



BRISBANE  
CRANES

50  
Q3 2020

104  
Q2 2016

Source: RLB

The Queen's Wharf development site in Brisbane CBD has kept Queensland tradies employed despite the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

# Tradies in demand

CHRIS HERDE

BILLIONS of dollars of infrastructure projects are driving demand for tradespeople in Queensland with a surge in house and land packages also generating jobs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to research by Construction Skills QLD, the state will need 114,000 tradesmen and women this financial year, down from 125,000 in 2019-20.

The Federal Government announced over the weekend a number of job-creating initiatives which should boost the construction sector.

## Major infrastructure projects crucial

This included an extension of the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme giving 10,000 extra first homeowners access to loans with deposits as low as 5 per cent. The government also said it will pay half the salary of 100,000 new apprentices and trainees in any industry for one year.

Construction Skills QLD director of research Robert Sobyra said federal and state government-funded projects and intervention — especially COVID-19 stimulus packages

— have been instrumental in creating employment.

"The construction industry has been the biggest take up of JobKeeper but there has also been other government help such as wage subsidies for apprentices which has been very important," he said.

Mr Sobyra said southeast Queensland's major publicly funded infrastructure projects such as the Cross River Rail and Brisbane Metro will continue to be big employment generators. He said those projects,

as well as Queen's Wharf, ensured demand for crane operators, riggers, structural steel construction workers and other skilled tradies.

"That reflects the bias in the industry towards infrastructure where there is a lot of concrete and cranes and heavy industry," he said.

"We may be focusing on the big ticket items but there are also a lot of these 'rats and mice' housing land packages developments that are abso-

lutely flying. While the big infrastructure projects employ a lot of painters, tilers, carpenters and plumbers, the house and land stuff is really important to keep them going as well," Mr Sobyra said.

While the multi-billion dollar Brisbane infrastructure projects take centre stage other major publicly-funded projects outside the capital such as the light rail extension on the Gold Coast, the Bruce Highway upgrade on the Sunshine Coast and the new men's mega prison near Gatton will also generate thousands of new construction trade jobs, he said.