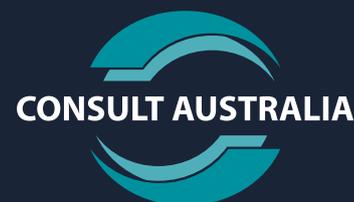


# 2018 POLICY WINS & ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

January – December 2018



*Consult Australia's policy and advocacy is supported by long-standing, productive relationships with federal, state and territory parliaments. Our members' substantial expertise and unique perspective on the built and natural environment informs everything we do. Our policy and advocacy focus is on four key industry issues; people, pipeline, practice and procurement.*

## PEOPLE

### *Strengthening the talent pipeline*

- *Striving for Mentally Healthy Workplaces* is our thought leadership report on the importance of mentally healthy workplaces. Launched in October 2018, it provides insights for businesses and recommendations for industry and for policymakers. As a result, meetings have been held with the offices of the Australian Government's Health Minister, the Shadow Mental Health Minister, Cathy O'Toole MP, the co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Illness, and the Department of Jobs and Small Business.
- Following discussions with the Queensland State Government regarding the recommendations in the *Striving for Mentally Healthy Workplaces* report, a key Department proposed a tender 'black out' period from 17 December to 11 January to make allowance for the holiday period. On becoming aware that five tender deadlines did not meet this, we requested an extension of the submission deadline to 31 January 2019 ensuring the full four to five-week tender period was still available excluding the holiday period. As a result, all but one was extended to late January.
- Briefings were held with the office of the Australian Government's Population Minister, the Department of Home Affairs, and the Department of Jobs and Small Business, to share the results of our skills shortage survey and to discuss the impact of the visa programme changes on consulting businesses. We put forward a number of recommendations including our proposal that the Department of Home Affairs reinstate the industry outreach officer programme to assist members with visa processing.

## PIPELINE

### *Strengthen the Built Environment Pipeline*

- We called for greater separation between politics, planning and projects, presenting a model infrastructure body or 'IBody' for adoption by all jurisdictions following a comprehensive review of their existing governance procedures. Our Report *IBodies, Infrastructure Governance in Australia* launched in January 2018 with an exclusive write up in the Australian Financial Review.
- Print media articles followed in the Canberra Times (picked up in the SMH, The Age, Brisbane Times and WA Today), and the Adelaide Advertiser. Five Trade media publications, including The Fifth Estate, Build Australia, Infrastructure Magazine, WA Business News, and 'Roads and Infrastructure' magazine have covered the report. The Report was also featured through four radio broadcast outlets.
- The Western Australia Government shortly after announced that it would establish 'Infrastructure WA', following significant advocacy by Consult Australia and fellow industry coalition partners. The South Australian Government has also announced its intention to create 'Infrastructure South Australia'.
- We received a commendation from the CEO of Infrastructure Australia, who said, "This work represents an important and timely thought leadership contribution to the sector, as well as, and most importantly to policy makers. I would like to commend Consult Australia for this work."
- Infrastructure Victoria's Chief Executive also sent a note of commendation to Consult Australia saying that he has shared our paper with government officials from New Zealand, Argentina, and Columbia who are all considering ways of strengthening their infrastructure governance.

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- Separate briefings have been held with Infrastructure Australia to explore better business case development, and the findings of their *Making Reform Happen* report regarding the future challenges and opportunities around asset recycling. Both briefings have informed the development of further thought leadership on these topics currently being developed through Consult Australia working groups.
- The Australian House of Representatives Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities released *Building Up and Moving Out*, which looks at the Australian Government's role in the development of cities. This report heavily references our submission to the inquiry and evidence given at the inquiry's hearing, with 10 of the report's 37 recommendations relating to our input.

## PRACTICE

### *Improve the regulatory and business environment for firms*

- The Building Ministers of Australia invited us to attend their Forum meeting to share views on the *Improving Building Confidence* Report (the Shergold & Weir Report). We highlighted members concerns about the lack of consultation, transparency, and certainty of governments' response to building product safety and the impact that this is having on the PI Insurance market. We followed this up with a formal response to the Report, which we have circulated to all governments.
- We were invited to give evidence to the Australian House of Representatives Committee on Economics for their inquiry into impediments to business investment in Australia. The business impediments we identified included capacity issues arising from a decline in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills in Australia, the need for procurement reforms to improve outcomes and capacity, inconsistencies in state regulations, and the lack of government support for research and development in our industry.

- Consult Australia and the Smart Cities Council ANZ launched a Smart Cities Guide for Consultants, a tool kit to assist consultants better understand the role of data, design and technology in Cities.

## PROCUREMENT

### *Improve procurement for better project outcomes*

- Launching our *Model Client Policy* we have called on all political parties to ensure that the governments they lead, or support, behave ethically, fairly, and honestly in their dealings with the private sector by adopting our *Model Client Policy*. The launch was covered on ABC Radio and social media.
- Government departments in Western Australia and Queensland have indicated that they are working towards becoming Model Clients in response to our Policy.
- The Australian Department of Infrastructure invited us to participate in two industry roundtables attended by contractor and consultant groups to explore challenges of procurement processes and winning work, allocation of risk and value for money, and skills and market capacity. As a result, the Transport and Infrastructure Council, (i.e. the Transport, Infrastructure and Planning Ministers from all jurisdictions) has endorsed high level principles to improve market capacity, procurement processes, and to adopt a more market-responsive approach to risk allocation. Ministers also agreed to report back to the Council in 12 months on actions taken by jurisdictions to support the high-level principles.
- We have successfully bid for funding from the CRC for Low Carbon Living to explore the opportunities/barriers to innovation across the built environment sector. This topic is being explored through a series of consultant/client focus groups in order to understand how we can reduce the constraints and identify proactive solutions.