

Migration would help but it's no silver bullet

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Permanent skilled migration is part of the solution to Australia's skills shortage, but it is not the silver bullet and should not be a substitute for other reforms.

Take a closer look at Phillip Coorey's article "[Permanent skilled workers to be top priority in immigration revamp](#)" (July 20) and see that Australia's third largest industry – construction – does not have a long queue of skilled applicants, because every nation is investing big in infrastructure and competition is fierce.

In Australia alone, the scarcity of qualified skilled construction workers is significant, with an estimated 105,000 additional workers required within the next year.

Put simply, this challenge cannot be solved by migration and training alone. The silver bullet is productivity.

Other industries have lunged forward with the emergence of digital tools, while the construction industry has become 25 per cent less productive over the past 30 years.

Just a halving of the productivity gap between construction and other major industries could result in savings of \$15billion annually, and it would contribute enormously to remedying the workforce shortage.

The federal government has a significant role to play in driving the reforms needed to improve productivity, and that can start at the upcoming Jobs and Skills Summit.

Letter to the editor by Jon Davies, chief executive, Australian Constructors Association

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