

Media release

Over control can ‘weaken resilience’

Trying to exert too much control over an organisation can weaken its resilience, says research ecologist Dr Steven Cork.

Dispersing decision making can strengthen resilience, but that is counter to the way many companies are organised, he said.

Dr Cork, a consultant who helps organisations think about future strategies, is a keynote speaker at the Risk Management Institution of Australasia’s annual conference, *“Risk management: the road to resilience”*, in Cairns, north Queensland, on November 22-25.

He says it is “not useful” to think of resilience as returning to the same position after absorbing a shock, because things are never “the same”. “We adapt, change and learn” from shocks that impact on businesses, communities and systems.

Dr Cork said businesses needed greater flexibility. Many companies stuck to a strategic plan, but became vulnerable when they could not adapt to change. He advocated “strategic navigation”, which allowed adaptation to changing circumstances.

Dr Cork is a project leader with Australia21, an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organisation that “builds networks of people from diverse backgrounds to develop a sustainable and flourishing future”.

His team’s research aims to improve Australia’s ability to anticipate social, economic and environmental tipping points.

He describes resilience as “a system’s ability to absorb shocks and retain its essential functions and identity”.

He urges organisations to look outside their own boundaries, including considering the ways they interact with social and environmental systems, to develop greater resilience.

Dr Cork will examine how much resilience Australia needs, and to what, in his presentation at the RMIA conference. For more information or bookings, go to www.rmiaconference.com.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Brian Roylett, President, Risk Management Institution of Australasia Ltd
Phone 0417 358 181

Released by: Kate Tilley, RMIA Communications Consultant
Phone (07) 3831 7500 or 0418 741606