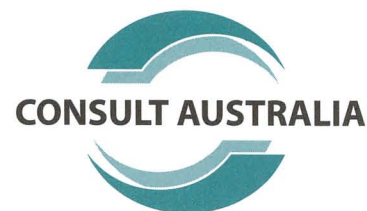


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Driving Business Success for Consulting Firms in the Built and Natural Environment

March 14, 2013

Services Trade and Negotiations Section
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
R.G. Casey Building
John McEwen Crescent
Barton ACT 0221

Sent by Email to: services.negotiations@dfat.gov.au

Re: Plurilateral services agreement negotiations in Geneva:

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

Consult Australia hereby provides its support by this submission for the need for Australia to play a leadership role in the upcoming negotiations regarding the development of a plurilateral services agreement in Geneva.

Consult Australia notes the fact that Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data reflects that services represent around 80 per cent of the Australian economy by GVA and 85 per cent of employment, including 93 per cent of graduates.

Over the past decade, employment in services has grown by 2.3 million jobs compared with negative growth in manufacturing and agricultural jobs and minor growth in resources jobs.

Growth in trade and investment for Australia's services sector is critical to the nations future prosperity and Consult Australia believes that the development of a Services Plurilateral Agreement offers the potential to be a highly significant catalyst to that growth.

Consult Australia urges the Australian Government to provide deep and well-resourced contributions to the services plurilateral process and encourages a strong related two-way communications process with local industry, which Consult Australia would be happy to play an active participation role in.

Yours sincerely,

Megan Motto
Chief Executive Officer
Consult Australia