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## Skilled Trade Shortages Back to Pre-GFC levels

The latest Housing Industry Association-Austral Bricks Trades Report highlights a further deterioration in the availability of skilled tradespeople in the residential sector in the first quarter of 2010.

The HIA, the voice of Australia's home building and renovations sectors, said the Trades Report confirmed widespread shortages of skilled labour.

HIA's Chief Economist, Dr Harley Dale said in the March 2010 quarter the headline HIA-Austral Bricks Trade Availability Index reached its lowest level since September 2008. The index fell to -0.11 in the March 2010 quarter, from -0.08 in the December quarter last year, meaning tradespeople were defined as being in moderate under supply.

"There was a shortage of labour in ten out of thirteen skilled trades in the March 2010 quarter, with the shortage growing in a majority of instances.

"Trade rates, meanwhile, are on the rise again, but upward pressure at this stage remains modest.

The HIA-Austral Bricks Trade Prices Index increased by 1.1 per cent in the March 2010 quarter.

"The Trade Prices Index was 2.4 per cent higher compared to the March 2009 quarter, the latter period being when trade rates were nearing a low amidst a very weak new home building environment.

"In the second half of last decade prior to the GFC, acute shortages of skilled labour formed a very significant constraint to new residential construction activity in particular. Australia is in danger of repeating that experience given an inherent structural shortage of skilled labour together with a resource sector recovery that is gathering momentum.

"Continuing focus on targeted policies regarding training and the encouragement of young people to start and finish a trade is crucial. So too is the urgent need to consider immigration policy that provides an effective path to specifically plugging short term gaps in skilled labour in the residential sector as distinct from the overall construction industry," Harley Dale said.

**For Further Information please contact:**

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For a full copy of the HIA-Austral Bricks Trades Report (media only), please contact Kirsten Lewis on (02) 6245 1393 or [k.lewis@hia.com.au](mailto:k.lewis@hia.com.au)

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	Mar-07	Jun-07	Sep-07	Dec-07	Mar-08	Jun-08	Sep-08	Dec-08	Mar-09	Jun-09	Sep-09	Dec-09	Mar-10	Quarterly Movement in Availability
Bricklaying	0.00	-0.48	-0.49	-0.63	-0.27	-0.17	-0.13	0.00	-0.12	-0.06	-0.10	-0.08	-0.18	↓
Carpentry	-0.30	-0.35	-0.50	-0.55	-0.46	-0.37	-0.29	0.11	0.16	0.08	0.04	-0.03	-0.18	↓
Ceramic Tiling	-0.36	-0.32	-0.37	-0.61	-0.43	-0.40	-0.33	0.00	-0.08	-0.21	-0.25	-0.33	-0.25	↑
Electrical	-0.70	-0.56	-0.57	-1.07	-0.25	-0.17	-0.30	-0.83	-0.51	-0.14	-0.15	-0.03	-0.18	↓
General Building	-0.54	-0.44	-0.49	-0.60	-0.44	-0.45	-0.17	0.06	0.13	0.03	-0.06	-0.05	-0.06	↓
Joinery	-0.32	-0.34	-0.40	-0.68	-0.44	-0.27	-0.27	-0.11	0.12	0.38	0.19	0.18	0.05	↓
Landscaping	0.00	-0.47	-0.49	-0.33	-0.50	-0.25	-0.10	0.09	0.18	0.11	-0.14	-0.17	-0.25	↓
Other Trades	-0.20	-0.32	-0.41	-0.34	-0.44	-0.24	-0.25	-0.36	-0.05	0.04	-0.04	-0.06	-0.04	↑
Painting	-0.47	-0.66	-0.40	-0.67	-0.62	-0.50	-0.36	-0.60	-0.08	0.18	0.00	-0.13	0.00	↑
Plastering	-0.29	-0.28	-0.50	-0.77	-0.56	-0.44	-0.39	-0.18	0.13	0.22	0.14	0.00	0.07	↑
Plumbing	-0.80	-0.85	-0.80	-0.76	-0.50	-0.26	-0.14	-0.50	-0.36	0.01	-0.25	-0.14	-0.33	↓
Roofing	-0.33	-0.76	-0.79	-0.96	-1.00	-0.40	-0.76	-0.31	-0.35	0.01	-0.14	-0.36	-0.21	↑
Site Preparation	-0.75	-0.84	-0.80	-0.50	-0.57	-0.57	-0.25	0.00	-0.09	0.13	0.08	0.14	-0.03	↓
All trades	-0.41	-0.43	-0.46	-0.51	-0.46	-0.40	-0.29	-0.06	-0.05	0.10	-0.07	-0.08	-0.11	↓

*A down arrow indicates a deterioration in trade availability over the quarter while an up arrow indicates an improvement in trade availability.  
Source: HIA-Austral Bricks Trades Report*

**Note to Editors**

1. The HIA-Austral Bricks Trades Report is a quarterly measure of trade prices and availability on a capital city and rest of state basis for 13 different trade categories in the 5 largest states.
2. The data is sourced each quarter from a sample of HIA builder and contractor members. The price series is the current charge out rate minus GST and materials. The data is weighted and expressed in terms of an index (with a base of 100 being the weighted average price for all trades in all regions in September 2002).
3. The trade availability measure is derived from a question asking members about the availability of their trade in their particular region. There are five possible responses ranging from critical short supply to massive oversupply. A net balance method is used to derive the single measure.
4. For a full copy of the HIA-Austral Bricks Trades Report (media only), please contact Kirsten Lewis on (02) 6245 1393