

SKILLS SHORTAGES TO PINCH INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE

As governments gear up for more investment in flagship infrastructure projects, industry warns that continued technical skills shortages will need to be addressed.

Industry association Consult Australia Chief Executive Megan Motto observed: “Consult Australia’s 2014 Skills Survey results indicate up to 30 per cent of firms identifying skills shortages in: management, civil, electrical, structural, fire, traffic and transport engineering. These are areas where a robust and responsive skilled migration program will continue to be essential to support business competitiveness and future market demand.”

Consult Australia’s annual survey of skills needs—covering over 25,000 employees of those firms charged with designing and delivering the nation’s infrastructure—highlights both technical shortages and the current challenges for firms to stay competitive.

“As new projects come to market, the impact of the significant contraction in industry capacity in recent years will be felt by governments as they seek to deliver projects against aggressive timelines.

“What is currently a very difficult operating environment will exacerbate future skills needs with 50 per cent of firms reporting a continued focus on targeted redundancies, and over 30 per cent of firms experiencing net employment reductions. Just 8 per cent of large firms (those employing over 200 staff) reported any growth in staff numbers in the last year.

“In response to current shortages of work and recent uncertainties in the infrastructure pipeline, 46 per cent of large firms are increasingly considering mergers and acquisitions, over 50 per cent report a focus on diversifying their services, and 73 per cent of large firms report an increasing reliance on international work.

“We are pleased to see governments now committing to more ambitious future infrastructure investment off the back of asset sales and leasing. It is vital that the scheduling of these commitments across jurisdictions accounts for future skills needs to ensure value for money is delivered for the tax payer.

“On a more optimistic note, helping to close the skills gap we are pleased to see that the industry continues to support home-grown talent. On the whole, firms are expecting to increase their graduate intake in the year ahead, perhaps reflecting a more optimistic view of the market.”

The Consult Australia Skills Survey is an annual account of skills needs affecting consulting firms in the built and natural environment. The survey data represents the experiences of companies that collectively employ nearly 25,000 people. The full survey results can be read [here](#).

Ends

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

MEDIA RELEASE



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About Consult Australia

Consult Australia is industry association that represents the business interests of consulting firms operating in the built and natural environment.

Our member firms include: AECOM, Brown Consulting, Golder Associates, Kellogg Brown & Root, Opus International Consultants, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Rider Levett Bucknall, URS Australia and WorleyParsons.

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.