

Call for Innovative Contractors

By Dr Keith Hampson
Chief Executive Officer
CRC for *Construction Innovation*

The BRITE Project is one of the most significant research areas within the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for *Construction Innovation*. The aim of the BRITE (building research, innovation, technology and environment) Project is to improve the rate and quality of innovation in the Australian building and construction industry.

Innovation is simply the introduction of products, equipment, processes or methods that are new to your business.

To achieve this, the BRITE team has actively worked with the construction industry over the past three years to compile a set of case studies demonstrating the benefits of innovation on building and civil projects.

Now the BRITE team is constructing a National Innovative Contractors Database, supported by public-sector clients across Australia. The purpose of the database is to facilitate networking and joint ventures between innovative businesses.

It will also be a powerful marketing tool, as only qualifying businesses will be listed.

Further to this, we intend launching the database in Brisbane in late 2006 at a large-scale industry event and it will also be part of a national seminar tour in 2007 involving industry leaders and government and non-government clients.

The database will contain general, trade and specialist contractors and subcontractors, and it will be used to source 20 innovative businesses for profiling and promotion over the next six months as part of the BRITE project.

The building sector has many contractors worthy of such recognition.

I have no doubts industry will respond to this BRITE Project initiative as enthusiastically as our previous calls for case studies.

If you are not familiar with these case studies, I urge you to visit the BRITE Project website. It details all 12 case studies - each is available as a handy colour brochure. You will also find other tips to improve innovation in your business.

The 12 case studies have been very enthusiastically received by industry and government agencies.

One BRITE case study details how Hunters Hill Council (Sydney) found a new way of dealing with urban stormwater run-off at a community centre that facilitates more sustainable use of water resources.

In another case study, better project outcomes with relationship management and 3D CAD modelling were achieved in an upgrade of Adelaide Oval. The \$22 million project was complex but was delivered on budget and within a tight design and construction timeframe.

The conclusions of these case studies are compelling. An innovative business not only produces significant benefits on projects, but also reaps substantial gains for itself, including improved profitability and reputation. To be more innovative, a business can: improve the depth and breadth of its relationships with strategic players, establish formal systems to make sure project-based learning are not lost, and establish incentive programs for employees to share ideas, to name a few.

Young and highly capable people are drawn to organisations that are innovative. At a time when the industry is suffering a skills shortage this is a significant factor.

Karen Manley (k.manley@qut.edu.au) is the BRITE Project Leader and can be contacted on (07) 3864 1762 to nominate for the database. For more information about the BRITE Project go to: <http://www.brite.crci.info>.

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The CRC for *Construction Innovation* brings together 19 industry, government and research partners in a collaboration to find innovative solutions to improve the economic, environmental and social benefit of the design, property, construction and facility management sectors as well as the Australian community. Website: <http://www.constructioninnovation.info>