

NEW SOUTH WALES & AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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

Attn: Prof Graham Sansom, Chair
Local Government Review Panel
C/-Locked Bag 3015
Nowra NSW 2541

E: info@localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au

Dear Professor Sansom,

RE: Local Government Review – Future Directions

Consult Australia is the association for professional services firms within the built and natural environment; influencing policy, creating value and promoting excellence. As an association, our primary focus is on improving the commercial environment for our members and raising standards across the industry.

We applaud the Local Government Review Panel for their work on this important issue, in particular the call for significantly consolidated local government which we believe will ultimately bring significant benefits for the productivity and liveability of communities across New South Wales.

We note the urgency of these changes within the Sydney Metropolitan area and caution against reliance on voluntary amalgamations, which we believe will unnecessarily slow down the benefits that will flow from substantive local government reform. We believe the long-term productivity benefits associated with more ambitious and faster reform should not be overlooked.

Consult Australia's support for substantial reform of local government across the Sydney basin has been longstanding. We initially canvassed this issue back in 2009 with the release of [Sydney Towards Tomorrow](#), where we advocated for a maximum of 11 regional councils for Sydney. This was followed by a Community Forum on the Central Coast where there was widespread support for regional government for the central coast. A copy of our [2010 report](#) from that Forum is also enclosed.

In 2011 we continued our support for stronger cities and urban regions through our report [Tomorrow's Cities Today](#). In that report we call for the delivery of best-practice local government highlighting the improved strategic planning and opportunities for smarter infrastructure delivery created by better local governance. Just this year, we have continued to support an active debate supporting the need for urgent reform. Our coalition with Regional



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Development Australia Sydney and the 10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney saw the launch of [Sydney 2051: A Greater Global City](#). This report, and the workshop of experts that give rise to its key findings makes clear that reforming governance is a non-negotiable aspect critical to assuring Sydney retains its standard of living and locks-in the productivity drivers for the next four decades.

In addition, most recently Consult Australia was pleased to form part of the Coalition for Local Government Reform alongside the Sydney Business Chamber; Committee for Sydney, Urban Taskforce Australia, NSW Business Chamber and Property Council of Australia. We were pleased to provide our earlier submission to this review as part of that strong coalition.

While the bodies represented in the Coalition may hold differing views on the exact model that should be utilised in achieving reform of the sector, we share a common purpose in supporting a new system of local government that features:

- A strong strategic basis to enable big city decision making;
- A stronger, more collaborative and therefore productive partnership between the various tiers of government;
- An alignment between the service delivery functions of local government and functions delivered by other tiers of Government;
- Capabilities to provide both shared and contestable services;
- Deep and lasting cultural change marked by increased professionalism, greater accountability, clearer lines of authority and satisfactory appeal paths;
- Strong, vibrant and healthy local communities;
- An imperative to both support and facilitate growth; and
- Financial sustainability.

Consult Australia continues to support the Local Government Review Panel in their work to deliver a better, and stronger local government sector in New South Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Lowe".

Amy Lowe
State Manager

