

CHAPTER 2

Policy implications

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Abstract

This chapter summarises and synthesises the thinking from the rest of this volume. A detailed summary of advice and recommendations is presented, followed by a shortlist of overarching recommendations and some discussion of these. This shortlist includes:

- learn from the substantial information on resilience that now exists
- apply governance processes that promote rather than inhibit resilience
- identify *what* is resilient *to what* pressures
- recognise that resilience is about more than good risk assessment
- recognise that resilience can be not only desirable but also undesirable
- address declining reserves.
- consider ‘systems’ at scales above and below the one currently under scrutiny
- develop a new approach to national security, prosperity and well-being
- develop nation-building response plans to address interrelated challenges
- take steps to achieve energy and water use efficiency, carbon-neutrality, eco-efficiency, green productivity, especially with respect to Australia’s cities, and satisfaction of human cultural and other social needs

Policy makers are increasingly focusing on resilience

Thinking about resilience has proceeded apace in business circles and academia over the past 5–10 years. This has included advice to policy makers about issues as diverse as environmental, organisational, governance, health and economic resilience, to which Australia21 has made several contributions (Cork *et al.* 2007, 2008; Cork 2009). It is impossible in the space available here to review the many ways in which the concept of resilience is finding its way into policy forums. The following examples give a flavour.

Australian policy makers have begun to focus on the challenging question of how resilience thinking can be applied not only *in* policies but also *to* the policy development process itself. For example, most major policies for environmental management in Australia include social and ecological resilience as key objectives (see Chapter 15, this volume). Similarly, the