

PROOF THAT AUSSIE WORKERS ARE FAVOURED OVER SKILLED MIGRANTS

Industry association, Consult Australia has today released evidence confirming that 457 visa holders are not receiving jobs over Australian workers.

The Association's annual skills survey shows that 59 per cent of Australia's consulting engineering firms recruited between just one and 4 per cent of new staff from overseas during the 2012 calendar year.

18 per cent of the industry did not recruit any skilled migrants over this period.

This is a marked change from previous years when the same survey quantified that up to 20 per cent of Australia's biggest consulting engineering firms were bringing in between 16 and 30 per cent of new staff from overseas.

Consult Australia Chief Executive Officer, Megan Motto said the survey results validate the industry's ongoing claims that skilled migrants are only employed as a last resort.

"Consult Australia's 2013 skills survey unequivocally proves that employers have responded to the current employment market downturn by reducing their use of skilled migrants," said Ms Motto.

In its current state, the 457 visa provides temporary access to overseas expertise to compensate for domestic skills shortages.

Consult Australia has slammed unions' scare campaigns and warns against any changes to the 457 program which would reduce its flexibility.

"The union campaigns against the 457 visa that claim the program takes jobs away from Australians, are uninformed and frankly, dangerous," said Ms Motto.

"The fact is that where possible, Australian firms do favour Australian workers but where we do not have those skills available onshore, there must be the ability to source those skills from overseas.

"Inability to access those skills would lead to significant delays in the delivery of critical national and state infrastructure projects," said Ms Motto.

Consult Australia claims that changes to the current program while domestic skills are in ready supply would be a knee-jerk reaction that's detrimental effects will only become fully apparent when we face another skills shortage.

"Given that such shortages are cyclical, it's only a matter of time before that day arrives. We urge the government not to be so short-sighted in its decision-making process," said Ms Motto.

Ends

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For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact Consult Australia Chief Executive Officer, Megan Motto on 0411 104 458 or via email at megan@consultaustalia.com.au.