

First define sustainability

A LACK of definition of sustainability and the question of who should drive innovation in the procurement process are two major questions for research and development arising from the Construction 2020 workshops held in every capital city in Australia in June and July 2004.

Client-led innovation was a common theme across the Construction 2020 workshops, with many participants lamenting the current state of the procurement processes in the industry.

Risk is passed down the line to sub-contractors through the lowest tender bid cycle, thus restricting the possibilities of innovation by industry. In this environment, many participants suggested innovation, and a change in the procurement processes, could be driven by clients instead of industry.

"We can get away from traditional tendering processes," one participant suggested. "But we need to get the data that will enable clients to not only be satisfied, but to have an objective insight into whether alternative procurement systems give value for money in the long haul."

Another workshop participant suggested the real issue is with the actual public understanding of sustainability. He suggested his involvement with the Year of the Built Environment this year had alerted him that most people think sustainability is related to the natural environment.