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BRITE Project series: Contractors deliver – innovation levels on the rise

Friday, 23 February 2007

THE construction industry is a strong performer in the innovation field, according to statistics released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in December last year. The statistics also revealed that innovation levels are on the rise across all Australian industries.



	2002-2003	2004-2005	Increase in percentage points
Goods and services innovation			
All industries	13.4%	19.4%	6.0
Construction industry	7.8%	16.5%	8.7
Operation process innovation			
All industries	18.9%	21.6%	2.7
Construction industry	17.3%	22.0%	4.7
Managerial process innovation			
All industries	18.4%	24.9%	6.5
Construction industry	19.3%	26.2%	6.9
Any innovation			
All industries	29.6%	33.5%	3.9
Construction industry	27.2%	30.8%	3.6

TABLE: Proportion of businesses innovating

Source: Dr Karen Manley, CRC for Construction Innovation, based on ABS (2006) Cat. 8158.0

The **BRITE** Project of the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Construction Innovation has provided *ConstructionIndustryNews.net* with a table (above) indicating the proportion of businesses innovating, by innovation type and industry, for the periods 2002-03 and 2004-05.



This information has been compiled as part of research carried out by the CRC for Construction Innovation, which was established in 2001 under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program.

The **BRITE** Project aims to improve the rate and quality of innovation in the construction industry and to address the traditional scepticism of many stakeholders in the industry about the potential for innovation and its likely benefits.

The ABS defines innovation as "the use of new or significantly improved goods, services, or processes."

According to the **BRITE** Project, the ABS statistics comprise Australian businesses employing more than five people.

The construction industry is defined by the ABS as main and trade contractors in

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the civil and building sectors, while consultants and construction suppliers are allocated to other industries.

The ABS statistics found that growth in contractor innovation keeps pace with other industries.

The proportion of contractors undertaking innovation increased by 3.6 percentage points from 2002-03 to 2004-05. The **BRITE** Project team said this was roughly equal to the growth in proportion of all Australian businesses undertaking innovation, which was 3.9 percentage points over the same period.

The statistics revealed that contractors put more effort into innovation in managerial and operational processes, than in developing new goods and services.

However, twice as many contractors were engaged in developing new goods and services in 2004-05 than in 2002-03. For this reason contractors are now more evenly spreading their attention across the three main innovation types – managerial, operational and goods/services.

The **BRITE** Project of the CRC for Construction Innovation is actively engaged in assisting contractors and other construction industry participants to improve their innovation performance across the three key areas.

Visit www.brite.crcci.info for assistance in improving your innovation performance.

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