

With the support and cooperation of the entire concrete and cement value chain, a successful transition to carbon neutral concrete is absolutely possible.

In 2021, the *Decarbonisation Pathways for the Australian Cement and Concrete Sector* report established a clear roadmap for the industry to lower its CO₂ emissions and decarbonise by 2050.

Powerful partnerships with real outcomes

According to SmartCrete CRC CEO Clare Tubolets, the report has been instrumental for the CRC in connecting researchers and industry experts and establishing partnerships that give their participants an edge in terms of sustainability, efficiency and competitive advantage.

“One partnership between Macquarie University and Sydney Water is developing sensor tech for water authorities to improve condition monitoring for their asset management,” Tubolets says. “The technology is designed to monitor the deterioration of sewer pipe systems – the most aggressive environment for concrete – so that repair and maintenance can be managed more easily. The sensors are now being trialled in the field with positive early results for faster, easier asset management.”

Water authorities in most states are now taking part in SmartCrete CRC supported research.

“The power is in our network. We bring together businesses and researchers who are keen to collaborate to generate new knowledge, products, processes and services that propel Australia’s concrete sector forward,” Tubolets says.

These connections also help organisations identify issues, opportunities and challenges, for instance in terms of sustainability goals, she says. SmartCrete CRC exists to broker relationships that break through those barriers, providing opportunities for organisations to hit their sustainability targets through knowledge and innovation.

Connections that increase competitiveness

“We’re helping to build Australian university capability in conducting industry-led research, facilitating impact-driven partnerships which harness the innovation potential of the research network to solve industry challenges,” Tubolets says.

“In doing so, we have championed a new generation of researchers who want to connect with industry and see their work adopted and used. They want to make a measurable difference and enhance the strength of their research through collaboration with industry.”

Equally, Tubolets says, innovative businesses looking to demonstrate leadership around the challenges of decarbonisation are now gaining greater confidence in the capability of Australian universities and their researchers. They recognise there is wisdom in seeking expert help in testing and developing new ways of doing things.

With the 2050 Net Zero deadline looming, organisations confident in their ability to lead are making the most of SmartCrete CRC’s offering. For example, MCI Carbon – which is developing low-carbon supplementary cementitious materials for concrete and blended cement use from mineral carbonation – is being recognised and awarded internationally.

“It’s an exciting time in Australia, for industry, government and academia,” Tubolets says. “We’re seeing real work, real innovation and real change, all driving by strong connection between research and industry.”

Contributed by Smartcrete



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THIS MONTH'S COVER

This month's cover is from the year 2000 and features the construction of Sydney's Eastern Distributor motorway on the edge of the CBD.



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