

# Forum Focus: Construction & Infrastructure



Knowledge Influence Support

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND INDUSTRY  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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## Chairman's Message *from Ray Sputore, Managing Director - Decmil Australia Ltd.*

Welcome to the December edition of CCI Forum Focus: Construction & Infrastructure.

Throughout 2011 the issue of infrastructure delivery has been a high priority for the Construction Forum and CCI generally. CCI Member Forums have consistently raised the issue of infrastructure bottlenecks and lack of planning as one of the major barriers to business growth and the overall development of WA. There are also significant challenges ahead for Perth as it grows in area and population and the demand this will place on its public infrastructure. CCI has now commenced work on an Infrastructure Policy Paper. The intention of the paper is to move beyond the normal debate of infrastructure wish-lists and consider the long-term planning and financing requirements for infrastructure delivery in WA. CCI is consulting closely with its member Forums on the development of this document. As C & I Forum Chair, I strongly urge all CCI members interested in the subject to make their thoughts known to CCI.

Next year will also be critical for CCI as it will mark the 12 month countdown to the next WA State Election being held in March 2013. The CCI's 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission sets to focus the attention of the WA Government on the key issues facing the WA business community. The next 12 months are a critical opportunity for WA to commit to critical reforms that will underpin the State's prosperity and growth into the future.

This Forum Focus includes articles on the recent visit to WA by the Resources Sector Supplier Envoy the Hon. Peter Beattie and the CCI Workforce Participation Forum.

May you and all of your staff have a Safe and Merry Christmas and Prosperous 2012.

## 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission to the WA Government

In recent weeks, CCI submitted its 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission to the WA Government.

With the 2012-13 Budget the last before the election, CCI has called upon the Government to deliver its promised reform agenda, which has stalled in recent times.

The Government should use the 2012-13 Budget to deliver a reform agenda that can be implemented immediately to ease the cost of doing business in the State, to help those businesses outside of the resources sector to navigate through the current conditions.

Click here for CCI's 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission to the WA Government.

***Fast Fact: CCI's submission sets out a non-negotiable list of nine priorities, which the business community expects to see in the upcoming budget.***

## CCI Workforce Participation Forum 2011 – Utilising the Untapped Workforce

Featuring a number of Western Australian business leaders, including an address by Richard Goyder, Wesfarmers Limited, the *CCI Workforce Participation Forum* was held on Friday 4 November, 2011.

The Forum provided attendees with an insight into some strategies to increase workforce participation in order to address the skills and labour shortage facing Western Australia. There is a large section of the community that employers, with some flexibility and appropriate procedures, can greater engage to fill some of the predicted shortages.

Speakers included Tony Noonan from Doorn-Dijil Yoordaing Mining and Construction, Dr Penny Flett from Brightwater Care Group, Zoe Weir of Freehills, Damir Kucan from Burswood and Sue Robertson of Edge Employment Solutions.

The speakers presented participants with insight on the reality of engaging, managing and retaining a wide range of under-represented groups,

including Aboriginal people, mature age employees, women in the workforce and people with disabilities.

The Forum was attended by a diverse range of participants who were appreciative of the calibre of speakers and the practical solutions they provided, particularly the knowledge of support services available for employers.

***Fast Fact: 1.7 million Australians over the age of 18 years wanted to contribute more to the labour force, according a recent report issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).***

## Hon Peter Beattie visit to WA

The Federal Government's Resources Sector Supplier Envoy and former Queensland Premier, the Hon. Peter Beattie visited Perth from November 22 to 25. It was Mr Beattie's first visit to WA in his new role as Resources Sector Supplier Envoy.

Appointed by the Federal Government in August, Mr Beattie's new role is part of the Federal Government's *Buy Australian at Home and Abroad* initiative that aims to assist local suppliers' link with the delivery of product to Australian projects.

CCI was proud to host a visit by Mr Beattie at its Hay Street Office on November 24. Mr Beattie received a briefing from Industry Capability Network WA as well as Project Connect that are both housed at CCI.

The highlight of Mr Beattie's visit was the CCI hosted Forum that was attended by more than 70 CCI members representing a cross section of suppliers, proponents and consultants involved in the WA resources sector.

In his address, Mr Beattie said he wanted to assist Australian suppliers to have greater engagement with overseas procurement officers as well as encouraging joint bids by Australian suppliers on major projects. In a discussion time that went for more than hour, Forum attendees advised Mr Beattie of their concerns ranging from the high cost of doing business in WA, the complexity of tendering processes and the impact of free trade agreements.

CCI has received very positive feedback from Mr Beattie and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research on the input of CCI members into Mr Beattie's visit. CCI shall continue to be in contact with Mr Beattie to ensure that its members opinions are included as part of his recommendations to the Federal Government on local content.

***Fast Fact: The attendance at the CCI Forum was the highest there has been for all the industry consultations Mr Beattie has held across Australia.***

## Freight and Logistics Council of WA

CCI is a member of the Freight and Logistics Council of WA. Convened by the WA Department of Transport, the Council is the State's peak advisory body to the WA Government on matters relating to the freight and logistics industry.

Throughout 2011, the Council has discussed a number of key issues including the Fremantle Port Outer Harbour Development, the proposed WA Metro and regional freight strategies, regional WA ports developments, the proposed National Freight Strategy, and out-of-gauge freight movements.

The high point for the Council in 2011 was an address and discussion by the WA Minister for Transport the Hon. Troy Buswell MLA.

Meeting monthly, the Council had its last meeting for 2011 on December 15.

***Fast Fact: In a 2006 Commonwealth Heads of Government report, congestion in Perth imposed avoidable costs of \$0.9 billion in 2005 and this is projected to increase to \$2.1 billion in 2020.***

CCI will continue to be part of the Council in 2012 and will be seeking member advice on issues that are raised throughout the year.

## 2012 CCI Advocacy Agenda

Each year the CCI Advocacy team, in consultation with members, determines the policy priorities for the year ahead.

Having consulted with members, the CCI Advocacy Team has identified the following list of priority issues for 2011:

- Productivity – examining ways to lift Australia's flagging productivity;
- Participation – the issue of labour shortages remains a priority for WA employers. This series will examine what changes are needed to increase the participation levels among certain groups, including older people, Indigenous Australians, migrants, women and people with a disability; and
- 2013 State Election Plan - setting out the issues of importance to business in the lead up to the March 2013 State Election. It will be similar to the previous State Strategies for Growth document.

These papers will be in addition to the advocacy work already being undertaken by the team. CCI Senior Policy officers will be consulting with members throughout 2012 in the development of these flagship papers.

***Fast Fact: In 2011, CCI released policy papers on Local Content, Industrial Relation Reform, Preventative Health Measures, the Cost of doing business in WA, and Tax Reform.***

## Carbon Tax and Mining Tax update

The Federal Government's Clean Energy Future package passed the Senate on 8 November 2011 and will become operational on 1 July, 2012. The package has wide ranging implications for CCI members. A relatively small number will be direct participants in the scheme. Others will be captured through changes in the fuel tax system. However, the majority of businesses will see an impact on their energy bills.

CCI is now focusing its efforts on helping members in the WA business community, particularly small and medium sized employers, to understand the impact on their businesses and prepare for the impact of the tax.

***Fast Fact: Only around 500 individual facilities will be liable to pay the carbon tax, of which around 75 operate solely within Western Australia, 45 across multiple states.***

November also saw the passage of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT) Bill through the Lower House of Parliament. CCI has remained consistently opposed to the MRRT arguing it is being considered in isolation to a wider national tax reform agenda. It places further risk on the overall growth prospects of WA and Australia.

In addition, various concessions have been granted to Independent Members of Parliament, on GST distribution and coal seam gas, which have wider implications than the MRRT itself. CCI is maintaining a close watch on developments in particular on any amendments that will have wider implications.

For further information on both the carbon tax and MRRT please contact Drew Pearman, senior policy adviser - Resources, Energy and Environment, on 08 9365 7720, or email [drew.pearman@cciwa.com](mailto:drew.pearman@cciwa.com).

