

### ENGINEERING SKILLS CRISIS REQUIRES URGENT ACTION

Consult Australia welcomes the ***Securing the future of Australia's engineering workforce*** report released by the Group of Eight (Go8) universities today and calls on government to take urgent action to address the skills crisis facing the nation.

As the representative body for an industry that employs over 50,000 engineers, scientists and designers, Consult Australia participated in the Go8 convened, Engineering Workforce Summit contributing directly to the report.

Nicola Grayson, Chief Executive of Consult Australia, said, "Engineers are essential workers when it comes to keeping our economy productive and our communities safe. From civil engineers designing transit systems to electrical engineers shaping our future energy networks, engineers are designing solutions to the problems of today and tomorrow."

According to the Reserve Bank of Australia, approximately 25 per cent of Australia's economic output is created in the engineering dependent resources, construction, and manufacturing industries.

Efforts to grow the workforce are constrained by long training periods and hyper-unique skillsets to sub-sectors. It is further compromised by a range of cultural, geographical, diversity and education issues that constrain the sector's ability to rapidly grow its workforce.

"Successive governments have chipped away at the funding that is so crucial to engineering faculties at our leading academic and research institutions, said Ms. Grayson. "The facilities, machinery and high-tech equipment required to teach engineering makes it a relatively expensive course to deliver well."

The recent closure of international borders due to COVID-19 restrictions has revealed just how reliant Australia is on migrant engineers and international students to study engineering.

"The scale of the deficit in our own capability to educate future engineers is confronting and poses a genuine threat to our prosperity, especially when you consider that our existing workforce is aging with over 40% of current workers likely to retire over the next 15 years.<sup>1</sup>," said Ms. Grayson.

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<sup>1</sup> Infrastructure Australia, [2021 Infrastructure Market Capacity Report](#)

# MEDIA STATEMENT

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Consult Australia fully supports the Go8's three key recommendations:

1. Adopting a new model for funding engineering education, that recognises the additional costs per student.
2. Creating national priority places for engineering supported by a closer collaboration between industry, universities and government.
3. Establishing a national industry, university and government engineering council.

The above recommendations will underpin a more strategic approach to managing our future engineering workforce, capable of designing our response to existential threats like climate change.

"We must accept and address this challenge by working together to drive a coordinated and strategic response. We call on government to step up with funding and policy support. Sadly, it isn't going to be a quick fix, but we need to create a sustainable future for Australia's engineering sector. This is not something we can outsource, we need a sovereign capability that supports our ability to compete on a global stage," concluded Ms. Grayson.

Ends

### NOTES TO EDITOR

#### 1. About Consult Australia

Consult Australia is the industry association representing consulting businesses in design, advisory and engineering, an industry comprised of over 58,600 businesses across Australia. This includes some of Australia's top 500 companies and many small businesses (97%). Our members provide solutions for individual consumers through to major companies in the private sector and across all tiers of government. Our industry directly employs over 285,000 people in architectural, engineering and technical services and many more in advisory and business support. It is also a job creator for the Australian economy, the services we provide unlock many more jobs across the construction industry and the broader community.

#### 2. About Nicola Grayson

Nicola Grayson is the Chief Executive of Consult Australia. Nicola is responsible for implementing the organisation's strategy, building ongoing external relationships, and for leading Consult Australia's advocacy and government relations agenda on behalf of members.

Nicola is a member of and former chair of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) Risk, Liability, and Quality Committee. In Australia she chairs the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council's Urban Resilience Task Group and sits on numerous government forums representing the Consult Australia membership. Nicola is the Convenor for Consult Australia's Champions of Change leadership group for gender diversity and inclusion, a member of the Champions of Change Coalition.

Nicola is a government relations specialist, and has represented industry associations in the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Australia. Nicola has worked across a range of sectors including general insurance, consumer finance, alcohol, and education, in addition to consulting engineering. She has an Honours Degree in Law from the United Kingdom and is a member of the Australia Institute of Company Directors.

#### 3. For interview

For more information and to arrange an interview, please contact Nicola Grayson directly on +61499 878 839 or email [nicola@consultaustalia.com.au](mailto:nicola@consultaustalia.com.au).