



Taskforce to examine building site disputes

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Crippling building site stoushes believed to cost several billions of dollars every year are to be put under the spotlight by a newly appointed national taskforce.

The dispute avoidance taskforce will try to quantify the frequency and exact financial fallout from clashes on Australian major construction projects.

The taskforce announcement is seen as coming at a crucial time for the industry as it faces significant economic pressures.

It was set up by the Co-operative Research Centre for Construction Innovation and includes key industry clients, construction companies, design consultants, industry groups and universities.

CRC chief operating officer Peter Scuderi said one of the major roles of the taskforce was to thoroughly research across the construction industry what the real problems, numbers of disputes, various forms of disputes, lost time, and costs to the industry and Australia actually were.

"The research work in the area of costs

has started but won't be fully researched, analysed and fully available until early next year when it is signed off by all members of the taskforce," he said.

CRC chief executive Keith Hampson said there was sparse evidence about the cost of disputes. "Much is shrouded and hidden, for various reasons," he said. "Many disputes never become public and consequently are not reported upon.

"The figures that we do have are broad-brush and often anecdotal. However, the costs of disputes are very likely to amount to several billions of dollars every year."

The taskforce findings will be used to produce an industry-wide best practice toolkit for dispute avoidance.

"The results ... are going to be more vital than ever with the value of construction projects in Australia approaching a staggering \$100 billion a year," Dr Hampson said.

The taskforce is chaired by Connell Wagner's Tony Barry and includes former building and construction industry royal commissioner Terence Cole and the Department of Main Roads in WA and Queensland.