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Mr John Alexander OAM MP
Chairman
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities
Inquiry into procurement practices for government-funded infrastructure

Dear Mr Alexander

Thank you for the invitation to provide the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities with a supplementary submission to its Inquiry into Procurement Practices for Government Funded Infrastructure.

As outlined during my appearance before the Committee on 5th October 2021, Civil Contractors Federation National (CCF) supports the establishment of a formal consultative mechanism involving industry and government with the aim of informing government policy and investment with regard to civil infrastructure.

At present, there is no formal consultative mechanism through which industry leaders can provide direct input to Government on key matters affecting the infrastructure industry, including procurement, investment and skills. Similarly, there is no formal consultative mechanism that allows collaboration between federal and state government and industry stakeholders to progress procurement reform in an 'informed manner' with industry input.

The **Infrastructure Industry Consultative Forum (IICF)**, which CCF proposes should be **Chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications** would act as an avenue through which senior government officials and industry leaders can collaborate and progress reform and innovation on key infrastructure matters. In this way, the Department can channel output from the forum up to ministerial level and indeed National Cabinet for consideration and decision if required.

The Forum would also help to ensure the Federal Government's infrastructure investments are maximised in this challenging economic environment. Furthermore, it could play a lead role in providing advice to Government on the implementation of policy reforms identified by Infrastructure Australia in its *Australian Infrastructure Plan*, other Infrastructure Australia Reports that are produced and delivered to Government, and indeed the recommendations that emanate from this Inquiry.

As Australia's peak national body for the civil construction industry, I propose CCF would be one of the peak industry bodies representing industry on the forum. CCF's federated structure would allow us to bring a valuable jurisdictional perspective to the Forum.



I attach for the Committee's consideration a proposed Terms of Reference for the Forum.

I remain at your disposal should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Melham
Chief Executive Officer
Civil Contractors Federation (National)



Draft Terms of Reference – Infrastructure Industry Consultative Forum

Context and Purpose

The purpose of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications is to support an efficient, sustainable, safe and accessible transport system and to improve living standards and facilitate economic growth in cities and regions across Australia. It also has responsibility for leading the Government's infrastructure policy agenda, including its reform agenda.

The purpose of the **Infrastructure Industry Consultative Forum (IICF)** is to support these objectives by providing a platform for high-level, forward- thinking input and output, and to foster the spirit of a national approach to the Government's infrastructure policy agenda. Key focus areas include but are not limited to:

- Infrastructure Investment
- Infrastructure Policy and Procurement
- Capacity Building and Sovereign Capability

The Forum is also intended to supplement and support other forms of engagement across the Department's reform agenda and business activities.

Key roles and responsibilities

Members of the Forum will provide advice on policies, programs, practices and systemic issues relating to the Department's areas of focus as it relates to infrastructure.

The Forum is not a decision-making body although it is empowered to deliver recommendations, advice and input for consideration by government that assists the federal/state government infrastructure policy relationship including investment programs, policies and reform agendas.

Members will treat all discussions of the forum as confidential.

Communication of meeting outcomes will be via a formal communique prepared by the secretariat and approved by the Chair prior to its release to Forum members and the wider public. Action items from the meetings will be circulated with the 'communique'.

Members agree to constructive behaviours in any discussions tabled, this behaviour extends to any discussion which may occur outside the meeting

Meetings will be formally minuted by the Department.

Terms of Reference and other matters relating to the operation of the forum will be reviewed annually, or as required.



Membership

Membership of the Infrastructure Industry Consultative Forum will be by invitation from the Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and will include but not limited to stakeholders with relevant knowledge and experience from:

- Peak infrastructure industry bodies
- State and Territory Infrastructure Departments
- Infrastructure Australia

In relation to industry bodies, membership is extended to industry bodies whose members have a direct involvement in the civil infrastructure construct – not secondary organisations who are the recipients of the infrastructure construct such as road and rail users etc. This will ensure the agenda remains focused on the key areas outlined in 'Context and Purpose', not secondary issues to the infrastructure agenda such as road or rail user charging.

Representation on the Forum will be reviewed annually or as required to ensure it continues to meet the Department's strategic agenda.

Meetings will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department. If the Secretary is not available, a delegated Departmental executive will chair the meeting.

Proxies may only attend with prior approval of the Chair. Members are responsible for ensuring the proxy is appropriately briefed and authorised to enable their constructive participation.

Agenda

The agenda for the Forum will be at the discretion of the Chair and generally related to matters upon which the Department and Forum members seek input and/or discussion. Members may submit items for consideration and they will form part of the meeting agenda. These items are to be submitted 21 days prior to the meeting and where appropriate have supporting documentation to inform the discussion.

If the Department has documents for reading the Department will provide them no less than 21 days prior to the meeting however from time to time this may not be possible.

Withdrawal

Members may resign from the forum by notice in writing to the Chair.

Expenses

No sitting fees or costs associated with travel to the forum will be paid by the Department.

Administrative costs (e.g., venue, food) associated with hosting Forum meetings will be met by the Department.



Meeting — frequency, arrangements

Meetings will be convened quarterly. The Department will endeavour to hold all these meetings face to face, however if appropriate teleconferencing will also be utilised to minimise travel costs. Out-of-session meetings and/or consideration of issues may also be scheduled from time to time. Meetings will be hosted by the Department. The secretariat will circulate a draft agenda and any papers for peak bodies to consider at least two weeks prior to the Forum.

Secretariat support

Department officers will provide secretariat support for the Forum.

Prepared by Civil Contractors Federation National

Christopher Melham

Chief Executive Officer

30th November 2021