

Australian construction innovation leads the way

By Dr Keith Hampson
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For those unfamiliar with the work of the CRC for *Construction Innovation*, our 'Clients Driving Innovation: Moving Ideas into Practice' conference is just one example of the diffusion of innovative ideas and world's best practice we are helping to bring to the Australian property, design, construction and facility management industry.

The three-day conference on Queensland's Gold Coast from 12 to 14 March, 2006, features some of the brightest and most experienced minds in our industry. Over 90 speakers from 11 countries will address the conference's key themes: sustainable construction, industry development, meeting clients needs, performance-based building, facility management, industry and technology diffusion, procurement and risk management, and construction health and safety.

While we actively pursue speakers from overseas to ensure we are kept up-to-date on international construction trends, the many Australian speakers demonstrate how innovative our industry is becoming.

Award-winning architect David Baggs from Natural Integrated Living will discuss one area where innovation is making significant inroads. As a sustainability consultant, David is well placed to discuss the significant impact life-cycle analysis tools such as Ecospecifier and LCADesign will have on our industry.

Irrespective of your view on the issues that surround sustainability, there is little doubt clients and regulators are increasingly insisting buildings are sustainable. These tools will assist designers and builders to computer-model buildings to determine the most sustainable building products to use. Building product manufacturers will also be able to respond to these needs by using the life-cycle analysis.

Dr Peter Newton of the CSIRO is another specialist in building sustainability. His work for *Construction Innovation* is focussed on the other end of the spectrum, making existing buildings 'green' after renovation.

Gerard van Erp's team at the Fibre Composites Design and Development (FCDD) centre is a further example of Australian construction innovation. Based out of the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba, the FCDD centre has developed a range of advanced composite structural systems. These new structural systems provide a new level of performance durability.

The FCDD is also another example – like *Construction Innovation* – of academic research responding to an industry need, developing the product and taking it through to commercialisation.

These are just three of the innovative ideas being developed by Australians in the world of construction. I invite you to our Clients Driving Innovation conference at the Crowne Plaza on

Queensland's Gold Coast where you will hear of many more. For a full rundown of speakers and to register visit the conference website: <http://www.2006conference.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>