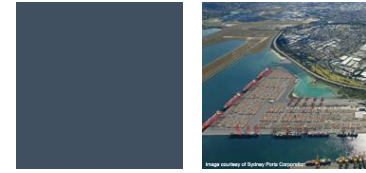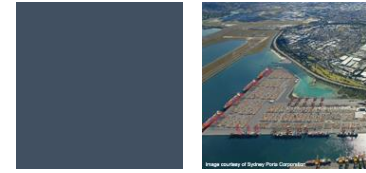# Ethics in Engineering Practice

David Stuart-Watt
Regional Director, Parsons Brinckerhoff

28 August 2014

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF

Engineers Australia

"As engineering practitioners, we use our knowledge and skills for the benefit of the community to create engineering solutions for a sustainable future. In doing so, we strive to serve the community ahead of other personal and sectional interests"

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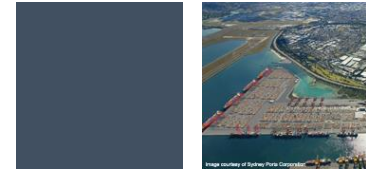
Engineers Australia

Code of Ethics

- **Demonstrate Integrity**

- **Practise Competently**

- **Exercise Leadership**

- **Promote Sustainability**

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Top 100 Ethical Companies in the World

The only Australian companies that made the list were Banks!

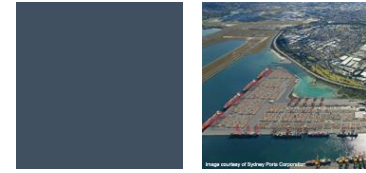**There was a New Zealand food company!**

Most companies will develop and issue a 'Code of conduct', have you read yours?

What distinguishes ethical companies are those that practice commendable business ethics.
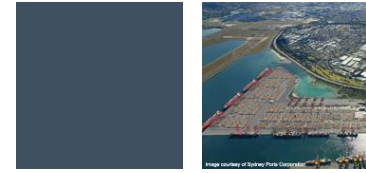
Practice means:

- **Throughout all levels in the organisation**

- **Embedded in the culture**

- **Leaders leading by example**
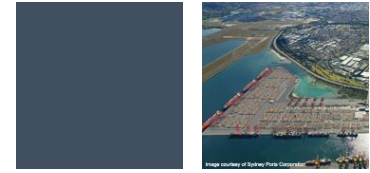
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A Code of Ethics is based on a number of basic assumptions and apply to:

- **Shareholders and Owners**

- **Directors and management**

- **Suppliers and clients**

- **Competitors**

- **Employees**

- **Community**

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An ethical business is often defined as one where the practices and actions of the company and its employees are considered **professionally** and **morally** responsible
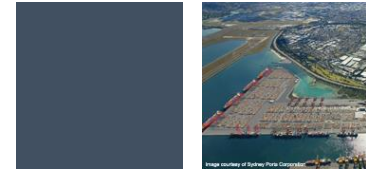
Leaders and Leadership

Ethical leaders exhibit key 'values' as well as 'ethics' in their leadership approach

'Practice' means they are visible in every day decisions and actions

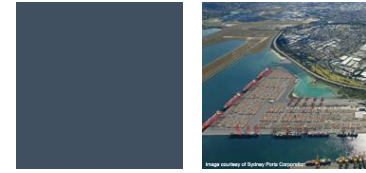**Capacity for 'Trust' is built on these principles**

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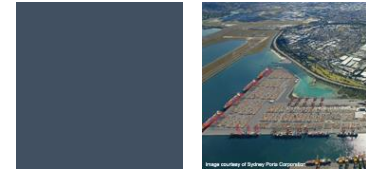
Leadership Values?

In the end the values and ethics that are most important to you and shape you as a leader are the ones you should live by in the work place

One of the most powerful tools available to you is to lead and influence others

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Employees

Despite Codes of Conduct, posters displaying Values, company policy documents and organisation cultures:

- **Breaches/lapses in workplace ethics occur daily**

- **Lapses occur at many levels and in all sizes**

- **Lapses drive workplace policy development**

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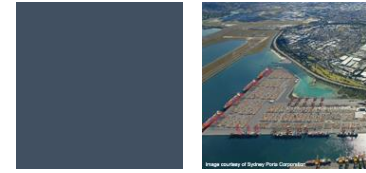
Employees cont'd…

Many employees believe their practices are invisible

The repercussions could be focussed at an individual or impact the workplace as a whole

Each failure affects your self image and tends to impact you personally more than other employees

Even the smallest breach can diminish the quality of a workplace for all

Examples?

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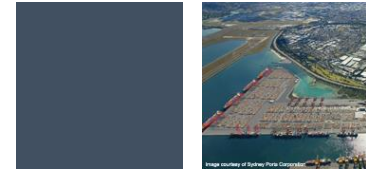
Professional Engineers

Where do we stand as engineers – remember the EA code and conduct

What about conflicts of interest – personal and professional

As professionals the community expects more of us and so do the law courts

A reliance on our knowledge, skills and competence and the way we represent ourselves and our ability

You cannot go past being trustworthy and honest

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If Engineering is about doing things right

Ethics is about doing the right thing

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