

2 April 2014

Peak engineering body urges practical action on climate change

Following the release of the United Nation's *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change fifth Assessment Report*, peak professional body Engineers Australia has highlighted the need for action to future-proof our communities from the effects of climate change.

"This latest IPCC report on climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability is a wake-up call to all Australians. The risks we face as a nation can no longer be ignored. In the face of such overwhelming evidence we need to ensure that clear actions are taken to ensure our communities are prepared and safeguarded against the effects of climate change," said Engineers Australia National President, Professor Alex Baitch.

"Australia's climate is measurably changing, with increasing atmospheric temperature, changes to rainfall patterns, rising sea level and increased extreme weather. The IPCC has found that it is highly likely that those trends will continue, with major risks of flooding and damage to our coastal infrastructure and settlements.

"Australia has over \$200 billion of assets in the coastal zone that support the lifestyle and livelihood of 85 percent of our community. We should be designing those assets to withstand the climate of the future not the climate of the past.

"A sensible risk management strategy is to develop a consistent national approach to adaptation that includes biophysical monitoring of climate variables, identified thresholds at which adaptation response is required and appropriate design standards that incorporate the climate likely to occur over the life of an asset.

"While some risks from climate change are now unavoidable, the costs of adaptation can be reduced by early and effective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This will increase our competitive advantage by minimising risks and creating new economic opportunities," said Professor Baitch.

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