



International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering

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A Message from the Vice President

By Professor John Carter

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It was with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation of our editor, Professor Osamu Kusakabe, to pen the lead article in this edition of the ISSMGE Bulletin. Although the Australasian Region of ISSMGE contains the smallest number of member societies (currently only New Zealand and Australia), and therefore when votes are counted we have the smallest regional “voice”, we nevertheless see ourselves as significant contributors to our International Society, with much to share with our international colleagues. With the issue of FIGS firmly on the agenda at present, and many member societies and also their individual memberships well-disposed to closer connections between the sister societies, it is timely to reflect on the issues and events “downunder” during the recent past. Like several other member societies within ISSMGE, The Australian Geomechanics Society (AGS) and the New Zealand Geotechnical Society (NZGS) have, since their inceptions, been active member societies of ISRM, IAEG as well as ISSMGE. Our two member societies have worked hard over the years to accommodate the vast range of geo-interests and to find a welcoming place for all who wish to further their own interests in the geotechnical and geological fields of endeavour. I think it is fair to claim that ours are inclusive Societies.

One measure of the success of these efforts can be found in the national membership statistics. Currently NZGS Membership is approaching 600, while affiliation of NZGS members with ISSMGE currently stands at well over 50% of that membership. Current membership of AGS is approximately 1200, with about three quarters of those members choosing to affiliate with ISSMGE. These statistics may seem modest on the global scale, but they represent probably the highest national per capita affiliation rates of all member societies. New Zealand’s population is just over 4 million, and so the affiliation rate is approximately 3 to 4 in 40,000, or the best part of 1 in 10,000, which is exceptional. Similarly, approximately 1 in 20,000 Australians are affiliated with ISSMGE, well behind New Zealand, but probably still amongst the other leading national societies.

It is worth noting at this point that NZGS will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2008, with celebrations planned for the New Zealand National Symposium, to be held in Auckland in September 2008. The theme of the symposium is “Soil-structure Interaction”. Earlier this year the New Zealand Geotechnical Society elected a new chairman, Dr C. Y. Chin. Dr Kevin McManus will stay on the NZGS Management Committee for another year as immediate past chairman. Steve Crawford has taken on the role as ISSMGE liaison for NZ, supporting me as ISSMGE Vice President for Australasia, providing magnificent support, for which I am very grateful. A highlight of the NZGS’s activities recently was the news that New Zealand has been invited to host the 11th IAEG Congress to be held in September, 2010 in Auckland, New Zealand. As the Society’s bid document and web pages clearly identify, geologically New Zealand ‘has it all’.

The most recent Regional Conference of ISSMGE in Australasia was held in Brisbane during October 2007, hosted this time by AGS. This four-yearly event is normally the highlight of the geotechnical calendar in Australia and New Zealand, greatly anticipated by members of both societies. I am very happy to report that this most recent Conference, with the theme of “Common Ground” was a resounding success, by all measures. Elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin you will find a more detailed account of the Conference. At its most recent national committee meeting, AGS elected Neil Benson from the Victorian Chapter as its new National Chairman for the next 2 year period (2008-09), succeeding Marc Woodward from Western Australia. I am very pleased to report that the seven Local Chapters of AGS are all very active, collectively providing hundreds if not thousands of hours of continuing professional development per year.

Both member societies have been particularly active lately, and will remain so, developing a number of geotechnical guides to assist geotechnical professionals with their day-to-day work.

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A Message from the Vice president (continued)

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Most of these guides have a local or regional character, but I feel sure that some of the good work being carried out will find use beyond antipodean shores. The work of which I speak includes the following:

- AGS has recently prepared and printed a series of articles and guides related to Landslide Risk Management. The comprehensive study that led to the development of these publications has received support from the Australian Government and local government. The study was carried out by members of the AGS and a collection of these articles was published in March 2007 issue of *Australian Geomechanics*. Copies of them are also available on CD-ROM from AGS.
- A Stability Guidelines Committee has been formed by NZGS and is chaired by Steve Crawford and Grant Murray. Their initial task is to review the AGS Landslide Risk Management Guidelines. This is seen as a *benchmark* document and may be adopted or adapted as a regional guide to establish uniformity across the Australasian region.
- A Geotechnical Earthquake Engineering Committee has also been formed by NZGS to develop a set of design guidelines for NZ conditions. This committee is chaired by Kevin McManus.
- Electronic Data Transfer Guidelines are being advanced by Rodney Hutchinson on behalf of NZGS and these are being modelled on the UK guide, which Rodney was also involved in establishing. It is hoped that eventually this will be used as an Australasian guide.

Other issues in the region of current importance include the need for further engagement with younger geotechnical professionals, the real need to interest students in a career in the geotechnical profession, and the really pressing need to deal with the shortage of skilled and experienced geotechnical professionals, which has now become acute in our region. Of course, these issues are not unrelated. Further detail of each of the Member Societies in the Australasian region and their current activities may be found at: <http://www.nzgeotech.org.nz> and www.australiangeomechanics.org or simply follow the links from the ISSMGE web pages.

View of Young Geotechnical Engineers

The 2nd Thai Young Geotechnical Engineers Meeting

Following on the success of the 1st Thai Young Geotechnical Engineers Meeting (tYGEM) held at Khon Kaen City in 2006, the 2nd tYGEM was held in Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand from 20 to 21 October 2007. The venue was at Srinagarind Dam, located 120 km west side from the capital Bangkok. The meeting was organized by the Geotechnical Engineering Subcommittee, the Engineering Institute of Thailand under H.M. the King's Patronage (EIT), in cooperation with the Geotechnical Engineering Research and Development Center of the Kasetsart University. 130 delegates from Universities in Thailand registered for this meeting. The purpose and objective of this meeting was to bring together both senior and young geotechnical engineers from various universities to stay together so that they could meet and interchange ideas in an informal atmosphere. The organizing committee would like to encourage the young geotechnical delegates to develop a wider scope of thinking in the geotechnical engineering field. Attendees will not only be comfortable in exchanging technical leanings, but the organizing committee wishes to form personal linkages with peers across universities.



In the opening ceremony, the Chairman of the Geotechnical Engineering Subcommittee Dr. Watcharin Gasaluck described the significance and aims of this meeting and then the Chairman expressed that the Geotechnical Engineering Subcommittee of EIT is always supporting the activity of younger generations who will bear the future of the geotechnical engineering in Thailand. The meeting was started with the technical sessions. In 5 technical sessions chaired by junior lecturers from various universities, each participant had the opportunity to make a 10 minutes presentation on a project or research topic which they were currently or had been recently involved in the graduate study. The fruitful discussions and comments from the senior members give a good idea and encourage the younger members in continuing a good research work. The summary session was conducted in the main conference room after a whole day and long presentations by a senior geotechnical engineer, Dr. Warakorn Mai-Rieng, the Head of Civil Engineering Department, Kasetsart University. Dr. Warakorn stated the high success of this meeting with the full achievement of the objective. All audiences agreed that this kind of meeting should be continued as long as possible under the support from EIT and from the local universities. The next meeting will tentatively be organized next year by the Ubonratchatani University which is located in the Northeastern part of Thailand and located about 500 km from Bangkok. The academic part of the meeting was completed by the official dinner with a variety of local foods and drinks. The 2nd tYGEM has finally finished with a technical excursion. A technical visit to the Srinagarind Dam- One of major dams in Thailand which is located on the active faults and with many geotechnical works, was organized for the conference delegates.

Reported by Dr. Pongsakorn Punrattanasin, the Engineering Institute of Thailand