

In their last meeting of 2023-2024, all five National Advisory Councils (NAC) met to discuss topical issues and share insights on what is happening in their sector. The Canadian Construction Association (CCA) thanks all Council members and guests who attended the sessions for taking the time to network and advance issues of importance to the industry. Please note that the next Council meetings will take place virtually May 6 - 7, 2024. Stay tuned for registration information!

Here are some of the highlights of the meetings:

Developed by the General Contractors and Trade Contractors NACs and endorsed by CCA's Board, a new Bulletin on cost escalation in contracts will be published in early April.

### **General Contractors NAC**

- The GC NAC is also developing two other documents: a “construction playbook” and “guide to supplemental conditions.”
- Canadian contractors have united under the Canadian Contractors Safety Council to collaborate and share best practices to address critical safety issues.
- The Ottawa Construction Association has launched a construction career website to encourage and make it easier to attract workers to the industry.

### **Trade Contractors NAC**

- A draft “Bid Go or No Go” bulletin will receive final input from the surety perspective before being brought to CCA for endorsement.
- Bill S-211 was noted as a compliance issue; although it is seen more as a GC or MS&S responsibility.
- There is concern that there is an increasing number of insolvencies from developers, general contractors and trade contractors over the past few months in addition to other payment issues.
- On the topic of prompt payment, it was noted that the Newfoundland government had engaged a consultant to help develop legislation and has held discussions with NLCA. In New Brunswick, the proposed legislation was undergoing a new reading with discussions on exemptions. Exemptions remained an issue in Alberta where payment periods of 120 days or more were seen. The Ontario legislation would soon be undergoing review after five years in place, as planned when originally introduced. In jurisdictions with legislation in place, many subcontractors remain hesitant to exercise prompt payment rights due to concerns of damaging relationships.
- Other topics raised included Quebec’s renegotiations of trade union agreements for increased flexibility with labour mobility and trade specialization, the movement of employees within the same sector for

higher wages, high steel costs arising from tariffs and Canada's prohibition of imports from certain countries, the lack of compliance officers enforcing required certifications like Red Seal, continuing outreach efforts encouraging young Canadians to join the construction industry, and the abuse of change directives as a tool for scope change.

### **Civil NAC**

- The federal government and all parties are transitioning to pre-electoral mode and adjusting their policy priorities to better connect with Canadians.
- Housing affordability took over Ottawa in the fall and represented a unique opportunity for civil contractors to be heard on the need for infrastructure investments.
- An RFP to develop a greening plan is in development. Recycling and aggregate remain misunderstood.
- Advocacy for a Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan (CTIP) continues; CICC and CCA have both played an important role.
- Price fluctuations have stabilized.
- The quality of documents appears to be worsening.
- Seeing some slowdown, but workforce shortage continues.
- Continue to focus on collaborative delivery models.
- Call for strengthening the voice of the sector and CCA as a prominent national voice.

### **Manufacturers, Suppliers & Services NAC**

- **Federal Prompt Payment:** CCA hosted a two-part webinar on Federal Prompt Payment legislation in English [Glen Ackerley & Jeff Scorgie - WeirFoulds LLP] and French [Jean-Philippe Gilbert – BM Avocats] exclusively. The webinar was attended by over 100 participants and the recording was also sent to membership.
- **Tech webinar series:** MS&S and GC working groups are finalizing the scope and content for two webinars:
  - Technology literacy: decision support for building with technology [June 2024]
  - Building on Artificial Intelligence: trusting new building methods using AI [September 2024]

### **Local Construction Associations NAC**

- The report on immigration in partnership with BuildForce Canada has been released and shared publicly. Bill Ferreira, Executive Director at BuildForce, was at the conference to present on the opportunities and challenges with immigration.
- The Council members also discussed a best practices guide for immigration that provides an overview of programs, services, and strategies from local construction associations across Canada.

- Ideas for future work the LCA NAC could include work to educate owners of construction, an owner's report card, and support to help SMEs better understand how they can work in alternative procurement methodologies.
- One critical issue that was discussed at length was federal prompt payment and which projects qualify under federal legislation. It was also discussed that prompt payment could potentially be something a subcommittee could be formed on moving forward. Other emerging issues include promoting value of belonging to our associations, potentially attracting buyers or construction to be members, and the removal of contract A in tendering.
- The LCA NAC reviewed the draft agenda for the Partner Association Symposium and provided feedback. Overall, council members felt the agenda was on track and the right mix of presentations and facilitated discussion. The only major consideration was time available to get through everything. It was decided that CCA staff would share the draft with all Partner Association COOs and ask for feedback within a week to finalize.