

# POLICY VS SERVICES – Getting the Balance Right



ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING  
ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA

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## ACEA's Mission

- ➔ ACEA exists to improve the business outlook for our member firms:
  - ↳ Top down by improving the commercial environment in which they operate through influential lobbying activities and;
  - ↳ bottom up through services that help them to conduct their day to day activities.



# Services

## ➔ Education Services

- ↳ Seminars

- ↳ Prof. Certificate

## ➔ Information Services

- ↳ Practice Notes

- ↳ Contracts

## ➔ Commercial Services

- ↳ PI Insurance

- ↳ Discount Programs

- ↳ Contract advice

## ➔ Benchmarking





## Major Policy issues

- ➔ Risk, Liability & Contract Management
- ➔ Procurement
- ➔ OHS & Safety in Design
- ➔ Infrastructure
- ➔ Skills
- ➔ Sustainability
- ➔ International Trade



## Complementary or Contradictory?

- ➔ Member Loyalty can no longer be taken for granted – “What’s in it for me?”
- ➔ One size fits all approach will not work
  - ↳ Policy work will win and retain big firms – give them a reason to be members
  - ↳ Small firms want services
- ➔ Complementary
- ➔ Member engagement
- ➔ Financial aspects



## Getting the Balance right

- ➔ Know how much policy costs
- ➔ Structure the organisation accordingly
- ➔ Invest in lobbying – it **CANNOT** be a part time job for the CEO!



# Celebrating Policy Wins...

## FACT SHEET

### ACEA'S MAJOR LOBBYING WINS FOR 2006

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#### OH&S

- The Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1991 was amended in accordance with our recommendations. These amendments re-enforced the proposition that designers should not be primary duty holders under OHS legislation.
- We met with the Federal Safety Commissioner to discuss safety in design and the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme. This established an ongoing dialogue on this Scheme and OHS in general with the Commissioner.
- We met with ComCare Director of OHS Policy, to discuss the implementation of the National Standard for Construction Work into federal legislation.
- We met with WorkSafe WA regarding their draft Safe Design for the Construction Industry Code of Practice. Following ACEA's recommendations the draft document is now being substantially revised to be more suitable for use by and does not place onerous obligations on design professionals.
- We have established and chair a combined design professionals working group to work closely with Workplace Health and Safety QLD on the drafting of a draft QLD Code of Practice for Designers in the Construction Industry.
- NSW Workplace Relations Minister wrote to ACEA to follow up our meeting in July. The Minister encouraged ACEA to meet with departmental representatives to further discuss ACEA proposals relating to OHS and workplace safety.
- We met with Advisor to the NSW Minister of Commerce in October to discuss the NSW OHS Reforms and ACEA proposals regarding workplace safety training and legislative reform.

#### SKILLS SHORTAGES

- We met with the Prime Minister to discuss skills shortages in the consulting engineering industry and have developed strong connections with the PM's senior adviser on skills.
- We have developed a good rapport with the Federal Education Minister, Julie Bishop had meetings with her and her senior staff to talk about the Australian education system and its impact on our industry.

- The Prime Minister and Federal Education Minister, Julie Bishop gave us a 1000 new engineering university places per year for the next four years
- The Federal Government did a specific case study (DEST SET Skills Audit) on the consulting engineering industry relating to the skills shortage issue
- We met with the Premier of NSW, Morris Iemma to discuss skills shortages
- We met with the QLD Education Minister, Rod Welford to discuss QLD primary and secondary education in relation to maths and science subjects. Similar meetings in the other states are scheduled for 2007
- We have developed an outstanding rapport with the Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone. The Minister will be the guest speaker at our annual awards night.
- We achieved the following immigration outcomes:
  - 1) A new 18 month graduate visa from the 500 top engineering faculties - commencing in July 2007
  - 2) ACEA has continued to develop the role of our DIMA Outreach Officer (IOO) who acts as a conduit between our industry and DIMA to streamline the visa process
  - 3) The holiday makers visa has doubled in length - from three to six months and the minimum wage requirement has increased.

#### CONTRACTS & LIABILITY

- We met Federal Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer, Peter Dutton in June 2006 to discuss the progress of tort and liability reforms and raised issues in relation to public sector procurement and contracting practices. The Minister agreed to champion the reforms aimed at improving the business environment for professionals.
- We met NSW Finance Minister, John Della Bosca and Premier's Chief of Staff in July 2006, continuing to build on dialogue with NSW government on procurement and contracting issues.
- We met the convener of State and Commonwealth Attorney Generals Group in October 2006. ACEA presented its concerns regarding the ability of parties to contract-out of Proportionate

Liability (PL) legislation beginning dialogue at a National and State level on the national consistency of the legislation.

- Federal Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer wrote to ACEA to follow up our meeting in June. The Minister confirmed to ACEA that he has written to State Attorney Generals urging them to finalise their arrangements to approval Professional Standards Schemes. The Minister also welcomed the ongoing meetings that ACEA is holding with his Treasury staff on contracting issues and is supportive of a nationally consistent approach to proportionate liability.
- Federal Treasury invites ACEA to provide case study information for report on tort and liability reforms. The Federal Treasury is finalising a publication on the reviewing the tort and liability reforms to be published in December 2006. Treasury has invited ACEA to provide case study materials and ACEA's concerns at the time of the Professional Indemnity insurance crisis and its views on the ongoing value of the reforms.

#### SUSTAINABILITY

- We were asked by the Federal Government to provide cutting edge commentary on sustainable development projects at the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage.

#### FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

- We filtrated the international arena by influencing Free Trade Agreements with China, Malaysia and the newly formed Gulf Co-Operation Council (GCC)

#### REDUCING BURDEN OF RED TAPE ON BUSINESS

- ACEA was cited in Federal Government Taskforce Report Rethinking Regulation. ACEA submitted a response to the Government's Regulation Taskforce that was cited in the report published in January 2006 as a business case study highlighting the cost burden that excessive regulation imposes on consulting engineering firms.