

### BUDGET REPLY 2022

On 31 March 2022, Anthony Albanese delivered the Budget Reply Speech. Below is a summary of the speech as it relates to [Consult Australia's Budget 2022-23 Submission](#) where we suggested that investment funding be directed to the following key areas:

- Statutory reforms and improved procurement to de-risk the market
- Prioritise a smarter pipeline approach to project investment
- Drive innovation by committing to digital investment
- Tackle skills capacity issues
- Invest in and championing mental health.

### ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

#### Investment in infrastructure to improve project outcomes

Consult Australia notes that long-term investment in infrastructure planning with increased participation of small business is essential to support economic recovery. The Budget Reply recognised that plans to invest in infrastructure will create a stronger, more connected and more efficient economy, contributing towards more job creation and productivity improvement. It highlighted that investment in renewable energy through private sector involvement is also critical to support households and businesses.

#### Employment, skills capacity and training

Consult Australia believes that a coordinated approach is important to address skills capacity, and highlighted that education and migration play a critical role to attract and retain a skilled workforce. This also includes increased participation of women in the industry. The Budget Reply acknowledged that access to education at all levels is critical in increasing the supply of well-trained professionals. Implementation of the recommendations of the Respect@Work report was promised. Further emphasis was given to childcare policy reforms in introducing new incentives to increase children's accessibility to early education.

#### Supporting Australia's defence industry

Consult Australia members are a valuable part of the Defence industry. To support Australia's Defence industry, the Budget Reply highlighted that spending should focus more on programs that support technology and capabilities to enhance overall security.

#### Climate change and disaster recovery measures

The Budget Reply noted the need to establish Disaster Ready Fund as a plan to mitigate the impact of natural disasters including challenges associated with climate change. Building climate resilient infrastructure should be one of the key aspects in delivering projects.

#### Reforms on health care

Given that health and well-being of people is critically important, Consult Australia ensures that mental health campaigns and initiatives are on the top of its agenda in delivering infrastructure projects. The Budget Reply noted that reform initiatives will be implemented to ensure accessibility and affordability of health care across Australia.