



# Insights into Bricklaying Apprenticeships

NATIONAL RESEARCH

Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd (ABBTF) welcomes the National research report "Barriers and Drivers for Bricklaying Apprenticeships". The project is funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as an Industry Pathways Project and prepared for Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council (CPSISC).

The project was completed by the consulting firm Altegis Group and included surveys gaining insights from 365 bricklayers, 369 apprentices and students and 83 bricklaying lecturers. Forums were also held in five states. ABBTF was pleased to support and be involved in the Steering Committee along with a variety of industry representatives.



The report provides a number of valuable insights into bricklaying apprenticeships. ABBTF will use the research findings to strengthen its marketing and other strategies to address the skill shortage in bricklaying. The project also includes a Status Report on the industry and a report on Innovative Practices in Bricklaying.

For access to the full reports contact:

**CPSISC** on (02) 6253 0002 or visit [www.cpsisc.com.au](http://www.cpsisc.com.au)

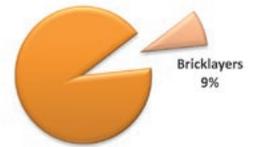
**ABBTF** on 1300 66 44 96 or visit [www.becomeabricklayer.com.au](http://www.becomeabricklayer.com.au)

The bricklaying industry is an integral part of the commercial and residential construction industry, with approximately 26,000 bricklayers and blocklayers across Australia.

New South Wales	7,341
Victoria	6,355
Queensland	4,058
South Australia	1,692
Western Australia	5,686
Tasmania	369
Northern Territory	124
Australian Capital Territory	354
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>25,979</b>



Bricklayers Within All Construction Trade Workers



## Industry Challenges:

- 55% of bricklayers have no formal bricklaying training
- 50% of all bricklaying apprentices do not complete their apprenticeship
- 47% of bricklayers are over the age of 40; 24% are over the age of 50

## What Apprentices say...

### Why Bricklaying?

Most common reasons bricklaying apprentices took up the trade:

1. Working outdoors
2. Get a qualification
3. Money
4. I like to see the results of my work
5. The opportunity to be my own boss

### Making your decision

Parents were the most important influencer.

However, the best sources of information came from other bricklayers ...'because they know the trade'.

### Best sources:

1. Other bricklayers
2. Bricklaying Training organisations (RTOs)
3. Parents
4. Internet
5. Australian Apprenticeship Centres

### Current Bricklaying Apprentices feel that 1st year attrition occurs because:

1. Apprenticeship wages too low
2. Not suited to bricklaying
3. Saw other jobs that paid more
4. Treated like cheap labour
5. Found the work too physically demanding (Money is a key barrier in three of the top five)

# Insights into Bricklaying Apprenticeships

## What Employers Say...

Employers have a big impact on the success of Bricklaying Apprentices

### Why do employers take on an apprentice?

1. Makes good business sense
2. An apprentice is more likely to stay with an employer over the 3-4 years
3. Because the employer was an apprentice once
4. It costs less to employ an apprentice

### Do Bricklaying Apprentices Cost the Employer Money?

	Cost	Break Even + Make Money
First Year Apprentice	46%	54%
Second Year Apprentice	25%	75%
Third Year Apprentice	7%	93%

### Why are there so many unqualified in the bricklaying trade?

Employers and bricklaying lecturers from TAFEs and RTOs believe these are the reasons:

1. Poor apprenticeship wage
2. Hands on learning allows many to handle the majority of work required (but not all)
3. The non qualified pathway has a long history within the trade
4. Many undervalue the qualification and cannot describe the benefits of a qualification
5. Challenging study requirements

### What makes for a good bricklayer? It's quality over quantity

1. Quality of work done
2. Someone who listens to the boss
3. Being able to work within a team
4. Ability to read plans
5. Getting the job done on time

### Employers Biggest Challenge?

1. Finding the right person for an apprenticeship
2. Cost of overheads
3. Steady flow of work
4. Teaching an Apprentice slows down productivity

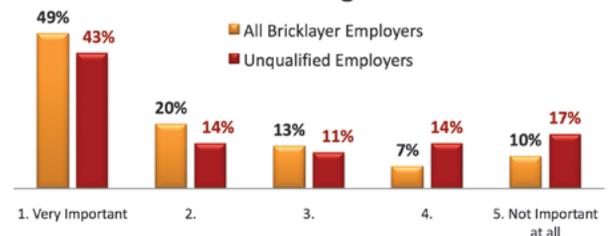
### The most successful bricklaying apprentices in trade school had a host employer who:

- Encouraged more bricklaying versus laboring
- Rotated the apprentice's role more often
- Had more than one apprentice

### Importance of Trade School

- Employers feel apprentices learn more about the trade on-the-job
- However, they still feel trade school is important. Even unqualified bricklayers support the need for trade school

### How important is it to have bricklayers who are trained through trade school?



### Licensing the Trade

- Surveyed bricklayers overwhelmingly supported an intention to license or regulate the trade.
- The overwhelming view appears to be strong support for some form of licensing. Whilst this may require a stepped process, most comments support the registration of bricklaying contractors.
- Even unqualified bricklaying employers were supportive of this direction.

Unfortunately, there appears to be strong incentive within the marketplace for the bricklaying workforce to bypass bricklaying training. This is particularly so for mature aged entrants into the field. With the trend towards more career changes, the bricklaying industry is currently at risk of having the current bricklaying qualification become obsolete within the workplace.