



MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia's Resilience for an uncertain future

The recent Haitian earthquake and Victorian bushfires show how unexpected change can throw lives, infrastructure and governments into chaos. How they recover is a sign of their resilience.

Australia21 is hosting a major conference on resilience on February 18-19 2010, to help shape the way we as a nation prepare for an uncertain future. As a multi-disciplinary conference it will appeal to a broad cross-section in business, government, research and the community.

'One thing we know', says Dr Brian Walker a Director of Australia21, 'is that the future will surprise us. We don't know how, or where or when.'

Pressure is mounting from many directions: from climate change, population growth, the global connectedness of our food and financial systems, water allocation and the health of our rivers.

At such a time we need confidence in our energy, agriculture, health, welfare, environmental and financial systems. But cracks are appearing, as Australia has to deal with multiple crises. Now is the time to develop the new skills and attributes to deal with such crises.

"It is essential that we take stock of how resilient we are in the face of these rapid domestic, global and regional changes. In fact, work is already underway in governments in the UK and EU to move beyond individual solutions which are recognised as only partial" noted Dr Walker.

The keynote speaker for the conference is The Hon Peter Garrett, MP, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, and he will join with leading resilience specialists, researchers and policy makers to determine how a resilience lens can help to build new policy responses for coping with change and uncertainty.

Bringing in consideration of resilience and complex systems dynamics will increase our chances of finding durable solutions. Building a more resilient nation will require developing resilience tools, such as strength and speed of feedback mechanisms, diversity of ideas and resources, and a strong capacity for self-organising.

The conference will be held at Australian National University - more information at: - <http://www.australia21.org.au/resilienceConference.htm>.

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