

Safeguard Submission

Speaker

Peter Casa

Wednesday, May 13, 2026



Introduction

- CASA Engineering is a Qld steel fabrication and construction company that started in Townsville in 1995. The director Peter Casa has been in the industry for 35 years
- We employed around 90 to 120 people and have traditionally fabricated between 2,000 and 4,000 tonnes of steel each year for mining, industrial, infrastructure and major warehouse projects.
- Over the past several years, we have seen more and more structural steel being imported instead of being fabricated locally in Australia.

The Problem - Not a Lack of Work

- The problem is not a lack of work. The market is still strong. The problem is that steelwork which was once fabricated in Australia is now increasingly being fully fabricated and painted overseas before being shipped into the country ready to install.
- In many cases, Australian fabricators are not being given a genuine opportunity to compete for the work.
- Often, local fabricators, including CASA, are only asked to provide prices so Contractors and builders can compare local costs or satisfy local-content requirements, even though the steel is likely going to be imported anyway.
- The impacts on CASA have been severe:
 - closure of regional facilities
 - equipment mothballed and stored
 - loss of regional jobs
 - reduction in apprenticeships
 - cancellation of productivity investments.
- Without safeguards, Australia risks losing not just steel fabrication work, but also the skilled workers, apprenticeships and local industry needed to support future infrastructure and industrial projects.

Current Market financial Position-Australia wide

- As a whole of country outlook, you can see that the %GDP has been pretty consistent for construction. The percentage sits around 10%

2. Construction vs GDP (Australia)

▲ High-level trend (post-COVID recovery → stabilisation)

Year	Est. Construction Output (\$B)	% of GDP	Key Notes
2021	~270–290B	~9–10%	COVID rebound, <u>HomeBuilder</u>
2022	~300B	~10–11%	Peak stimulus + backlog
2023	~320–340B	~9.1%	Strong but cost pressure
2024	~330–350B	~10–11%	Infra + energy projects
2025	~\$324.6B work done / \$624.6B turnover	~11.7%	
2026*	~330–360B (est.)	~10–11%	Flat growth, margin compression

*2026 based on latest ABS quarterly trend extrapolation.

- The shows our primary markets breakup. As the markets changes so do we as fabricator
- We have moved up and down the list from infrastructure and yet it's impossible to compete

4. Structural Steel Industry (Your Key Layer)

Demand Split

Sector	Steel Demand Share
Engineering / Infrastructure	40–50%
Mining & Energy	20–30%
Commercial Buildings	20–25%
Residential	<5%

Australian Projects Increasingly Using Imported Steel

Examples

- Hitachi Wacol expansion imported despite being beside CASA workshop
- Bundamba warehouse imported, 5000m² offered to local fabricators to tender
- Redbank warehouse imported, 77000m² within 1km or two fabricators
- Goodna warehouse imported 2000m²
- CSR Coopers Plains project imported, offered for tender locally during budget phase but designed for imported material
- Eva Copper project shifted to importer, delivery method changed during tender period to suit imported material
- Jindalee bridge falsework- CASA developed the methodology that the project was expected and we weren't even invited to quote of the falsework steel

Closing line

- The projects are still being built in Australia — but the fabrication work is no longer being done in Australia.

Local Fabricators Not Getting Genuine Opportunities

Key Points

- Local fabricators are often not invited to tender
- Some companies ask local fabricators for prices just to compare them with overseas suppliers
- Some companies present themselves as local fabricators but source the steel from overseas
- Sometimes the decision to import the steel is already made before local fabricators get a real chance to quote

Closing line

- We are not just losing work on price — in many cases, we are not being given a real chance to win the work at all.

Impacts

Key Points

- Rockhampton facility closed- 5000m²-6 overhead cranes up to 20t
- Townsville facility closed- 7000m² – 9 overhead cranes up to 63t
- Bundamba facility downsized-9000m²-14 overhead cranes up to 32t down to 1700m² with 2 overhead crane up to 15t
- Equipment containerised and stored
- 70 regional jobs lost
- apprenticeships reduced
- turnover declined from \$35m to \$15m
- beamline and paint line investment cancelled

- National and Queensland fabrication trade apprenticeship commencements have declined significantly in recent years
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) data shows Australia-wide commencements in boiler maker apprenticeships declined from approximately 3,570 commencements in 2021 to around 445 commencements in 2024, with only 10 commencements recorded in the March quarter of 2025.
- In Queensland, commencements declined from approximately 1,025 in 2021 to around 90 commencements in 2024, with no commencements recorded in the March quarter of 2025.
- That demonstrates how quickly Australia is losing its future fabrication workforce.

Closing line

- Without market access, Australian fabricators stop investing in equipment, productivity and apprentices.

National Statistics

Apprentices and trainees: March quarter 2025

Last updated: August 2025

Quarter
 12 month series
 Commencements
 Completions
 Cancellations/withdrawals
 In-training
 Recommencements

Apprentice/trainee attributes

- Gender
- Full-time status
- Client remoteness region
- Age group
- Existing worker
- Client state/territory
- Indigenous status
- Highest school level completed
- Language other than English spoken at home
- Disability status
- Prior education
- Country of birth
- Previous highest education level
- At school
- Client postcode region

John Palermo (jvpalermc)

Training contract attributes

- State/territory
- Occupation
- Employer type
- Level of education
- Trade status
- Employer industry
- Field of education
- Workplace remoteness region
- Employer size
- Type of training
- Workplace state/territory
- Training duration
- Training package
- Workplace postcode region
- Provider type
- Qualification name
- School-based status

Download data

Reset

	12 month series				
	12 months ending 31 March 2021	12 months ending 31 March 2022	12 months ending 31 March 2023	12 months ending 31 March 2024	12 months ending 31 March 2025
Commencements	3,570	3,000	1,765	445	10
MEM30305 - Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade	1,475	895	125	-	-
MEM30319 - Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade	2,100	2,105	1,640	445	10

Queensland Statistics

Quarter
 12 month series
 Commencements
 Completions
 Cancellations/withdrawals
 In-training
 Recommencements

Apprentice/trainee attributes

- Gender
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Reset

Contract status <input type="text" value="Contract status"/>	State/territory <input type="text" value="State/territory"/>	Qualification na... <input type="text" value="Qualification na..."/>	12 month series <input type="text" value="12 month series"/>			
			12 months ending 31 March 2021	12 months ending 31 March 2022	12 months ending 31 March 2023	12 months ending 31 March 2024
Commencements			1,025	940	585	90
Queensland			1,025	940	585	90
MEM30305 - Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade			490	285	25	-
MEM30319 - Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade			535	655	560	90

Why Australian Fabrication Matters

Key Points

- Safeguards would help:
- preserve regional jobs
- maintain apprenticeships
- support local manufacturing capability
- encourage investment
- reduce supply-chain risk
- maintain technical trades

Closing line

- Once fabrication capability, skilled trades and workshops disappear, they will be extremely difficult to rebuild.

Summary

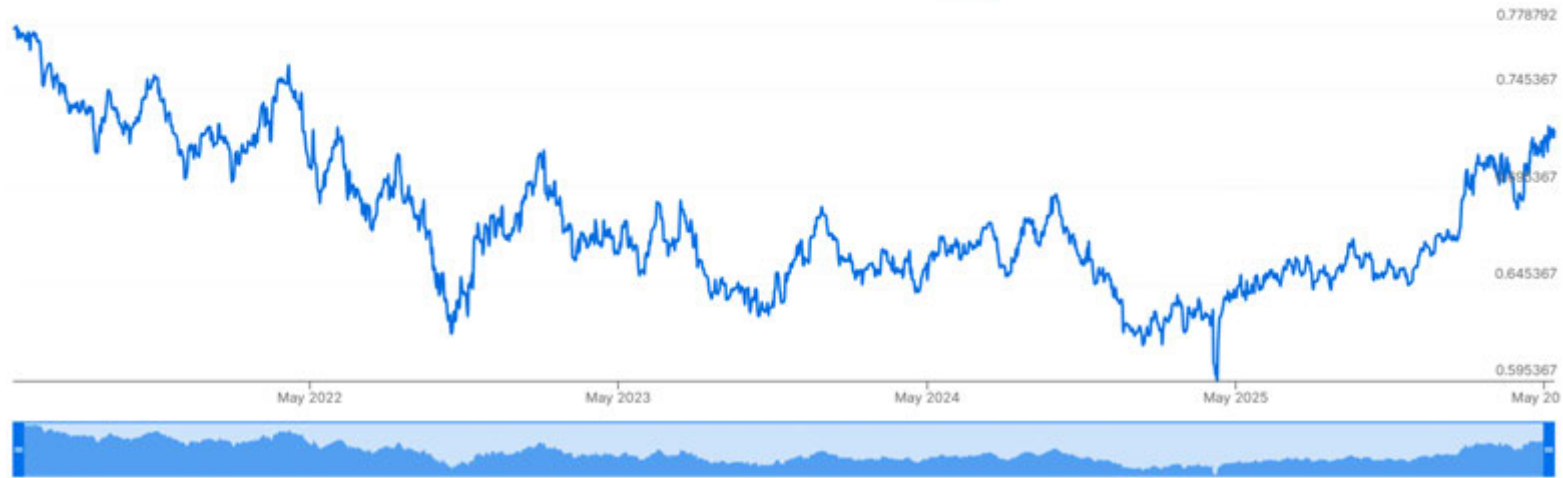
- CASA continues to deliver technically complex infrastructure and industrial projects. The issue is not capability — it is the increasing replacement of locally fabricated steel with imported fabricated steel.
- Australia still has the skills, experience and capability to fabricate structural steel locally. But without safeguards, more workshops will close, more apprenticeships will disappear and more Australian manufacturing capability will be lost.
- The market remains strong, but Australian participation in it is steadily declining.
- How do we compete with
 - Cheaper steel (\$2400 AUD Vs \$680USD)
 - Cheaper labour (\$48/hr vs \$17.50/hr) (\$1200/tn vs \$437/tn)
 - Cheaper shop detailing (\$1200/tn vs \$250/tn)
 - Cheaper Galvanising (\$1400/tn AUD vs \$320/tn USD)
 - Cheaper painting (\$2000/tn AUD vs \$400/tn USD)
 - A business that has one salesperson in this country
- It doesn't matter how much technology you implement into a workshop , you still can't compete.

AUD to USD Chart **-6.85%** (5Y)

1 AUD = 0.724494 USD 13 May 2026, 01:57 UTC

Australian Dollar to US Dollar

12H 1D 1W 1M 1Y 2Y **5Y** 10Y

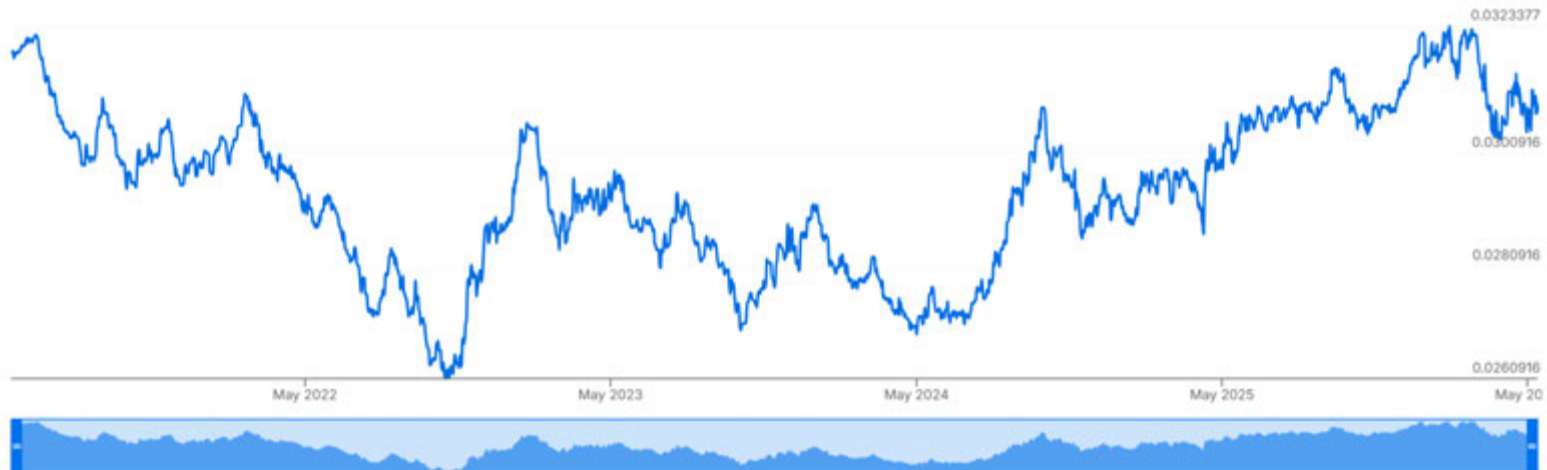


THB to USD Chart **-3.04%** (5Y)

1 THB = 0.0309096 USD 13 May 2026, 02:02 UTC

Thai Baht to US Dollar

12H 1D 1W 1M 1Y 2Y **5Y** 10Y

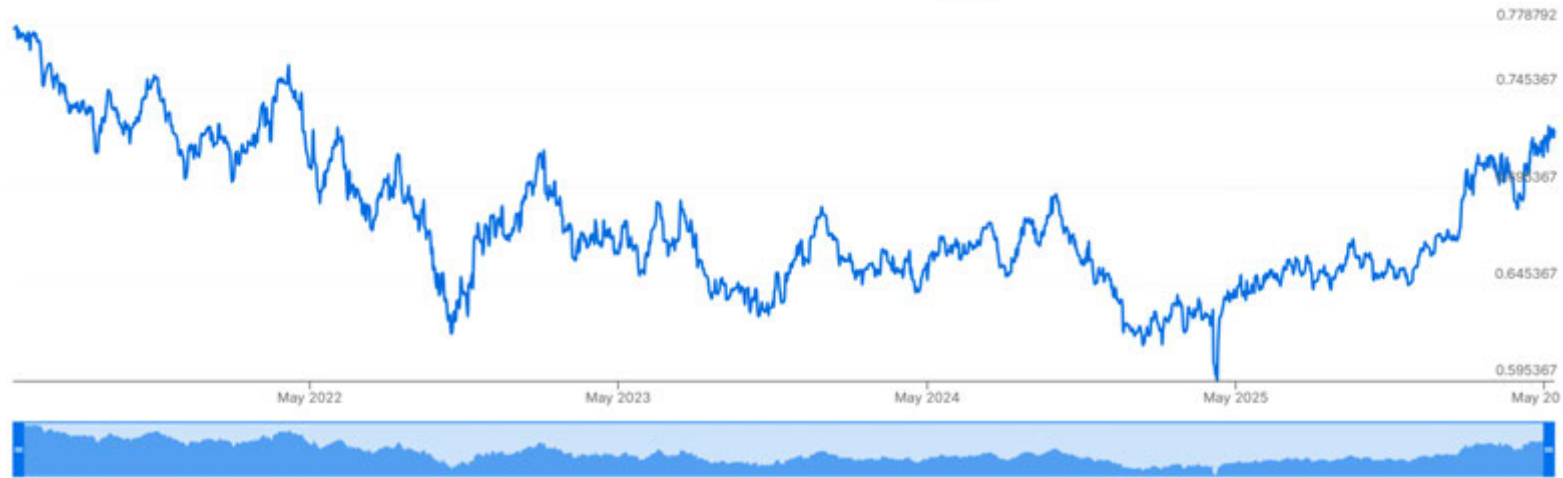


AUD to USD Chart -6.85% (5Y)

1 AUD = 0.724494 USD 13 May 2026, 01:57 UTC

Australian Dollar to US Dollar

12H 1D 1W 1M 1Y 2Y 5Y 10Y



CNY to USD Chart -5.23% (5Y)

1 CNY = 0.147222 USD 13 May 2026, 02:17 UTC

Chinese Yuan Renminbi to US Dollar

12H 1D 1W 1M 1Y 2Y 5Y 10Y

