

Australia Division - Victoria State Group

Chairman's Report June 2010

BACKGROUND

As the inaugural Chairman of the Victoria State Group's Committee of Management (CoM) I feel that it is necessary to put the history of the Group into context so that in the future members and interested others engineers will have an understanding of our origins and what has been achieved in the past few years.

For as long as I have been in Australia the main forum for structural engineers was the Concrete Institute of Australia (CIA). This is not surprising as the Institution of Structural Engineers began life as the Concrete Institute. There were many Institution members in Melbourne **Bob Sturrock** was the representative for over 20 years and organised the programme for the triennial visit of the Institution's President while **Dr. Andrew Baigent** organised the membership examination. However there was no real attempt to further the aims and objectives of the Institution during this period.

In 2004 the Institution of Structural Engineers made a significant break with tradition when **Mike Fordyce** became the first non UK resident to be elected President. In 2005 Mike promoted the concept of forming an Australia Division which had been previously suggested by Bob Sturrock (Victorian Representative since 1985).

In July 2006 Mike Fordyce sent a letter and questionnaire to all members of the Institution resident in Australia with a response date of 31 August 2006 and on 4th December a dinner meeting was held for all members who had responded to Mike's questionnaire. At this meeting Mike Fordyce outlined his proposal for the formation of an Australian Division of the Institution. The meeting endorsed the proposal and confirmed their support for maintaining the standard of entry as the Corporate Membership examination and added the following recommendations:

- The Division should remain independent of Engineers Australia
- Provide informative technical meetings
- Provide more input into the standard of education of engineering graduates.

On 30th April 2007 Mike Fordyce circulated a draft of the Australian Division Regulations and in September 2007 nominations were called for the Australian Division committee, **Dr. David Morris** was elected as the Victorian member. The Australia Division of IStructE was officially launched on 1st January 2008.

The Institution of Structural Engineers held a Centenary Conference in Hong Kong on 24 - 26 January 2008 which was attended by approximately 450 structural engineers from some 55 countries.

On 17 March 2008, David Morris initiated a meeting to discuss the establishment of a Victoria Group in accordance with the Australia Division Regulations and 19 members of the Institution met at the GHD offices in Melbourne. It was agreed that there was a need for technical meetings where problems and solutions related to specific projects could be discussed as a learning experience. A number of members agreed to make presentations. (See early meetings below.)

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

The triennial visit of the Institution's President **Sarah Buck** took place from 29th – 31 July 2008. She addressed final year students at Melbourne University on 30th July and after a detailed technical visit to the MCG in the evening attended a dinner at the members' MCC dining room with members and guests of the Institution. Sarah spoke of the future for structural engineers and **Mr. Peter Bowtell (Arup)** presented an account of the new Rectangular Stadium. Her visit concluded with a breakfast on the topic "Women in Engineering."

EARLY TECHNICAL MEETINGS

The initial technical evening meetings commenced in July 2008. These early technical meeting were generally informal and allowed a free interchange of information between the speaker and the attendees.

The topics were:

14 th July 2008	Paul Kennedy	"The Business of engineering."
11 th August 2008	Dr. Geoff Taplin	"My time on the East Link Project".
1 st September 2008	John Stella	"Temporary Works".
6 th October 2008	Mark Percival	"The Albury-Wodonga Bypass".

No further meetings were scheduled for 2008 as our attention was focussed on getting a course organised for the Chartered Membership Examination (CME).

The initial technical meetings were held in the offices of the GHD Group without their generous help we may never have achieved our present success. The fact that they allowed our group access to their training room for our early meetings and later for the first Chartered Member Examination course was a significant factor in the development of our group for which we shall be always grateful.

CME Course 2009

An initial invitation was sent out to all members for a meeting to be held on 9th September 2008 to assess the level of interest in a preparation course for the CME. About 23 young engineers attended and several showed interest in such a course. This provided the impetus to David Morris to commence organising a course and find engineers who would be prepared to become tutors. A meeting of tutors on 27th October set out the basis of a course. Following the initial announcement of the CME course only 2 participants registered but when the information was circulated by the Victorian branch of the CIA a further 12 engineers enrolled.

The first course lasted 10 weeks and special topics were presented by Dr. David Morris (Principal Tutor) who was ably supported by Dr. Geoff Taplin, John Stella, Ast Prof. Nelson Lamb, Paul Kennedy, Dr. Garry Chapman (Golder Associates), Sean McGinn, John Hamilton and Brendan Corcoran. The course was conducted on the basis of an introduction to a specific topic and followed with the presentation of a previous question for the candidates to attempt. The participants then worked in small groups to provide a solution for presentation which was open to comment from the tutors present. The trial 7 hour examination was taken at the end of the course which was doubly marked as is the CME. A final meeting where the participants received detailed feedback concluded the course. The following week 3 members sat the CME, Dr. Ken Nagato passed.

Technical meetings 2009

Only one technical meeting was held while the CME course was in progress which achieved a low attendance. This led us to the consideration that those who were involved in the CME course were the same people who were organising and attending meetings.

Another meeting was called for 4th May to discuss a more structured approach to the Victoria Group. The meeting was attended by 18 members who considered the discussion paper which had been previously circulated. The meeting accepted the proposal to form a Committee of Management (CoM) and the meeting duly elected the current committee. The meeting also recommended that meetings be held on 1st Monday of each month. The CoM then organised the following programme for the remainder of the year.

6 th July	Frank Filippone	"Post-tensioned Concrete Structures."
3 rd August	Sarah Furman	"Durability Planning for New Structures".
17 th Sept.	Dr. Nelson Lam	"A simple approach for estimating Seismic and Transient Loading on Structures."
12 th October	Brian Dean	"Tall Buildings – Design and Durability."
9 th November	Craig Allen	"An overview of the Westgate Bridge viaduct strengthening."

In late August the CoM decided that by moving the technical meetings to a neutral venue might increase attendance and Melbourne University, Department of Engineering offered the use of their facilities.

In November the announcement of a second CME course was made and as in the previous year the response was small but numbers increased when the Victorian CIA send out the flyer to their members.

CME Course 2010

The second Course was supported by the same band of tutors with John Stella and Dr Ken Nagato providing close support to Dr. David Morris. There were 16 participants and a similar format to the previous course

was adopted. There was one major change, only the 7 engineers taking the CM examination in April sat the trial examination. This allowed time for all of the examination papers to be marked and for appropriate advice to be presented in a feedback session to the candidates prior to sitting the examination. We now await the results hoping for a high pass rate.

Technical meetings 2010

The technical programme for this year appears to have satisfied a need of the engineering community as the attendance has steadily grown. So far this year we have had:

8 th February	Jochen Ristig	“Redesign of North Melbourne and Nunawading Railway stations.”
1 st March	Bernard Shepherd	“Bridges of the Future.”
12 th April	John De Arouge	“Remedial Works on Swan St. Bridge due to ground movements.”
10 th May	John Woodside	“Detailing of steel reinforcement in concrete and Durability.”
7 th June	Gary Wyatt	“New Foot bridge over the River Yarra.”

The remainder of the technical meetings are listed on the website.

Other General Matters

Following the establishment of the Victoria State Group in May 2009 it soon became apparent that the future development of the Australia Division could not be continued as in previous years. A paper was prepared entitled “**A Strategy for the expansion of the Australian Division**” was prepared and sent to all of the Division members.

One matter of grave concern was the then current financial situation as set out in the Division’s regulations. This required all expenses incurred by a State Group to be sent to the Division’s treasurer who then presented the account to the Council for approval before payment could be made. As a result of our paper, the Australia Division Constitution decided to amend the regulations to allow State Groups to have their own bank account. This involved approval of the IStructE Council in London, which I am pleased to report that the changes were approved.

A further response to our paper was that the Division set out in October 2009 a series of goals or objectives to be achieved over the next five years. The Victoria Group thought that the goals should be arranged in order of priority and that there needed to be a programme for their achievement. To this end the Victoria Group has recently prepared and distributed to Division members a further paper entitled “**A Strategy to achieve the Division’s Goals.**” It is too early to receive any considered response to this paper.

As Chairman of the CoM I would like to thank all the engineers, members, non-members and students who have supported our meetings and hope that they have increased your interest in the proud profession of structural engineering. Our thanks should be extended to GHD, Melbourne University and the Victorian Branch of The Concrete Institute of Australia for their support. I should also thank all the engineers who assisted as tutors on the CME course. And finally, my thanks to my Committee for their encouragement and support David Morris, John Stella, John Hamilton, Evelyn Yung, Nelson Lam and his wife Kitty for preparation of the snacks before our meetings.

Brendan Corcoran FIAStructE

25 May 2010

Chair of Committee of Management
Victoria State Group
Australia Division of IStructE