

A WIN FOR HIGH SPEED RAIL - NOW TIME FOR BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

Industry association representing Australia's infrastructure design firms, Consult Australia has labelled Rudd's high speed rail announcement a 21st century vision, but cautions against the issue becoming a political football.

Consult Australia's CEO, Megan Motto warns that sound policy debate might lose out if the rail network becomes a political tool in the lead up to the election.

"Unfortunately with the current climate, high speed rail is now even more at risk of becoming a political plaything that parties use to score points off each other and without consideration of the best interests of Australia's infrastructure needs," said Ms Motto.

"What we desperately need is to secure bi-partisan support for this critical nation building project."

Consult Australia has long advocated for a more stable and consistent pipeline of work and greater investment in productivity enhancing infrastructure.

"If we're going to think about 21st century infrastructure, we need to consider those modes that offer the best return on investment in terms of jobs and productivity," said Ms Motto.

"No mode should be ruled out in the absence of considered planning and long-term thinking.

"Realising a high speed rail network would see significant economic growth not only in our cities, but in those regions that would be serviced by the network.

"With recent policy announcements that are increasing recurrent expenditure, it is important we shift the focus to one-off capital investments that drive productivity.

"We need to invest today, for what we want Australia to be in the future. The preservation of Badgery's Creek, and indeed the foresight reflected in building the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Snowy Mountains Scheme demonstrates the triumphs of a long-term view.

"In the case of high speed rail, we need to secure bi-partisan support, preserve corridors, and identify funding options that leverage the economic benefits to minimise government investment.

Ends

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For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact PR & Policy Coordinator, Gillian O'Young on (02) 9922 4711/0423 223 620 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



Driving Business Success for Consulting Firms in the Built and Natural Environment

Our member firms include: AECOM; Arup; Aquenta; 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.