

Associations

New National Body for Construction Industry

A new industry association for major contractors will have an important role in reform of the construction industry.

Senator the Honourable Peter Cook, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, was guest of honour at an inaugural dinner in Canberra on 15 November 1994 at which a new national association for major construction companies was launched.

The Australian Constructors Association has fifteen members, each of which operates in more than one State and has an annual turnover in excess of \$200 million.

The Board comprises Chief Executives only. Office Bearers are:

- President: Wal King, Chief Executive Officer, Leighton Holdings Ltd
- Vice President: Harold Clough AO OBE, Chairman, Clough Ltd
- Vice President/ Treasurer: Paul W L White, Managing Director, Concrete Constructions Group Pty Ltd

Mr King said the Association was born out of the need to provide a forum in which CEOs of the major national contractors could discuss broad industry issues and effectively communicate their views to government and the wider community. Mr King:

“We are a national association of national companies determined to play their part in helping to make the construction industry more efficient, more competitive, and better able to contribute to the national development of Australia”.

Among the Association’s aims are to:

- require the highest standards of skill, integrity and responsibility of member contractors;
- ensure that the major contractors take a leading role in furthering the reform process initiated by the Federal Government and contributed to by State Governments;
- develop a Code of Ethics which will provide a benchmark for its members;
- participate in the development of relevant Government policy and influence decision-making concerning construction industry issues;
- facilitate exchange of technical information and encourage further research on technical and economic matters of interest to construction contractors;
- promote and support improvements, by way of standardisation, efficiency and simplification, in relevant laws and regulations;
- provide an authoritative and representative voice for major construction contractors on matters of common interest.

Mr King said that increased efficiencies in the construction industry can significantly contribute to

Australia’s economic growth and competitiveness:

“In 1993/94, new expenditure on non-residential construction accounted for almost one-third or \$20.5 billion of total gross fixed capital expenditure.

The fifteen members of our new Association accounted for \$8 billion or 40% of the total construction activity.

As an Association we have a responsibility to ensure that the industry continues to play an important economic role, by way of infrastructure development to increase national competitiveness and in exports of construction services.”

Mr King said the Association had categorically ruled out becoming involved in specific industrial relations issues, confining itself instead to broad policy considerations:

“The Australian Constructors Association will not represent members individually or collectively on industrial relations issues.

Likewise, in regard to general industry construction contracts, the Association will not provide advice to members individually or collectively on contractual or legal matters relevant to a specific project. Nor will it arrange meetings of its members to discuss matters relevant to a specific project.

I must emphasise that the Association is about looking at the big picture, the broad policy focus, as it affects the construction industry nationally and internationally.”

Mr King said that in targeting the Asian market, Australian industry faced immense competition from other developed countries.

An important role of the Australian Constructors Association will be to foster a more efficient, competitive industry capable of meeting this challenge as well as to advise Government on how opportunities in the region can be optimised for Australia through industry and trade policies.

Mr King said:

“The Australian Constructors Association looks forward to working with other industry organisations, professional bodies and the Federal and State Governments towards a common objective: the development of an efficient and competitive construction industry capable of contributing significantly to the economic growth and social development of Australia”. □