

MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



GOVERNMENTS SHOULD LOOK TO INDUSTRY TO HELP IMPROVE MATHS AND SCIENCE STANDARDS IN AUSTRALIAN CLASSROOMS

NATIONAL – Consult Australia calls on Australian governments to harness the expertise of industry to help improve Australia’s STEM education outcomes.

Consult Australia’s call comes after the latest OECD international education rankings (PISA), which found that maths and science standards in Australia continue to decline.

Consult Australia’s recently released report identifies the following challenges facing STEM education in Australia ([copy here](#)):

1. STEM fields and industry role models are not being sufficiently showcased to students. This reduces interest, engagement, and participation in STEM education.
2. Many school career advisers have significant knowledge gaps regarding potential STEM based careers and industry opportunities.
3. Australia has a shortage of STEM qualified teachers, with many ‘teaching out of profession’ for STEM subjects. This limits the ability to confidently deliver learning outcomes that compare STEM concepts to real world examples.
4. A STEM curriculum that is not covering the right content and tends to promote project-based activities instead of inquiry learning.

As demonstrated by the PISA results, many countries have identified STEM education as a key enabler for long-term economic growth and have effectively lifted participation and standards over recent decades. Australia however is falling behind other countries by failing to increase student participation in STEM education and improve the quality of its curriculum.

Nicola Grayson, Chief Executive of Consult Australia, said, “Despite considerable efforts and investments by governments across Australia to date, the recent PISA results demonstrate we are not seeing a corresponding lift in STEM education standards.

“We believe that focusing on the challenges we have identified, in partnership with industry, will unlock a robust ‘STEM talent pipeline’ for Australia’s future.

“Consult Australia sees an opportunity to strengthen Australia’s STEM talent pipeline by improving collaboration between governments, industry and the education sector, and re-focusing on a coordinated approach to improving Australia’s STEM education performance.

“The growing STEM skills gap facing industry and the education sector has not and will not be addressed through one stakeholder alone. Instead, we are far more likely to meet Australia’s current and future demands for STEM skills by taking a partnership approach to identifying and responding to STEM education challenges.”

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NOTES TO EDITOR

1. About Consult Australia

Consult Australia is the industry association representing consulting firms operating in the built and natural environment sectors. These services include design, engineering, architecture, technology, survey, legal and management solutions for individual consumers through to major companies in the private and public sector including local, state and federal governments. We represent an industry comprising some 48,000 firms across Australia, ranging from sole practitioners through to some of Australia's top 500 firms with combined revenue exceeding \$40 billion a year.

2. About Nicola Grayson

Nicola Grayson is the Chief Executive of Consult Australia. Nicola is responsible for implementing the organisation's strategy, building ongoing external relationships, and for leading Consult Australia's advocacy and government relations agenda on behalf of member firms.

Nicola is a government relations specialist, and has represented industry associations in the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Australia. Nicola has worked across a range of sectors including general insurance, consumer finance, alcohol, and education, in addition to consulting engineering. She has an Honours Degree in Law from the United Kingdom, and was previously Consult Australia's Director of Policy and Government Relations.

3. For interview

For more information and to arrange an interview, please contact Nicola Grayson directly on 0499 878 839 or email nicola@consultaustalia.com.au.

4. About the *Australia's STEM education challenges* report

A copy of Consult Australia's *STEM education challenges* report is available [here](#).

Consult Australia's research report aims to start a conversation on how stakeholder groups can work together to improve STEM education in Australia by identifying some of the current challenges and potential causes. The research report:

- Analyses Australia's performance relating to quality and uptake of STEM education;
- Reviews the approach of Australian governments to improve STEM education outcomes;
- Highlights industry initiatives in place that promote STEM skills and related careers; and
- Outlines Consult Australia's future work plan to support this thought leadership series.