

MEDIA RELEASE



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

BIG ON INFRASTRUCTURE; LIGHT ON FUTURE-PROOFING **Built environment body lukewarm on budget built on optimism.**

8th May 2018

CANBERRA – The Chief Executive of the peak-body representing consulting firms in the built environment has cautiously welcomed a continued emphasis on infrastructure in tonight's [08th May] federal budget - however there won't be too much dancing in the [transport] corridors any time soon.

Of the \$24.5bn committed to new projects less than a fifth is projected to be spent in the next four years leaving projects susceptible to economic or political change.

Megan Motto, CEO of Consult Australia, said: "That a government can move from 'budget emergency' to personal tax cuts in less than five years, highlights political variability in the economy. Of the \$5bn allocated for the Melbourne Airport, for example, just \$250 million is projected to be spent over the next four years, and even this is subject to the project's approval by the Victorian Government. Consult Australia welcomes the focus on infrastructure, but we do cautiously, knowing a great deal of spend is based on future projections and externalities outside the Treasurer's control."

The Government also announced: \$250m Major Project Business Fund to contribute to the development of business cases for future land transport infrastructure investments; \$3.5bn for Roads of Strategic Importance Initiative to upgrade key routes, and a \$1bn Urban Congestion Fund.

"In some respects, it is surprising to see to separate funds for congestion, roads of 'strategic importance' and a major project business fund," said Motto. "All are welcome if they support existing work by Infrastructure Australia who already prioritise projects on this basis."

A further \$2.4 billion was allocated to Australia's public technology infrastructure for the development of supercomputers, world class satellite imagery, and more accurate GPS across Australia. "So much of this budget focusses on infrastructure in a traditional sense, yet future infrastructure and mobility will be as reliant on GPS and internet connected systems and artificial intelligence as it will be on roads and trains. It is critical we start to factor in these changes in mobility, related infrastructure and revenue streams for the years ahead."

Motto added: "Whilst this budget is built on optimism it emphatically underlines Consult Australia's longstanding view that investment in infrastructure is key to increasing connectivity, productivity and ultimately economic growth of cities and regions." ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Interview requests:** To interview Megan Motto, please call +61 420901276

2. **About Consult Australia:**

Consult Australia is the industry association that represents the business interests of consulting firms operating in the built and natural environment.

Our member firms include: AECOM, Aurecon, Arup, Beca, SMEC, Douglas Partners, GHD, Jacobs, Arup, Golder Associates, Kellogg Brown & Root, Arcadis, Northrop, Rider Levett Bucknall, Stantec, Tonkin, WSP, Norman Disney & Young.

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.

3. **About Megan Motto:**

Megan Motto is the Chief Executive Officer of Consult Australia; Member of the Government's new Cities Reference Group; a Director of Standards Australia; Councillor of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI); Treasurer of the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) and sits on the NSW State Advisory Council for the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA).