

Consult Australia survey: Confidence and continuity at risk with pipeline uncertainty

Consult Australia members across most sectors report having capacity to take on more work, according to the 2024 membership survey.

Consult Australia's annual survey provides insights into current business capacity, staffing impacts, market confidence and future challenges.

In 2024, the survey gathered responses from businesses in design, advisory and engineering that employ a combined total of 23,510 people.

The survey results, published in Consult Australia's [Confidence & continuity report](#), reveal a "reversal of fortunes" since 2023, says Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Cartledge.

"Consulting businesses are at the front end of projects and are, therefore, susceptible to pipeline uncertainty more than the broader industry delivering Australia's infrastructure.

"A significant percentage of our members say they have capacity to take on more work – and in some sectors, after years of capacity constraints, there is not enough work. Having some capacity gives businesses the breathing room to bid on new work, but this can become a concern when the continuity of work is not certain."

The sectors most likely to identify a lack of work were commercial buildings (57%), rail (53%) and roads (52%). But 77% of respondents across almost all sectors expected to have capacity within the next 12 months.

In 2023, respondents reported "too much work" in most sectors, with water and dams (47%), transport (44%) and energy and resources (43%) leading the way.

Other key highlights from the 2024 survey include:

- 57% of businesses have redeployed staff to alternative projects due to pipeline changes and 46% have made resource cuts.
- 70% of respondents cited the 'escalating costs of doing business' as their biggest challenge, followed by pipeline uncertainty (57%), staff recruitment (51%) and the availability and affordability of professional indemnity insurance (41%).
- 47% of respondents noted insurance premium increases of up to 10%, and around two thirds (62%) noted fewer insurers offering cover.

"A massive 73% of respondents told us they were operating in a higher risk environment than just 12 months ago. Uncertainty and lack of pipeline visibility makes it more challenging for businesses to invest in the future. This is a message we will continue to take to governments as they outline their spending priorities and plan the projects needed to meet the impact of population growth we already see," Mr Cartledge concludes.

Download Consult Australia's 2024 membership survey report: [Confidence & continuity](#).

MEDIA STATEMENT

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About Consult Australia

Consult Australia is the industry association representing consulting businesses in design, architecture, engineering and technical services – an industry comprised of 58,600-plus businesses that directly employ more than 285,000 people. Consult Australia’s members provide professional consulting solutions to individual consumers, private sector companies, and public sector clients across all three tiers of government. From building design to advisory services on major infrastructure, Consult Australia members shape, create and sustain Australia’s built and national environments. See: www.consultaustralia.com.au

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