

Highlighting the great career opportunities for young engineers in the energy sector

The energy generation and transmission industry in Australia is facing a critical shortage of engineers to build and maintain the infrastructure and systems required to meet future customer demands.

This worrying outlook has been highlighted by Mike Griffin, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Power Institute, in the lead-up to the Energy 21C conference in Sydney from November 11 to 14, 2007.

Mr Griffin said there were about 5,000 professional engineers currently working across all sectors of the energy transmission and distribution sector and associated industries.

Yet, he said the advanced age profile of those engineers and the high number of impending retirements would create a critical shortfall of skilled personnel within five years.

“We will need up to 2,000 engineering graduates from universities before 2012,” he said.

“However, the problem is that the perceived benefits of science and engineering study is low compared to other high profile areas such as law and medicine.

“This means we simply don’t have the pool of emerging engineers to meet our requirements into the future.

“At the other end of the scale, many academics teaching energy engineering in Australian universities are also approaching retirement.

“We need to address this problem to ensure that engineering teachers are abreast of new developments and emerging demands in the energy sector.

“There is also an urgent need to highlight to secondary and early tertiary students the many challenges and career opportunities in energy engineering.

“The Australian Power Institute has implemented a national Power Engineering Bursary program to attract first year engineering students into the energy sector, with over 35 bursaries to be awarded in 2007.

“As an industry-funded, not-for-profit organisation, the Institute is dedicated to promoting careers in engineering that are both motivating and fulfilling for young people.

“These people are our future.”

Mr Griffin said energy delivery capability over the next decade would depend largely on the ability of the industry to attract, manage and retain skilled young people.

“This will be a particular focus of the Energy 21C meeting with a plenary session on Wednesday November 14 to be devoted to the views and aspirations of future leaders in the energy sector.

“By providing a forum for young engineers to express their views on the future of our industry, it will hopefully highlight an exciting and challenging future.

“We will strive to spread this message beyond the Energy 21C meeting to ensure it reaches schools and universities so that young people can make informed decisions about careers in our industry.

“There has never been a better opportunity for dedicated young engineers to fulfil their ambitions and establish successful career paths in a sector that is vital to Australia’s growth and social stability.”

For more information, visit www.energy21c.com.au or contact the Conference Managers, Waldron Smith Management, by telephone (03) 9645 6311 or e-mail energy21c@wsm.com.au