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## James Cook University to design engineering inspection scheme for strata-title properties

James Cook University (JCU) has been engaged by the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) to design an engineering inspection scheme for strata-title properties in North Queensland.

An inspection scheme was a key recommendation of an independent study by JCU, released in October last year, which recommended strata-title properties in North Queensland undergo regular engineering inspections to ensure they are resistant to future extreme weather events, and to improve understanding of how the buildings might perform during these events.

ICA CEO Rob Whelan said: “Designing an inspection scheme is a logical next step toward helping strata owners and strata managers address vulnerabilities that may exist with their buildings and reduce preventable damage.

“Once it’s been developed, governments can then consider adopting the scheme to assist strata owners and managers identify and potentially manage vulnerabilities to their buildings in regions exposed to extreme weather, such as cyclones.”

The engineering inspection scheme for strata-title body corporates will:

- Investigate and report on any specific building issues that could lead to extreme weather damage
- Identify high-level remediation options to address any detected vulnerabilities of the building to extreme weather events, for consideration by the body corporate
- Deliver a report to the body corporate on the status of the building with regard to detected extreme weather vulnerabilities

Strata property owners could then use this report as evidence of inspections and actions taken to mitigate risk with their insurers, with the potential for reductions in insurance premiums on a case-by-case basis due to lower risk.

The ICA has agreed Terms of Reference with James Cook University, with the project getting underway this month. The Terms also include reviewing the potential for a government assistance grant to help drive the service, and recommendations on its management.

The first JCU strata-title study is available on the ICA website:

<http://www.insurancecouncil.com.au/issue-submissions/reports/independent-strata-study>