

Published: 10 September 2012

Sustainability mindset key to future: building industry body

Australia's building industry won't reach its potential in efficiency, productivity and safety if sustainability skills are not embedded across our economy, according to a peak Australian industry body.



Credit: istockphoto/@temis

The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) has called on the Federal Government to provide leadership in building community capacity to ensure a safe, productive and sustainable future.

'As one of the most urbanised nations in the world, Australia's buildings and infrastructure are critical to productivity and provide safety and comfort to the entire community,' says Carolyn Hughes, Chair of ASBEC's Skills and Education Task Group and Education Manager at the Australian Institute of Refrigeration Air Conditioning and Heating.

'Now is the time to make sure that these vital assets are designed, constructed, managed and maintained by a workforce that is adequately equipped to build for the future.'

ASBEC has urged for a COAG-endorsed Education for Life National Action Plan which delivers:

a strong culture of continuing professional development to adapt to ever-changing skills needs

strategies to address existing deficits in skills for sustainability

lower levels of risk for investors in our buildings and cities

recognition of appropriate industry-based professional standards and

higher levels of community understanding and trust.

According to Nicholas Burt, Chief Executive Officer of the Facility Management Association of Australia, education should be lifelong and not simply at the beginning of a career.

'Industry practitioners at all levels need to continually update their skills and knowledge to meet the nation's environmental, social and economic challenges.

'Both formal qualifications and experience play an essential role in ensuring effective built environment performance.'

Carolyn Hughes adds that standards should be coordinated at a national level. 'There needs to be a nationally coordinated approach to ensure professional development, education and training keeps pace with increased regulatory requirements and the growing market demand for sustainable practices.'

ASBEC is the peak body of key organisations committed to a sustainable built environment in Australia. Its members include industry and professional associations, non-government organisations and government observers who are involved in the planning, design, delivery and operation of our built environments, and who are concerned with the social and environmental impacts of this sector.

Source: ASBEC

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC12414>