

WORKING TOGETHER: HARDER, SMARTER AND FASTER FOR AUSTRALIA'S CITIES

Consult Australia has responded to the release of the COAG Reform Council's report into Capital Cities Strategic Planning Systems, by again urging governments to continue to work together, harder, smarter and faster to secure a better future for Australian cities.

The Association sees the report as just the beginning of ongoing collaboration between all spheres of government and industry supporting better strategic planning of cities across Australia.

Consult Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Megan Motto welcomes the much-anticipated report and applauds COAG's contribution to this vital debate.

"The COAG Reform Council has clearly demonstrated without any measure of doubt, the importance of an ongoing commitment by all spheres of government to work together and to share information and expertise towards better strategic planning for better cities," said Ms Motto.

"Industry collaboration and community buy-in are critical elements in this process. Consult Australia looks forward to being a part of the work going forward."

Consult Australia has long advocated for the prioritisation of cities across all spheres of government, which emerges as a critical message in the COAG report.

Similarly, the use of cities in a smarter way, allowing them to respond to those challenges Australia faces across economic and social policy.

"Whether we are talking about population growth, productivity, climate change, social inclusion, health, liveability or housing affordability, it is through better urban planning that we will see meaningful change in these areas," said Ms Motto.

"Critically, the extent to which our capital city strategic planning systems address nationally significant policy issues is the one criteria against which all capital cities were found wanting.

"There is clearly much more to be done. The recommendations outlined by the COAG Reform Council provide a new mandate for COAG to continue to progress cities policy through every sphere of government.

"We need a stronger evidence base against which to make more informed decisions in relation to cities planning, and policy frameworks and settings that provide for infrastructure prioritisation and investment, accountability and evaluation against clear indicators.

"In once again demonstrating the critical role of cities and the extent of work still to be done, this report should provide the catalyst for improved strategic planning across all Australia's major cities, not just our capital cities—the expansion of this work must be a focus for COAG's forward agenda.

"While the report provides absolute clarity as to the importance of the Commonwealth Government in cities, the impact of different local government arrangements across states and territories is less obvious."

MEDIA RELEASE



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In assessing COAG's report, Consult Australia notes that a detailed evaluation of the impact of varying approaches to local government across our cities was beyond the scope of the COAG Review.

Consult Australia's 2011 report, *Tomorrow's Cities Today* voiced the Association's vital contribution to this debate by outlining 16 recommendations which aim to achieve more productive, sustainable, liveable and better governed cities. Local government was a high priority.

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that you will get more integrated strategic planning across our cities with larger, stronger, better resourced local government," said Ms Motto.

"Consult Australia has long advocated for a Productivity Commission review of what constitutes best-practice local government and now is the time to commission that review."

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.

ABOUT CONSULT AUSTRALIA

Consult Australia is the association for professional services firms within the built and natural environment; influencing policy, creating value and promoting excellence.

As an association, Consult Australia's primary focus is on improving the commercial environment for its members and raising standards across the industry.

Consult Australia's member firms services include, but are not limited to: design; architecture; technology; engineering; planning; landscape architecture; surveying; cost consulting (quantity surveyors); project management; and management solutions. The Association represent some of the industry's biggest players in this space with its member firms collectively employing more than 50,000 staff.