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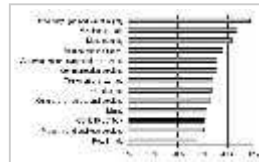
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BRITE Project series: The challenge ahead

Tuesday, 27 February 2007

INNOVATION statistics released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in December last year have indicated that despite growing interest in innovation by contractors, more businesses need to take up the challenge if the construction industry is to keep pace with productivity growth in other Australian industries.

The **BRITE** Project of the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Construction Innovation has provided *ConstructionIndustryNews.net* with a diagram (right) indicating Australian industries by percentage of businesses innovating from 2004 to 2005.



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

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

Despite the ABS figures revealing that more contractors are being innovative, the inter-industry ranking of contractors remains poor.

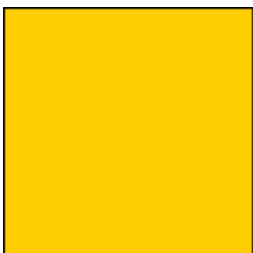
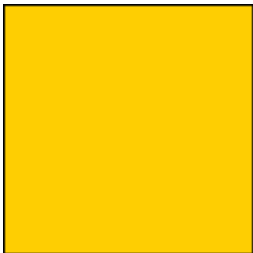
Other ABS data shows the industry is ranked third last across all Australian industries in terms of the proportion of expenditure on innovation, and second last in terms of the proportion of income generated from innovation.

According to the **BRITE** Project team, both findings reflect the industry's relatively low level of innovation activity in goods and services despite strong growth over recent years.

Examination of ABS data by the **BRITE** Project team revealed low rankings in terms of intellectual property, training and marketing expenditure.

However, findings also indicated the construction industry's performance for machinery and equipment expenditure was better, with a middle ranking across all industries.

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