

Civil Contractors New Zealand submission on 2025 Funding Determinations

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on your Consultation on 2025 Funding Determinations.

Civil Contractors New Zealand (CCNZ) is an industry association representing the interests and aspirations of more than 800 member businesses and organisations, including more than 520 large, medium-sized, and small businesses in civil engineering, the physical construction of infrastructure, and general contracting.

Our 300 associate members provide valuable products, support, and services to contractor members. We live and work in all communities across New Zealand.

Civil contractors are responsible for the physical construction and maintenance of NZ's transport networks, water networks that bring fresh water to houses and wastewater to treatment plants, cables that bring the internet to homes and businesses, ports, airports and private developments.

These are the services a modern and developed economy must have to compete efficiently in world markets and to deliver high living standards and wellbeing for all New Zealanders.

The infrastructure construction industry employs between 60,000 and 80,000 people, and to scale up effectively it needs good education pathways. Our members have repeatedly advised us in our annual surveys that better vocational pathways are needed to support people entering the industry.

The interest CCNZ has in this consultation is around vocational education and training, and more specifically, how funding is applied to Gateway programmes which provide a 'bridge' between school and the workplace.

In the interest of keeping this submission brief and to the point, we are making a three-point submission, specifically focussed on

- The need for strong vocational pathways that support learners in entering the industry,
- The importance of supporting driver licensing through education, and
- The need to prepare people for careers in infrastructure construction to fulfil the future work programme.

1 – Need for strong vocational pathways that support learners in entering the industry

Civil Contractors New Zealand is concerned the proposed approach will not meet the needs of learners and support them in preparing for work or connecting them with work opportunities.

Gateway programmes currently have little connection with civil construction industry employers, however we have seen successful examples where students connected with employers through gateway programmes have been supported to achieve a solid foundation.

These students are often far better prepared for the health and safety requirements of the businesses they are joining. They have also in some cases been funded to meet the prerequisites of employment so they can safely and legally join the workforce upon leaving school, and so that they can leave school with some work experience.

2 – The importance of supporting driver licensing through education

The [proposed changes](#) state that Gateway funding will explicitly not be used to fund driver licence training, except where learners are required to obtain a specific class of licence to complete a workplace learning programme.

We believe this change will lead to poor outcomes. Obtaining a driver licence is one of the biggest barriers for people entering the civil construction industry, as the full driver licensing process can take up to two years.

Almost all civil construction roles require a driver licence, and while employers will support employees in gaining specific licence classes, they cannot circumvent the statutory time periods required under driver licensing.

Many young people are remote from driver licencing facilities, with cost providing a major barrier to them entering the infrastructure construction workforce. Any steps schools can take to support these young people in learning to drive legally and safely will have great benefit, even beyond vocational employment.

It is therefore imperative for people looking to join the industry safely and legally that the driver licencing process is started as soon as possible. If this does not happen early, it becomes a major barrier for employment, and these young people will not be able to start their careers in infrastructure.

It is common knowledge that people entering the industry will need a driver's license, and therefore we believe point 23. a. i. is an unnecessary restriction and should be removed entirely.

3 – Need to prepare people for careers in infrastructure construction

Year on year, members provide CCNZ with information that a shortage of skilled workers entering the industry is the single biggest challenge they face, because new entrants to the workforce are not prepared for the real-world jobs they are expected to perform.

Conclusion

We believe the proposed changes reduce one of the few pathways students have to gain the support and skills they need to enter the workforce, and we request that arrangements for students to gain driver licensing through gateway are strengthened rather than undermined.

We would like to meet with the people and organisations running this consultation in person to verbally discuss this consultation and are eager to enter further dialog to ensure the required educational supports for people entering the workforce are in place.

We await your response.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Pollard
Chief Executive
Civil Contractors NZ

Supporting documents

- *Developing a Skilled Civil Construction Workforce* report – CCNZ
Available at: <https://civilcontractors.co.nz/Pages/SYSTEM/Utility/Download.aspx?id=581c1002-612e-4801-9090-8548b8477281&newtab=1>
- *Civil Construction: A requirement for a robust and reliable training pipeline* – ConCove, 2023.
Available at: <https://concove.ac.nz/discovery-hub/civil-construction-full-report/>