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A new building and construction skills programme for young people was launched in Wellington recently by Hon Shane Jones, the Minister for Building and Construction.

BConstructive is a hands-on programme aimed at Year 11 and 12 high school students which has been developed by the Built Environment Training Alliance, a group of allied industry training organisations (ITOs) in the building and construction industry.

BConstructive aims to provide students with relevant and practical skills for pursuing a career in the industry, and to increase their awareness of the broad range of career options available. Students successfully participating in the programme will receive a National Certificate in Building, Construction and Allied Trades Skills.

Mr Jones applauded the BETA group for launching a practical programme that will give young people the tools to make the right career options for their future. "I've always enjoyed encouraging youngsters towards the trades and beyond," Mr Jones said.

"Given our nation's skills challenges, it's particularly timely that these construction industry training organisations have started a programme which will springboard young people into a worthwhile career."

BETA chairman Ruma Karaitiana says the BConstructive programme will provide students with a wide variety of skills, from practical hands-on abilities to communication and basic mathematics.

It will also introduce them to the breadth of career options the construction industry has to offer, and provide a foundation for undertaking further training in a construction-related tertiary course or make them work-ready for starting a trade apprenticeship, he said.

"BConstructive will mean our young people are better prepared to enter the construction industry, whether that's straight into an apprenticeship or to do more training," Mr Karaitiana said.

BConstructive's resource material is web-based, and free to registered providers. It is available to technical teachers online at www.bconstructive.co.nz.

A pilot of the programme was successfully trialed in 10 high schools throughout the country in 2007, and it is anticipated 150-200 high schools will offer BConstructive in 2008.

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