

ROAD-USER CHARGING DISMISSED AT OUR PERIL

Industry association, Consult Australia heralded today's report from Infrastructure Partnerships Australia and Deloitte, with Australia's leading motoring clubs, as signalling a critical shift in the appetite for a smarter debate about how we fund our infrastructure.

Consult Australia's Chief Executive, Megan Motto appealed for the public to engage in the road pricing debate and not dismiss it out of hand.

"Often in these debates, good ideas and public benefit are lost where proper policy debate is overtaken by sloganeering and a misunderstanding of the basic facts. Let's not fail the public while kidding ourselves that the status quo is working," said Ms Motto.

"People must understand that through fuel excise and vehicle registration we are all already opening our wallets every day just to get off the driveway.

"This report is about removing these more arbitrary costs to put in place an approach that reflects how much we actually use our cars: much the same as we are charged for how much electricity we use.

"In recent weeks the Productivity Commission already identified the importance of a more informed debate about road-user charging, with the complexities of that debate being too quickly overlooked in the bullet-point grabs captured in the media.

"Commuters are by definition people who are not seeing their families. We know the cost of congestion on businesses and our economy. We are now long overdue in thinking smarter about how to fix these problems.

"In the case of road-user charges, simplistic arguments are often made with the best intentions of protecting the long-distance worker, or those least able to pay. In fact these are the people who are suffering the most today, and who will suffer the most in the long-term through limited transport options and increasing reliance on ever-more congested roads if action is not taken.

"This report gives us some new ideas about how to solve what are complex problems that are not going away. Let's take a breath, gather the facts and deliver some smarter policy for everyone's benefit."

Ends

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For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact PR & Policy Advisor, Gillian O'Young on (02) 8252 6715 or via email at gillian@consultaustalia.com.au.

About Consult Australia

Consult Australia is the leading not-for-profit association that represents the business interests of consulting firms operating in the built and natural environment.

MEDIA RELEASE



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We represent an industry comprising some 48,000 firms across Australia, ranging from sole practitioners through to some of Australia's top 500 firms. Collectively, our industry is estimated to employ over 240,000 people, and generate combined revenue exceeding \$40 billion a year.