

CONSULTANTS CALL FOR A LITTLE LESS PLANNING AND A LOT MORE ACTION PLEASE

In response to the release of the NSW State Budget today, Consult Australia welcomes the focus on delivering stronger fiscal discipline and oversight of growing government expenses, but is urging stronger action to support infrastructure investment.

Consult Australia is the association for professional services firms within the built and natural environment; influencing policy, creating value and promoting excellence and represents some of Australia's biggest players in this space, including SMEC, URS, GHD, Worley Parsons and AECOM.

Consult Australia Chief Executive Officer, Megan Motto said,

"The NSW Government continues to keep the purse strings tight in relation to infrastructure. The prioritisation of the State's AAA credit rating continues in spite of the groaning weight of pending infrastructure projects pulling down productivity.

"Early investment by this government in the infrastructure pipeline is sensible, but relatively unambitious. The announcement of \$30 million for Sydney's next motorway, following the release by Infrastructure NSW of the State's priority projects later this year is a very, very small drop in what can only be a large ocean of projects.

"Following Federal Government support for the duplication of the Pacific Highway, we note that the prioritisation of funding to help realise this long-standing project makes good sense, as does consideration of the long term lease of Port Kembla as part of the scoping study into Port Botany.

"The NSW Government is making strong efforts to slow the trend towards increasing recurrent expenditure. Hopefully this is an initial step supporting more substantial future investment by the Government in the increasing infrastructure backlog in NSW.

"There is no time to waste in NSW. We are living now with the consequences of those past budgets that favoured populist economics and surpluses, rather than building future productivity.

"Now is the time to leverage the Government's borrowing capacity to grow NSW for the longer-term.

"The Government's relatively quick action in order to progress with the North West and South West rail links in this first term demonstrates what could be possible for a raft of infrastructure projects.

"A little less planning, a little more action and a lot more funding would serve this Government and the people of NSW well into the future."

Ends

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For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact PR & Policy Coordinator, Gillian O'Young on (02) 9922 4711 or via email at gillian@consultaustalia.com.au.