

## INDUSTRY CLAIMS 457 REFORMS UNNECESSARY

The firms responsible for the design of critical Australian infrastructure have slammed proposed reforms to the 457 visa in a submission handed into the Senate Inquiry today.

CEO of industry association Consult Australia, Megan Motto said that the reforms are a misinformed reaction to what has become an over-politicised debacle.

“Something needs to be done to identify those who do abuse the system, but adding unnecessary burden to all business, as well as to government themselves is absurd,” said Ms Motto.

“An efficient solution would be to enforce existing sponsorship requirements in order to detect and eliminate misuse where it occurs.”

Consult Australia released evidence earlier this year confirming that within the built environment consulting industry, 457 visa holders are not receiving jobs over Australian workers.

The Association’s annual skills survey showed that 18 per cent of survey respondents did not recruit anyone from overseas in the 2012 calendar year, and 59 per cent recruited overseas candidates for just 1-4 per cent of vacant positions.

This is a marked change from previous years when up to 20 per cent of Australia’s biggest consulting engineering firms were bringing in between 16 and 30 per cent of new staff from overseas.

“Businesses need certainly that they will be able to access a stable and flexible system to meet fluctuating skills and labour demand.

“The mismanaged process by which these reforms have been tabled has undermined employer confidence and created business uncertainty which is harmful to the broader economy.

“We urge the Government to see past the media frenzy and consult with business on the best course of action.”

### **Ends**

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For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact Director of Marketing and Membership, Cathy Mitchell on (02) 9922 4711 or via email at [cathy@consultaustalia.com.au](mailto:cathy@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; 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.