

Private sector calls for government reform to ease engineering shortage

Consult Australia has recommended that Governments undergo significant reform in their procurement processes, to ease the burden of the engineering skills shortage on the private sector.

Calling for improved capabilities within government; public sector contributions to the private industry's training burden; and a more efficient use of the potential labour force, the Association sees these changes key to unlocking the industry's ability to help ease the shortage and deliver the infrastructure Australia needs.

Consult Australia Chief Executive Officer, Megan Motto said that industry is concerned by the impacts of the shortage on the nation.

"If the skills shortage is not addressed, we will continue to see a backlog for new infrastructure as well as critical maintenance and repair," she said.

"This backlog impedes our nation's productivity, diminishes the quality of our surrounding environments and comes at a huge price to tax payers.

"With the recommendations made by Consult Australia, industry will be better positioned to help relieve the impact of the shortage."

This call from Consult Australia has been made in response to the federal Senate inquiry into the nexus between the demand for infrastructure delivery and the shortage of appropriate engineering and related employment skills in Australia.

Ms Motto said that the submission takes a holistic approach to addressing the skills shortage which over previous years has become a systemic rather than a cyclical problem.

"In making these recommendations to government, Consult Australia aims to improve the overall appeal of the industry across both the public and private sectors," said Ms Motto.

"This will allow us to attract and retain the most skilled workers and ultimately ease private sector recruitment difficulties, steady the rising cost of labour, decrease the reliance on skilled migrants and decrease public sector delivery delays."

In their submission Consult Australia also identifies the root causes of the shortage.

A reduced pool of future engineers, the privatisation of public services, the transfer of the training responsibility to the private sector and the inefficient use of the skilled workforce are noted as some of the key causes.

"There is a distinct disparity between the supply and demand of professionals within our industry," said Ms Motto.

"Better use of the existing pool of engineers across the public and private sector, supported by a steadier stream of graduates entering the industry are critical first steps that will at the very least, ease the issue."

MEDIA RELEASE



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"Consult Australia looks forward to continuing this important conversation and bringing about genuine systematic change to foster a more productive and sustainable country."

Ends

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For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact Cathy Mitchell on 02 9922 4711 / 0415 719 428

ABOUT CONSULT AUSTRALIA

Consult Australia is the association for professional services firms within the built and natural environment; influencing policy, creating value and promoting excellence.

As an association, Consult Australia's primary focus is on improving the commercial environment for its members and raising standards across the industry.

Consult Australia's member firms services include, but are not limited to: design; architecture; technology; engineering; planning; landscape architecture; surveying; cost consulting (quantity surveyors); project management; and management solutions. The Association represent some of the industry's biggest players in this space with its member firms collectively employing more than 50,000 staff.