

INDUSTRY *comment*



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As the construction industry faces its latest challenges in meeting sustainability targets, improving productivity and negotiating a slowing economy, mechanisms that improve collaboration and communication in the construction process become ever more critical. The Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Construction Innovation is developing one such mechanism through a two-year, industry-focused research project which in mid-2009 will culminate in the release of the National Building Information Modelling (BIM) Guidelines.

Estimates show that 25–30 per cent of construction cost is caused by the splitting up of processes and bad communication, and further, the same information is entered on average seven times in different systems before being handed over to the owner organisation. The new National BIM Guidelines address these inefficiencies and the potential introduction of errors at several levels.

Written specifically to the Australian market, the Guidelines are based on experience, industry consultation and practical examples that promote consistency in the implementation of digital models for building projects. Workshops were held around the country to help inform and refine the content of the BIM Guidelines and ensure their relevance to industry practitioners.

The BIM Guidelines place architects, engineers, contractors and sub-contractors that use BIM along a continuum developed by the Australian Institute of Architects and in conjunction with this CRC project. The continuum ranges from using CAD (2D or 3D) through 3D building models, 3D models exchanged one or two ways, to those integrating several multidisciplinary models using local or web-based model servers. The Guidelines will provide a process outline for any firm wanting to move to a higher level along the BIM implementation scale.

The BIM Guidelines will support stakeholders in achieving interoperability throughout the life cycle of the facility and will be based on internationally accepted standards. By

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CONSTRUCTION

Rudd To Fastrack \$600 Million On Small Infrastructure Projects

As part of the strategy to encourage economic activity and offset the global financial crisis the Rudd Government has recently announced the fast-tracking of up to \$600 million in funding on small infrastructure projects such as local roads and bridges. A new regional and local community infrastructure fund will replace the previous Government's controversial Regional Partnerships program.

The fund will bankroll local councils to deliver small projects with short lead times as part of an overall plan to keep the economy moving and safeguard communities from potential job losses and reduced growth stemming from the global capital and stock markets crisis.

Originally intended to be a part of next year's Federal budget, economic urgency suggests it could be announced late this year with councils throughout the country lobbying for up to \$1 billion in financial support.

Earlier this year the Government committed to fast-tracking the work of Infrastructure Australia, handing out billions of dollars in major infrastructure works from the Building Australia Fund, at the same time adding that the scale of the projects involved means it will still take time for the money to start flowing into the economy.

governments were well prepared to get started on the backlog of public works projects almost immediately, noting:

"We have got the plans, we have got the designs, we know the priorities. In many cases, this is spending we have had to continually defer, so this money could hit the ground very, very quickly."



A parliamentary committee has been asked to take evidence from local community groups as to how the new funding program should

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highlighting open and consistent processes, the Guidelines will assist practitioners to work together in developing shared "virtual building and infrastructure" projects. In addition, they will enable documentation of suitable information technology platforms that allow for online collaboration between design and construct project team members.

Accompanying the Guidelines will be a published compilation of case studies about lessons learnt in implementing BIM in Australian building projects that will also serve to inform future developments in this area.

To be notified when the BIM Guidelines are released please email enquiries@construction-innovation.info

For those of you not already familiar with the CRC for Construction Innovation, we lead collaborative research and implementation for the property, design, construction and facilities management industry. Since 2001, we have been delivering internationally recognised outcomes for our growing number of partners across Australia and for Australian industry. www.construction-innovation.info

David Kelly

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With pre-fabricated products, skilled workers are brought on site for specific tasks which are achieved proficiently.

Also of particular significance for emerging