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LONG SERVICE HELPS SHORTAGE

A levy on development will help ease the chronic shortage of workers in the Territory construction industry.

NT Build has been created to manage the first portable long service leave scheme in an attempt to attract more construction workers to the NT.

There is a major shortage of carpenters, electricians, concreters, plasterers, painters, tillers and bricklayers according to the NT Government's Occupation Shortage List.

Under the NT Build scheme developers of construction projects have to pay a 0.5 percent levy on total construction costs. All of the money paid in levies is invested and used to pay long service leave for workers who are registered for the scheme.

Developers face fines of up to \$55,000, work site shut down or interest penalties if they do not pay the levy when required.

The compulsory levy was introduced on July 1 last year as part of a package of reforms to improve the Territory's construction industry and attract more workers to the NT.

The 0.5 percent levy has to be paid for every development with construction costs of more than \$200,000 - not including single residential homes.

NT Build has set up a system where construction workers, including sub-contractors who only supply labour, can accrue 13 weeks of long service leave over 10 years while working for more than one employer.

Employers record the number of days worked by each registered worker and pass the information on to NT Build every six months.

NT Build registrar Theo Tsikouris said the national scheme allows construction workers to move interstate, and between employers, and still accrue long service leave.

"Now we have truly national coverage and coming to the NT will not put their long service leave at risk," Mr Tsikouris said.

"A lot of workers who wanted to come to the NT in the past have avoided it because they may have jeopardised the long service leave they had already accrued interstate.

"The nature of the construction industry is that you follow the job and you are not working with one employer long enough to get long service leave. It is truly portable because it is not reliant on service with one employer."



Mr Tsikouris said almost 3500 construction workers and 200 employers had already registered for the scheme, while 30 developers had already notified NT Build of their projects.

Mr Tsikouris urged developers to do the “right thing” by notifying NT Build of their projects and pay the levy before the amnesty ended on June 30.

NT Build is giving developers a second chance to pay the levy without facing serious penalties with an amnesty offered until June 30.

Under the legislation the NT Build Board can charge an interest penalty on late payments, and developers could face fines of between \$11,000 and \$55,000. If necessary a “stop work” notice could also be issued.

NT Build field officers will be routinely visiting sites throughout the Northern Territory to locate developments eligible to pay the levy and encourage workers and employers to register.

Developers, employers and workers can find out about the NT Build long service scheme via the website **www.ntbuild.com.au** or contact **8923 9300**.

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