

A WELCOME SHIFT IN THE FOCUS ON 457

Consult Australia welcomes today's announcement of greater powers for the Fair Work Ombudsman to deal with 457 visa misuse, and has called for additional staff and resources to support the agency.

Consult Australia Chief Executive Officer, Megan Motto said that recent distorted public debate and the actions of some rogue firms put the integrity of the visa program at risk.

"For Australia's consulting engineering firms, the 457 visa has been proven as an effective tool, providing temporary access to overseas expertise to compensate for domestic skills shortages," said Ms Motto.

"Any misuse of the program should be dealt with, but isolated instances should not detract from its success.

"Without the 457 program, the inability for business to access skills not available domestically, would lead to significant delays in the delivery of critical infrastructure projects.

"A focus on risk-based enforcement is a good thing, but recent politicised debate over the value of the program has simply created uncertainty for employers, potential skilled migrants and companies wanting to do business in Australia.

"Consult Australia welcomes the announcement of greater powers for the Fair Work Ombudsman, and looks forward to seeing additional investment to enable them to effectively monitor and enforce compliance with 457 visa conditions."

Ends

18 March 2013

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact PR & Policy Coordinator, Gillian O'Young on (02) 9922 4711 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.

Our member firms include: AECOM; Arup; Aquenta; Coffey; Cox Architects; GHD; Hyder Consulting; Parsons Brinckerhoff; 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.