

For immediate release

LABOR URGED TO COME TO THE TABLE ON 'INFRASTRUCTURE SA'

The industry association for consulting firms in the built environment has reiterated its call for an 'Infrastructure SA' following the latest war of words between the Labor and Liberal parties.

With the Liberal Party citing '16 years of hopeless infrastructure planning and investment'¹ and Labor declaring a 'workforce valley of death for the construction industry'² would occur should the current opposition take power, Consult Australia has called again for greater separation between infrastructure planning and electoral cycles via an independent Infrastructure SA.

Jan Irvine, State Manager for South Australia, said: "Tit-for-tat politics over something so fundamental to the future of our economy as infrastructure cannot be a good thing. We welcome announcements made by the Liberal Party and Nick Xenophon's SA-BEST that they will look at this, but we need the Labor party to step up too or they run the risk of placing stress on jobs and being out of step with their Labor counterparts in Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland."

In January Consult Australia called for infrastructure bodies or iBodies in each state and territory as part of a nation-wide approach to infrastructure planning and delivery. This would include reporting to Parliament, as opposed to the government-of-the-day; developing a long term plan; publishing a project priority list; and alignment with Infrastructure Australia on how projects are assessed.

Irvine added: "It's not just about getting any infrastructure body, it's about getting the right infrastructure body. The Liberals and SA-BEST have started a conversation, but there is still further to go. Reporting to parliament would protect infrastructure planning from chop-and-change election-based policy, strengthening the democratic process, and reducing the risk of wasting taxpayers' money. It would ensure we can plan beyond the short term for sustainable economic growth which this state so urgently requires."

The report 'Infrastructure Governance in Australia' is available at www.consultaustralia.com.au

ENDS

¹ 'Liberals Top Ten infrastructure Projects'. News Release from the Marshall Liberal Team on 12/03/18

² 'Liberals will deliver a Valley of Death in Construction Industry.' News Release from Hon. Tom Koutsantonis MP on 13/03/18

NOTES TO EDITOR

1. Both the Labor and Liberal press releases referenced in this report available upon request.

2. About the report

Consult Australia launched its Thought Leadership Paper entitled, 'Infrastructure Governance in Australia', on 30th March 2018 which proposed the following model for independent infrastructure bodies ('Ibodies') in all jurisdictions.

3. Recommendations for South Australia

Consult Australia recommends that in South Australia an independent infrastructure body be created by an Act of Parliament. The Act will set out the function and structure of the infrastructure bodies based on four core components, independence, planning, assessment, and prioritisation.

Independence

- 1) The functions of the infrastructure body will be set out in legislation, and the Government (via the Premier) will not be allowed to direct or control its activities.
- 2) All strategies and plans prepared by the infrastructure body will be responded to by the Government within a specified period. The strategy, plans, and Government response must be presented to Parliament, thus promoting bipartisan support and accountability to Parliament.
- 3) If the Government wants to deliver an infrastructure project that is not included in the pipeline, or change the order of priority, it must seek Parliamentary approval.
- 4) The Board of the infrastructure body will be a balance of representatives from the public and private sectors. Private sector representatives must have appropriate skills relevant to infrastructure strategy/planning/delivery, including design and construction.

Planning

- 5) The infrastructure body will be responsible for developing:
 - o Long-term infrastructure strategies, and
 - o Shorter-term plans to underpin and deliver against the aims of the strategy.
- 6) The strategies and plans will be developed with a formal process of engagement across all stakeholders, political, public sector, business, interest groups, community groups etc. The other

infrastructure bodies should also be included to ensure that the strategy and plans have cross-jurisdictional alignment and interconnectedness.

- 7) The plans will have consistent assessment components (objectives) formed around productivity, livability, and sustainability (including integrated land-use) that can be reported and measured against.

Assessment

- 8) The Infrastructure body will provide project implementation plans for major infrastructure projects (the amount to be defined in the legislation).
- 9) Project evaluation and benefit realisation will be embedded within the decision-making processes, as a condition of funding and as a core component of project scoping.
- 10) Infrastructure Australia and the other infrastructure bodies, are to work together to develop national guidelines for business case development, consistent with Infrastructure Australia's assessment guidelines.

Prioritisation

- 11) The infrastructure body will assess and publish a pipeline of priority infrastructure projects.
- 12) The methodology for the assessment of priority projects should be based on an agreed framework of assessment principles.
- 13) The infrastructure body will have responsibility for the review, evaluation, oversight, and monitoring of infrastructure delivery (but not project delivery).

4. 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, 900 firms across Australia, ranging from sole practitioners through to some of Australia's top 500 firms with combined revenue exceeding \$40 billion a year.

5. For more information and to arrange an interview

Contact Kevin Keith on +61 420 90 12 76 or email kevin@consultaaustralia.com.au