**MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release

**Local Canberra Construction Company Creating Career Pathways for Indigenous Australians and Individuals Transitioning From Justice System**

Longstanding Canberra construction company Woden Contractors (Wodens) is transforming lives for Indigenous Australians by providing individuals transitioning from incarceration at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) with the skills, licenses, and support needed to build a sustainable career in the construction industry. The Civil Tasters Program plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of reoffending, offering a pathway to stability, long-term employment, and a fresh start.

Indigenous Australians face significant challenges upon release with data showing that they are incarcerated at a rate 15 times higher than non-Indigenous Australians and experience higher rates of recidivism due to barriers like unstable employment, housing insecurity, and limited access to mental health support (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

The Civil Tasters Program is breaking this cycle in Canberra by providing funded culturally inclusive, industry-recognised training, stable job opportunities, and wraparound support to help Indigenous participants reintegrate successfully and build long-term careers in the construction industry.

With support from the Australian Government’s Launch into Work program, in partnership with The Umbrella Collective, Worldview Foundation, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra, and the Master Builders Association, the program will do more than create jobs—it will transform lives and build brighter futures.

Managing Director for Woden Contractors, Ben Helmers says that for individuals leaving the justice system, securing full-time employment can be a significant challenge, particularly for Indigenous Australians.

“As a long-standing construction company, we have always fostered a family-oriented culture. We prioritise direct employment over subcontracting, creating a cohesive and supportive work environment that helps individuals, especially those transitioning from the justice system, build stability and long-term careers.”

Research suggests that by providing real opportunities like those through the Civil Tasters Program, it is possible to break the cycle of reoffending and empower individuals to reclaim their futures.

The program provides essential pre-employment training, including White Card certification, Asbestos and Silica Awareness training, hands-on work experience with Wodens and Worldview’s Holistic Life Management Program, which develops critical soft skills.

“By working at a grass roots level we can help build financial independence, strengthen communities, and offer a fresh start,”

The success of the Civil Tasters Program speaks for itself, with the inaugural round seeing 15 participants complete their training—10 securing roles at Wodens and five finding employment through Worldview.

Building on this momentum, a second intake is now underway, with 13 more participants set to enter the workforce within the next few weeks, further strengthening pathways to long-term stability and economic independence.

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