

## SJ Group strengthens global infrastructure and Energy leadership amid AI and energy transition

18 November 2025 – Built environment consultancy SJ Group, of which SMEC is a member company, has announced new leadership appointments to its Infrastructure + Energy business line, marking a strategic step forward as the industry adapts to rapid advances in technology, sustainability, and the global energy transition.

James Phillis has been promoted to Chief Executive (CE), succeeding Hari Poologasundram, who now serves as Senior Advisor. Murray Kretschmer joins as Chief Operating Officer (COO), bringing over 25 years of experience from Arup, where he was COO for the Australasia region.

“Engineering and design have always shaped the world around us, but today, they must rise to even greater challenges,” said Sean Chiao, Group CEO of SJ Group. “As infrastructure evolves globally, driven by decarbonisation, digitalisation, and the energy transition, our clients are looking to us for bold thinking and quality delivery. James and Murray bring the global experience and perspective to lead our Infrastructure + Energy business into its next chapter, creating enduring value for our clients, communities, and the planet.”

James Phillis and Murray Kretschmer will oversee operations across more than 40 countries, where SJ Group delivers solutions in transport, energy, water, and environmental infrastructure.

“This is an extraordinary time for our industry, rich with opportunity and rapid change” says James. “The integration of AI is no longer on the horizon, it’s here - transforming how infrastructure and energy systems are conceived, delivered, and experienced across every part of modern life. From predictive modelling and design automation to data-informed decision-making, the technology is evolving from a productivity tool into a true design partner. SJ has engineering and technical excellence embedded in our DNA and understands what is needed to adapt to new challenges and embrace new, innovative ways of working.”

“Supporting James, I look forward to guiding SJ Group through this next phase,” adds Murray, “harnessing our expertise to support the energy transition, accelerate innovation, while remaining a purpose-driven organisation.”

James Phillis is based in Singapore and Murray Kretschmer in Brisbane, jointly leading the Infrastructure + Energy division globally.

**-ENDS-**

### About SJ Group:

SJ designs spaces and systems that unlock human potential, delivering connection and certainty on shifting ground.

For over 75 years, SJ and its member companies have turned foresight into form and function through urban, infrastructure and managed services consulting. Through its business lines, it builds clarity into complexity, identity into infrastructure, character into skylines and insights into the future.

SJ walks global expertise home in over 40 countries, with 16,000 specialists united by a culture of openness and excellence. As the next-generation partner for the built world, SJ pushes the boundaries of innovative design and technology – unlocking potential for Real impact, made together.

The group continues a collective legacy of creating futures worth inheriting, meeting the needs of today and the aspirations of generations to come.

For more information visit: [www.sjgroup.com](http://www.sjgroup.com)

**Contact:**

Katie Cowell

Director, Global Communications & Marketing, Infrastructure + Energy, SJ Group

[Katie.Cowell@sjgroup.com](mailto:Katie.Cowell@sjgroup.com)

+61 457 474 178