FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Disaster Ready Fund project to develop climate resilient infrastructure guidelines

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) and project partners are pleased to announce the launch of the South Australian led '**Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project**'.

Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of a range of climate change related hazards. The World Economic Forum's 2024 Global Risks Report identified extreme weather events as "the top risk most likely to present a material crisis on a global scale in 2024". The Second National Action Plan to implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework states that since 2013, 496 (92%) of Local Government Areas have been impacted by disasters at a cost to the economy of $38 billion every year on average.

By 2100, for a business-as-usual greenhouse gas emissions scenario, temperatures are projected to increase by as much as 4^{o}C above pre-industrial levels. And a sea level rise of up to 2.3 m, as a result of ice sheet collapse, cannot be ruled out. As a result, there will be more extreme heat events and heatwaves, bushfires, rainfall events and flooding, droughts, coastal inundation and erosion, extreme winds, storms and cyclonic events.

The Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project will deliver a nationally relevant, collaboratively developed, industry best practice guideline, online course and supporting resources that provide asset managers and engineers with the relevant knowledge, training and tools needed to reduce climate change risks to infrastructure, including coastal assets. To do this, the project will enable the inclusion of climate change into long-term asset and financial management plans to ensure the continued provision of essential community services.

> *"Climate change represents the greatest global hazard that humanity has ever faced. The consequences without rapid reductions in greenhouse gases, and adaptation to climate changes, will result in an un-insurable world. Immediate action is imperative." Jacqueline Balston, Director of Sustainability, IPWEA*

As the climate continues to change, exposed and vulnerable infrastructure will be damaged and the services they provide compromised. The recently released National Climate Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Plan assessed the current risk for critical infrastructure (including transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructure) as moderate but rising to high–very high by 2050 and very high by 2090. The last Federal Government study of sea level rise impacts (in 2009) determined that around Australia, a 1.1 m rise in sea level will expose $226 billion of commercial, industrial, road, rail, and residential properties to inundation and erosion hazards.

To reduce impacts, and ensure the provision of essential community services, it is critical that infrastructure assets are planned, constructed and managed to be climate resilient. A 2022 Insurance Council of Australia report calculated that every $1 invested in resilience initiatives could result in an estimated $9.60 return on investment. However, a lack of knowledge, training and tools means that climate change risks are not always considered in strategic asset management planning, asset management plans or long-term financial plans.

The Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project will develop a best practice guideline and online training course that detail for the Australian region: climate change hazards and risks; adaptation options to enhance resilience; management tools, and templates. IPWEA's existing suite of globally recognised

asset and financial management publications and tools will also be updated to include the latest information on climate change impacts, risk, adaptation and resilience.

> *"IPWEA is excited to collaborate with our project partners to deliver practical guidance, tools and templates to guide infrastructure asset stewards in the incorporation of climate change risk and resilient adaptation options into mainstream asset management. This project will ensure that climate change becomes integrated into all levels of asset management planning and the resources and funding needed to implement it are allocated." David Jenkins, CEO, IPWEA*

Best practice guidance will be created for a range of climate hazards including changes to temperature, heatwave, rainfall, flooding, drought, sea level rise and resulting coastal inundation and erosion, ocean acidification, increased storm and cyclonic intensity, and bushfire weather.

Climate impacts and resilience options will be detailed for buildings, bridges, roads, footpaths, kerbing, water and waste water assets, stormwater assets, and coastal assets (sea walls / revetments / breakwaters, flood protection levees, jetties, boat ramps, marinas (and floating pontoons) and beach access stairs), as well as common infrastructure materials including concrete, steel, PVC, wood, bitumen, glass and fibre reinforced polymers (FRP).

A stand-alone online training module will be developed to support the guidance and will allow users to complete an IPWEA industry-recognised credential in their own time.

The Climate Resilient Infrastructure project is a collaboration between the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA), SA Department of Infrastructure and Transport, SA Department of Environment and Water, South Australian Coastal Councils Alliance (SACCA), Alexandrina Council, Wattle Range Council, Yorke Peninsula Council, and the Adelaide Coastal Councils Network (ACCN). The project received funding from the Australian Government, IPWEA and project partners.

For further information about the project or to get involved please contact Project Manager, Dr. Jacqueline Balston, IPWEA Director of Sustainability. Email: sustainability@ipwea.org

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