

Consultation on Industry Skills Boards' coverage

The Registered Master Builders Association (Master Builders) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Tertiary Education Commission's (TECs) consultation on Industry Skills Boards' (ISBs) coverage. As a leading voice for over 3,000 commercial and residential builders across New Zealand, we are committed to strengthening vocational education to meet the evolving needs of the construction sector.

Our responses build on previous input into vocational education reforms, affirming our support for industry-led governance, national training consistency, and strong recognition of specialist trades. We believe a well-designed ISB model, responsive to sector priorities and supported by sustainable funding, will be crucial to lifting workforce capacity, enhancing productivity, and ensuring long-term economic resilience.

TEC ISB Consultation Responses

Questions	Master Builders Response
2. Overall, do you support the proposal to establish seven Industry Skills Boards?	Yes. Master Builders supports the establishment of industry-led ISBs. We view this as an important step toward ensuring vocational education is aligned with the needs of individual sectors – especially the construction sector, which requires consistent and industry-responsive training systems.
3. What aspects of the proposal do you support, and why?	<p>Master Builders supports the following aspects of the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated construction ISB: The establishment of a standalone ISB for construction recognises the sector's complexity, scale and workforce needs. It enables focused governance and policy setting that aligns directly with industry practice. • Industry-led governance: A board structure with six industry-appointed members ensures decision-making remains grounded in the realities of construction businesses and work-based learning environments. • Clear functions and responsibilities: Assigning qualifications development, standard setting, programme endorsement and moderation to ISBs aligns with our advocacy for maintaining high standards and national consistency in construction training.

Questions	Master Builders Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for national consistency: Given the highly mobile nature of the construction workforce, we strongly support standards for training, assessment and moderation. Portability of qualifications across regions and employers is critical. • Pragmatic approach to funding: We broadly support proposal allowing ISBs to charge for endorsement and moderation services. We also cautiously support industry levies, provided they are transparently governed and equitable – especially for small to medium enterprises, which make up a significant portion of our industry.
4. What aspects of the proposal do you have concerns about, and why?	<p>While we are broadly supportive of the overall direction, we have several areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial appointees: There is a risk that political appointments to ISB boards may dilute industry leadership. These roles must be filled in consultation with the sector based on relevant experience in vocational training or the construction industry, alongside strong governance experience. • Functional independence post-2027: After 2027, training delivery must be separated from standard-setting to avoid conflicts of interest. The construction sector needs confidence that assessment standards will remain consistent and independent of delivery interest. • Specialist trades at risk: Niche trades within construction, such as stonemasonry, must not be marginalised due to funding limitations or narrow ISB definitions. These trades are vital to the quality and integrity of the built environment. • Transition uncertainty: The shift from Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) and Te Pūkenga must not disrupt current apprenticeships or employer-provider relationships. Clear communication and continuity of service are essential.
5. Do you have any feedback relating to a specific industry?	Yes - Construction

Questions	Master Builders Response
6. Which industry or industries does your feedback relate to?	Construction Industries – <i>picked from list on website.</i>
7. Will your industry/sector be covered by an ISB or NZQA in the proposal?	The construction industry is proposed to be covered by a Construction ISB, which we support.
8a. You reported that your industry is covered by one of the seven ISBs. How supportive are you of the decision to assign your industry to the ISB it has been allocated to?	We support the allocation of the construction sector to a dedicated Construction ISB. The structure is essential for effective workforce planning, training and sector responsiveness.
*10. Do you have any other feedback about the proposal?	<p>Master builders would like to see the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seamless transition: The transition from current structures to ISBs must be seamless. Any service gaps or confusion would be detrimental to both apprentices and employers. • Retain existing expertise: Waihangā Ara Rau, the current WDC for Construction and Infrastructure, has built valuable sector knowledge. This should not be lost in the transition to ISBs. • Empower Establishment Advisory Groups: These groups will shape the initial design of the Construction ISB and must include strong sector voices, with strong governance and knowledge of vocational education • Make levies work for the industry: If levies are introduced, they must be clearly tied to benefits, managed transparently, and affordable – especially for SMEs, who form the backbone of the construction sector.

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***Please note:** Questions between 8a and 10 are related to NZQA and are not applicable for our submission.