



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Resilience thinking must extend beyond disasters**

Australia21 today welcomed the COAG statement on strengthening Australia's disaster resilience, which highlights the strategic importance of resilience to future policy development, and urged that Australian governments build emerging thinking on resilience into all policy areas.

Dr Brian Walker, a Director of Australia21, which is hosting a major national conference on resilience in February 2010, said that resilience goes beyond natural disasters.

"We cannot prevent most of the major uncertainties facing us today, and our ability to predict future shocks is inherently limited", Dr Walker said. Yet, at a time when we need resilient energy, water, agricultural, transport, health, education, welfare, economic and financial systems, the signs are that many of these systems are less resilient now than they were in the past".

"It is essential that we take stock of how resilient we are in the face of the very rapid and disturbing 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. Bringing in consideration of resilience and complex systems dynamics will increase our chances of finding durable solutions." Dr Walker stated.

'Resilience thinking is important because it assists in making better decisions under conditions of uncertainty'. Resilience is the ability of systems (social, ecological and social-ecological) to respond to external shocks without losing their essential functions and identity, he said.

Australia21 supports COAG's intention to build a more disaster resilient nation as an investment in our future, and believes that incorporating key resilience concepts into all policy development will help extend this important outcome. Some of these key resilience concepts include: strength and speed of feedback mechanisms, diversity of ideas and resources, spare capacity, and strong capacity for self-organising.

To further develop and consider these concepts Australia21 is holding a conference that will bring leading resilience specialists, researchers and policy makers together to determine how a resilience lens can help to build new policy responses for deeply uncertain times. The national conference will be held on 18-19 February 2010 at ANU. <http://www.australia21.org.au/resilienceConference.htm>.

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