

PROPERTY NEWS

CRC FOR CONSTRUCTION INNOVATION: CONSTRUCTION 2020 – ABRIDGED, THE FULL REPORT IS AVAILABLE FROM THE WEB <WWW.CONSTRUCTION-INNOVATION.INFO>

PROPERTY AND CONSTRUCTION PROVIDES 14 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S WEALTH, EMPLOYS 730,000 PEOPLE AND HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON OTHER INDUSTRIES. GLOBALISATION, ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND CHANGES TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY ARE PRESENTING NEW AND SERIOUS CHALLENGES TO THIS INDUSTRY.

"Looking to the future is an important step in any industry," says Professor Keith Hampson, chief executive officer of the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Construction Innovation. "Through the CRC's national initiative of Construction 2020, a significant step forward is being taken in establishing a vision for the future of the Australian property and construction industry."

Compiled through consultation with industry leaders and members, the following summarises the key Construction 2020 themes.

THE OVERARCHING VISION: AUSTRALIAN LEADERSHIP IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Industry has clearly identified a closer relationship between researchers and research users as a key step to achieving a world's best practice industry, requiring the industry to embrace the concept of industry, government and research bodies working together through research and innovation.

The challenges and opportunities identified by industry through this Construction 2020 process are significant and exciting. Integrating R&D strategies will enable an impact on industry performance through:

- developing tools for evaluating design standards and facility performance;
- identifying more appropriate skill requirements for a changing business environment;
- encouraging national uniformity of codes of practice and legislation;
- comparisons with other national and international industries for adaptation of advanced approaches to Australian property and construction; and
- process analysis to better understand and identify interactions and opportunities for improved practice.

Australian industry is recognising the need for change in business environment, environmental sustainability, and information and communication technologies. It also clearly identifies the need in this change process for improved

education and training. An active program of education and technology diffusion is required to achieve the visions, and may include:

- case studies or demonstration projects as valuable teaching tools through industry awareness programs (especially useful for small to medium enterprises [SMEs]);
- national consistency of education to service a mobile and project-based workforce (complementing nationally consistent standards and legislation); and
- integration of effort between technical and further education, vocational education and training and higher education sectors, together with professional and trade organisations.

CONCLUSIONS

Significant industry, government and researcher initiative and investment will be required to properly address the range of education and research challenges posed by industry from this Construction 2020 process. The focus of the Construction 2020 study has been on applied research

initiatives that service the industry. The CRC for Construction Innovation is well poised to deliver strategic and relevant research outcomes, but it will be impossible to succeed in this critical task without ongoing support from industry and government research users and other research organisations.

It will be the responsibility of the property and construction industry to ensure the industry's future by exploiting research and innovation to continuously improve in line with international competition, and to meet the increasing demands of clients and the community.

Government at all levels has a responsibility as a major client and industry regulator and legislator to use its position of influence to drive industry improvements and promote research and research user linkages.

Given that 94 percent of Australian construction businesses employ fewer than five people each, encouraging more involvement with SMEs is critical in ensuring the awareness and uptake of advanced technologies and management systems to upskill Australian industry.

AUSTRALIA'S CRC FOR CONSTRUCTION INNOVATION

The CRC for Construction Innovation is a national research, development and implementation centre focused on the needs of the property, design, construction and facility management sectors. Construction Innovation takes ideas and turns them into collaborative research to produce industry-relevant results for our partners and the whole industry. Our research projects are collaborative and innovative.

Established in 2001 under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program with headquarters at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, the CRC for Construction Innovation is developing key technologies, tools and management systems to improve the effectiveness of the property and construction industry.

The full report is available from the web at <www.construction-innovation.info>, email enquiries@construction-innovation.info or write to CRC for Construction Innovation, Level 9 - L Block, QUT Gardens Point, 2 George Street, Brisbane Qld Australia 4000.