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Driving business success for consulting firms in the built and natural environment

26 March 2020

The Hon Michael McCormack MP
Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development

The Hon Karen Andrews MP
Minister for Industry, Science and Technology

By email to: Michael.McCormack.MP@aph.gov.au; Karen.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Deputy Prime Minister and Minister,

Virtual roundtable request – Building and Infrastructure Pipeline re COVID-19

I am writing on behalf of Consult Australia member firms to commend the Australian Government's actions to date in response to the significant economic consequences of COVID-19, and to seek your engagement regarding the ongoing delivery of building and infrastructure projects and COVID-19 safety measures.

Consult Australia is the industry association that represents the business interests of consulting firms who provide design, advisory and engineering services for the built and natural environment. We represent an industry comprising some 48,000 firms across Australia, ranging from sole practitioners through to many of Australia's top companies. Many of our member firms are supporting the delivery of the Australian Government's \$100 billion infrastructure plan and are committed to assisting through this challenging time.

The government's \$189 billion economic stimulus and support packages, and fiscal and balance sheet support measures will play a key role in supporting the business community through the challenging outlook for our economy. We also welcome the government's commitment to responding to evolving economic challenges in an adaptive and scalable way.

COVID-19 challenges are already starting to impact the delivery of infrastructure and building projects across the country. However, our members can continue to support this pipeline of essential work for the Australian economy, as they are well placed to provide professional design and advisory services via a remote workforce. Advancing the design work prior to construction has the added benefit of keeping our workforce active and will provide relief to the construction sector once the threat has passed by enabling the construction phase to begin immediately.

If the Government deems it necessary to shutdown all but essential services, we stand ready to continue to provide our services in support of the economy. In defining us as essential services and giving us appropriate access to sites where we can ensure compliance with all necessary health and hygiene requirements, we can continue our work in the nation's interest.

We would welcome the opportunity to hold a virtual roundtable with you and senior leaders from our member firms to discuss opportunities to help support the Government's efforts, and to discuss cushioning the pipeline of infrastructure and building projects across the country.

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Never has there been such a significant catalyst for greater collaboration in bringing building and infrastructure projects to the market and we look forward to working with you on this.

I invite your offices to contact me directly at nicola@consultaaustralia.com.au or 0499 878 839 to discuss this virtual roundtable request or any of the matters raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'N' and 'G' followed by a horizontal line.

Nicola Grayson
Chief Executive