

LET'S GET SMARTER ABOUT TOLLS

Industry association, Consult Australia warns that rumours of a 'secret agenda' for tolls on South Australian roads ignore the urgent need for a more sophisticated debate about how we fund and finance infrastructure across the State.

Consult Australia's South Australian State Manager, Jan Irvine said that the debate must become more sophisticated and that the public must be engaged so they truly understand the options.

"At the end of the day infrastructure will be funded by the tax payer. Whether that is through user charges and tolls, or through state and federal taxes, let's be clear: we will all be paying," said Ms Irvine.

"We all talk about how important it is to encourage private sector investment into the state: how about we facilitate a policy discussion that encourages that.

"Some consider user charges an inevitability. When delivered intelligently, they can support the delivery of infrastructure that eases congestion and boosts productivity.

"Rather than rule out user charges we should instead have a reasoned discussion considering in what circumstances they might be appropriate. There is a reason why tolls proliferate in other states; largely because they attract investment and get roads and rail built.

"We do not need to rule tolls out: we do need to have a smarter debate about how best they might be used in South Australia."

Ends

14 November 2013

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact SA State Manager, Jan Irvine on (08) 8216 1177 or 0408 845 975 or via email at jan@consultaaustralia.com.au.

About Consult Australia

Consult Australia is the leading not-for-profit association that represents the business interests of consulting firms operating in the built and natural environment.

Our member firms include: Aurecon, Aquenta, Beca, Cox Architects, GHD, Hyder Consulting, MWH, Norman Disney & Young, Sinclair Knight Merz, SMEC and WorleyParsons.

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.