



White Paper

Climate Adaption: Extreme Weather Events and the Mining Industry

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The damage caused by recent flooding across eastern Australia highlights the vulnerability of the built environment to extreme weather events. Flooding is part of the natural cycle of climate variability everywhere so the current discussion about whether the recent floods were caused by climate change unnecessarily diverts attention away from the urgent need to adapt to climate extremes.

The best available scientific information indicates that climate change may amplify some aspects of natural climate variability, resulting in the normalisation of weather events currently considered extreme. There is a growing body of empirical evidence (especially extreme temperatures, rainfall and sea levels) suggesting that climate change is already having this effect.

To date, the mining industry's focus with respect to climate change has been on the emissions mitigation and the implications of a price on carbon. Recent events highlight the flip-side of the climate debate – climate adaptation. Mining operations may be more vulnerable to climatic extremes than previously assumed. As such, the mining industry needs to consider whether current approaches to mine and infrastructure planning and design provide an adequate basis for cost effectively managing the extreme weather events that might occur in the future.