

**THE ASSOCIATION OF
GEOTECHNICAL TESTING
AUTHORITIES (QLD) INC.**

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**AGTA 2003
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Deputy Chairman's Report

In the absence of a Chairman (nobody has yet agreed to take on the role), I thought I would offer some comments on the production of the AGTA newsletter.

The previous Newsletter editor/publisher was unable to continue producing it and the task was taken back by the committee. Despite the best of intentions and some good ideas, the committee was unable to get a Newsletter to see the light of day. Given that the Newsletter is the primary tool for member communication, the committee was pleased when Civil Quality Assurance agreed to take over the task.

This is the first Newsletter for the year (and hasn't the time flown), but hopefully not the last. We intend producing one more Newsletter this year provided we can come up with enough ideas of interest. If any member has ideas about newsletter articles, then **please** let the committee have them. The hard part with the Newsletter is not getting articles written (although that isn't necessarily easy), it is getting the ideas in the first place.

We have lined up two articles for the next Newsletter, these being on:

- The current situation in NSW with site laboratories on RTA road construction projects.
- The status of implementation of QDMR's sampling test methods, Q050 and 060.

What else would you like to see included? Profiles of prominent industry players? More stuff on measurement uncertainty? Current problems / difficulties in the testing industry (such as)? Commentary on new NATA policies?

The other change is in the distribution of the Newsletter. This is the first time we have attempted to distribute it by email. Those without email addresses will continue to receive a hard copy, but in future this will be at a cost. The committee would welcome any feedback on the success or otherwise of the email distribution. Until next time, take care.

**Peter Davis
Deputy Chairman**

ITEMS FOR SALE

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GENERAL MEETING, 10 JUNE 2003

The General Meeting held on 10 June was well attended. About 30 people listened to the two speakers and provided a refreshing interchange of ideas.

Ian Reeves, executive director of QDMR's Pavements, Materials and Geotechnical Division gave a talk on the problems currently being experienced by the Department in receiving reliable test results from road construction contracts. A similar problem is being experienced by the Roads and Traffic Authority in NSW. A separate article relating to NSW is being prepared by Peter Weir, chairman of ECLA (AGTA's counterpart in NSW) and will appear in our next newsletter.

The common theme from both road authorities is that site laboratories are frequently staffed by inexperienced operators, testing "shortcuts" are frequently taken, and there is evidence of "selective processing" of falsification of test results.

Ian raised the possibility that testing laboratories working for contractors on road construction projects may be required to pre-qualify for projects in much the same way as construction contractors do.

The second talk was given jointly by Max Purse of NATA and Mark Owtrim of QDMR's Herston testing laboratory. They presented a discussion on measurement uncertainty (MU) and the current requirements of ISO/IEC 17025. Part of the talk included a short demonstration of how MU can be determined for the moisture content test method. There was considerable debate over the selection of the uncertainty components and how they are assigned uncertainty values.

Following these two presentations, Mark Owtrim advised attendees of the current status of industry training in the 'new' QDMR test methods for sampling, Q050 and Q060. Training courses are to be run by the Department with the assistance of the Crushed Stone Association. These courses will be available to industry participants.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Peter Davis sought feedback from meeting attendees on:

- The future direction(s) for AGTA, and what issues it should pursue on behalf of it's members,
- What members wished to see in forthcoming Newsletters (articles, profiles, news etc),
- What members wished to see and hear at future general meetings.

The feedback received is listed below;

Lets hope there will eventually be some useful feedback. After all, AGTA is no more than an association of it's members, and is there to represent the concerns and interests of its members. If members have no interest, there will be no AGTA.

**Peter Davis
Deputy Chairman**

AMENDMENTS TO THE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 1995

The Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 was amended in 2003 to ensure continued effectiveness and relevance. Seminars were held in May to explain the changes. Here is a very brief summary for those AGTA members who were unable to attend these presentations. Detailed information is available at the website www.whs.qld.gov.au or by phoning 1300 369 915. At the website, the changes are identified as "Safety Links" and by number. The list is as follows:

1. Overview
2. Obligations of employers, self employed persons and persons conducting a business or undertaking.
3. Obligations for designers, manufacturers and suppliers of plant.
4. Obligations of manufacturers and suppliers of substances.
5. Obligations of building designers.
6. Obligations of persons in control of relevant workplace areas and persons in control of fixtures, fitting or plant included in relevant workplace areas.
7. Workplace Health and Safety Officers (WHSO's).
8. Workplace Health and Safety Representatives (WHSR's).
9. Maximum penalties for breaches of the Act.
10. Enforceable undertakings.
11. Inspectors' powers.
12. Event notification.
13. Building and Construction Industry.
14. Anti-victimisation.
15. Volunteers.

The areas of note for the majority of AGTA members would be Safety Links 2, 6, 12 & 13.

Safety Link 2 redefines the obligations of employers, self employed persons and persons conducting a business or undertaking, and given the key elements to meet the obligations under the Act. These elements include but are not limited to:

1. Identifying hazards, assessing risks, deciding control measures, implementing control measures and monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the measures.
2. Providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment.
3. Providing and maintaining safe plant.
4. Ensuring the safe use, handling, storage and transport of substances.
5. Ensuring safe systems of work.
6. Providing information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure health and safety.

The importance of this to AGTA members is that proof of the utilisation of any or all of these elements may have to be provided to an Inspector should you be investigated, or proof may be required to minimise the payout in the event of death or serious injury.

Safety Link 6 now places responsibilities on the lessee or renter of a premises where previously the owner of the premises carried most of the responsibility for fixtures, plant and fittings.

Safety Link 12 provides a long list of notifiable events, which must be reported.

Safety Link 13 has raised the value of project cost to assign the responsibility to the principal contractor from \$40,000 to \$80,000. Should a project be worth less than this value, the principal contractor does not carry the sole responsibility for safety.

This has been a quick look at a fairly detailed subject. A visit to the website is strongly recommended. If you have trouble understanding the legal descriptions, please feel free to contact me on 0427 655 475, or after hours at my home number, 3201 6164

John Kippen
Treasurer

**Alan
Bartlett
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LIGHTEN UP

In the bleak hour before dawn the cocky and his brand-new offsider had a couple of boiled eggs and tea for breakfast. Then the farmer said, "Well Jack, s'pose we better get crackin'. Had enough breaker? No? Well ... p'raps we'll have lunch now. Save comin' all the way back here at midday".

So a couple more eggs and several cups of tea went the way of breakfast.

"Well, now we'd better be off", the cocky said. "Had enough now? What? You'd like some more? Well, tell you what ... if you like to have your supper now, that'd mean we could work on right through the day without interruption".

"Suits me," said the new hand.

So the cocky boiled some more eggs and brewed some more tea. When these had been consumed, he said rather testily: "Right-o, you've had your supper. Now come on, let's get to work"!

"WHAT"! the new hand exclaimed, "WORK – after SUPPER? Cripes, I NEVER work after SUPPER.

NOTEABLE QUOTABLES

- **Technology**

It is said that one machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men. No machine, however, can do the work of one extraordinary man.

Tehyi Hsieh

- **Value**

Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value.

Albert Einstein

- **Truth**

Truth often suffers more by the heat of its defenders than from the arguments of its opposers.

William Penn

- **Power**

Power does not corrupt men; fools, however, if they get into a position of power, corrupt power.

George Bernard Shaw

- **Responsibility**

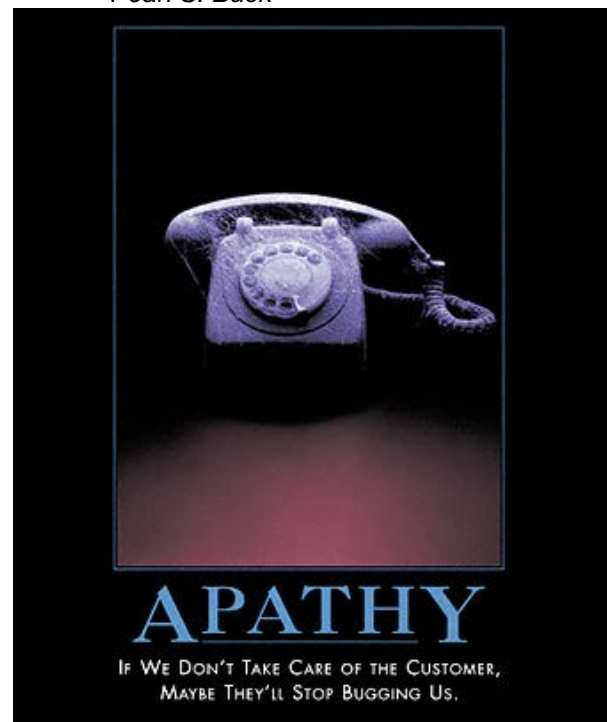
Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him, and to let him know that you trust him.

Booker T. Washington

- **Solitude**

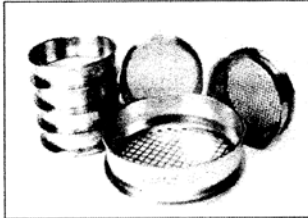
The person who tries to live alone will not succeed as a human being. His heart withers if it does not answer another heart. His mind shrinks away if he hears only the echoes of his own thoughts and finds no other inspiration.

Pearl S. Buck



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS – 2003

3 September 2003	General Meeting
17 September 2003	Committee Meeting
15 October 2003	Committee Meeting
19 November 2003	Committee Meeting
1 December 2003	Newsletter
10 December 2003	Annual General Meeting

Notes:

- *Unless altered/approved by the Deputy Chairman, the above dates will remain the same.*
- *Please advise the Deputy Chairman in advance if any meeting dates are unsuitable.*
- *Committee meeting will proceed regardless of individual absenteeism provided a quorum is present.*

CURRENT MEMBERS AS AT AUGUST 2003

Alan Bartlett Consulting	Independent Soil Testing
APOD Soil Testing	Karreman Group
Aus, Will	Kase Enterprises
Battisson, Ross	Kippen, John
Blackburn, Terry	Lawson, Neale
Boral Construction Materials Country (Qld)	McCabe, Thomas
Bordertech	McDonald, Tony
Bordertech Pimpana Geotech. Eng. Services	McFarlane, Amanda
Bowler Geotechnical Pty Ltd (Browns Plains)	Mapstone Geotechnical Pty Ltd
Brincat, Christopher	Morrison, Michael
Brisbane City Council	Murphy, Peter
Bruyeres, Gary	National Association of Testing Authorities
Cairns Engineering Testing Services Pty Ltd	Perry, James
Civil Quality Ass. (Qld) Pty Ltd – Lawnton	Phillips, Brian
Civil Quality Ass. (Qld) Pty Ltd – Loganholme	Pioneer Construction Materials
Civiltech Pty Ltd	Qualtest Laboratory Pty Ltd
Coker, Paul	Queensland Geotechnical Pty Ltd
Coleborn, Danny	Railway & Drilling Equipment
Conran, Carl	Redlands Soil Testing
Davies, Lloyd	Roadtek Laboratory – Toowoomba
Dick, James	Roadtest
Edwards, Dennis	Ron Richards & Partners Pty Ltd
Engineering & Construction Lab Assoc.	Sheppard, Graeme
Faithfull, Doug	Simmons, John
Futcher, Col	Soil Engineering Services
Geo-Investigations Pty Ltd	Soiltech Pty Ltd
Geotech (SC) Pty Ltd T/A Soil Surveys Technical Services	Soiltest Australia Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd
Geotest Engineering Services Pty Ltd	South Queensland Soils Pty Ltd
GJ Brandon & Associates Pty Ltd	Strata Test Pty Ltd
Golder Associates Pty Ltd	The Dirt Professionals
Gold Coast City Council	Thomas, Noel
H&M Testing Pty Ltd	Thompson, Paul
Hallett, Mark	Thurley, Christopher
Howard, Kym	Ullman & Nolan Geotechnic
Howland, Matthew	Vimbury Pty Ltd T/A Earthtech Laboratories
	Wide Bay Geotechnical Services Pty Ltd

PLEASE PASS THE INSERTED 'APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP' TO AN ASSOCIATE TODAY. THE MORE MEMBERS WE HAVE, THE MORE LOBBYING POWER WE HAVE AS AN ASSOCIATION.

MU – MEASUREMENT UNCERTAINTY

MU is not just the 12th letter of the Greek alphabet (μ) or a symbol used for micro E.g. 75 μm sieve – NO! it is the technical jargon abbreviation for Measurement Uncertainty.

Since the introduction of AS ISO/IEC 17025, measurement uncertainty has been or should have been on the lips of all laboratory managers without being a well understood subject. Now we have to face the music and give more than lip service to MU.

Why do we need to look at MU?

Good laboratory practice requires that all technicians understand the effects of each of the operations, equipment, etc which affect results. Performing MU assessments will help us to understand the more significant factors in the tests we perform.

Do specifiers really understand the effect of measurement uncertainty on the results they use for assessment of compliance with specifications or is it based on “gut feeling”? A better understanding of MU will help specifiers set realistic values and provide them with a better understanding of the implications of acceptance/rejection based on the test results alone.

Do designers understand the effect of MU on the test results they use to design pavements, embankments, etc?

What is the MU of a CBR test? Will this not affect pavement thickness where CBR low values are measured?

Will the “Note 2 out” be sufficient. Note 2 to Clause 5.4.6.2 – states:

In those cases where a well-recognised test method specifies limits to the major sources of uncertainty of measurement and specifies the form of presentation of calculated results, the laboratory is considered to have satisfied this clause by following the test method and reporting instructions.

The general view of international accreditation bodies is that this clause is not sufficient for most test methods and that initially laboratories need to at least identify those areas which affect measurement uncertainty as an absolute minimum and then carry out analysis of MU in the longer term.

What is NATA doing about it?

- Since MU may be specific to an individual laboratory and is often dependent on the nature of the material being tested, no standardised MU values can be provided.
e.g. the effect of errors in moisture content on MDD for a crushed rock may be significantly different to that for a clay.
- NATA's CMT field is endeavouring to gather examples of MU calculations to assist its members – your assistance is needed to provide these examples.
- NATA will be looking at the approach laboratories are taking to MU at your next assessment (more detail later).
 - have you looked at the areas which contribute to MU for your tests and by how much?
 - What are your customers needs – see Note 1 to Clause 5.4.6.2.

There are a number of ways that we can estimate/measure MU. A future article will investigate these.

So although it seems Greek to English speaking laboratory managers, MU is a reality which must be faced now.

Dom Meadley
Technical Consultant
NATA Construction Materials Testing

The following article on professional indemnity (PI) insurance was prepared by Willis Australia for this newsletter. While the article refers to consulting engineers, it is equally applicable to testing authorities and those undertaking site investigations. As you will see, it does not paint a rosy picture.

Consulting Engineers Professional Indemnity

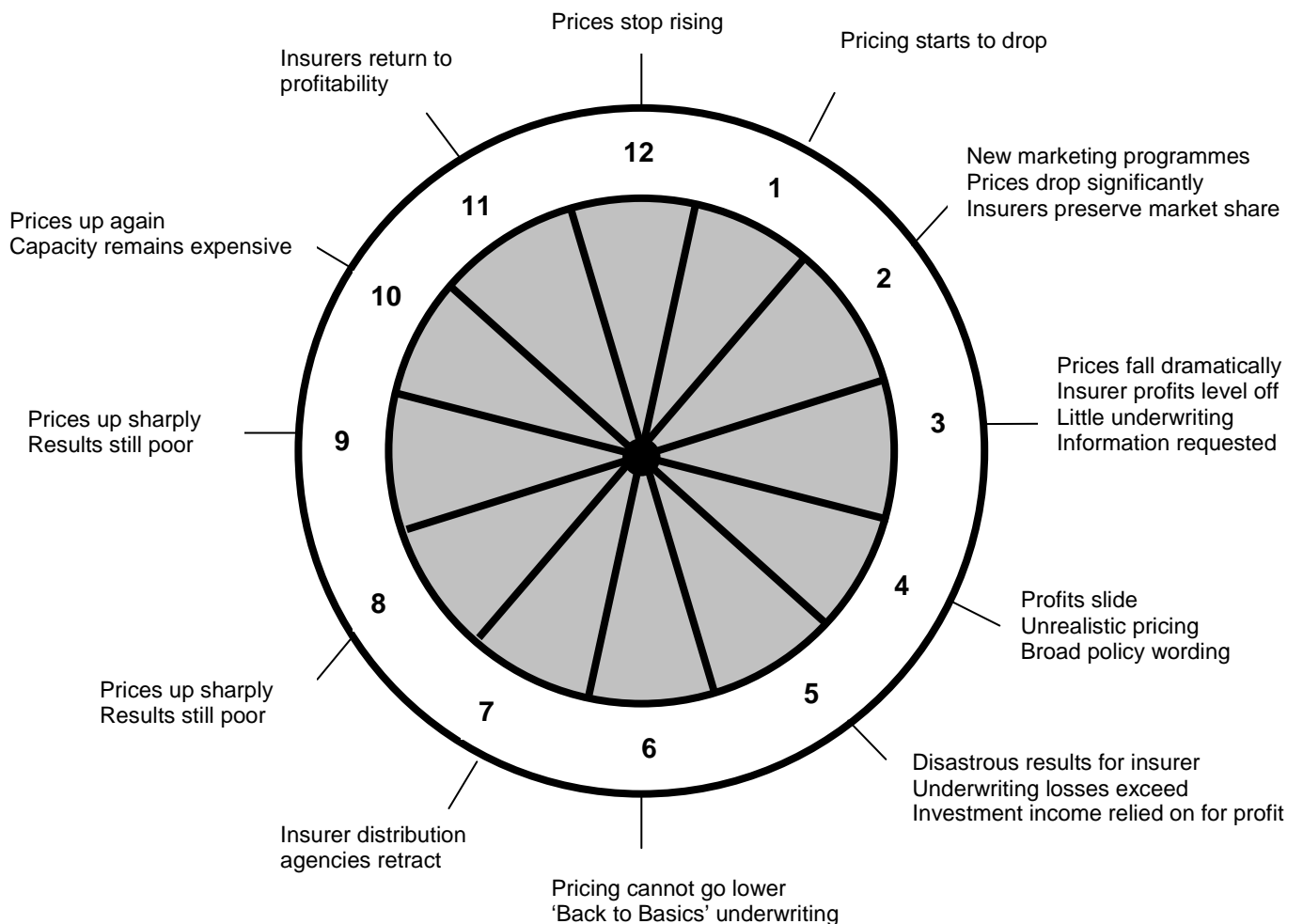
Going Forward - A Brokers Perspective

Going Forward decisions need to reflect upon the current state of

- the economy for Insurers generally
- the professional indemnity insurance market specifically and
- the Consulting Engineer's relative position in that market.

Market Cycles

The clock below represents what is often referred to as the insurance cycle.



Willis Australia © - August 2003

Your own experiences can be related to this clock face

- 2:00 – in 1995 relative pricing drops
- 3:30 – in 1998 pricing low point and broader coverage
- 5:00/6:00 – early year 2001 HIH collapse; cover reduced
- 7:00/8:00 – end year 2001/early 2002 – reduction in available markets
- 9:00 – about where we are today

The September 11 World Trade Centre disaster is often cited as a cause of the current market condition but, in reality, the market was already into a correction phase. September 11 has nevertheless accelerated the cycle and added significant volatility.

In the Australian context, the collapse of HIH and The Independent (a UK writer of Australian PI) have brought added pressure on prices and capacity in the form of increased solvency requirements which commenced in 30 June 2002 – also accelerated ahead of the original schedule.

Translating all of these factors to this Engineer's PI insurance, the outlook is for

- increased premiums
- increased retention
- risk, but a low one, of revised and narrower policy wordings and scope
- more selectivity on the part of insurers with preference for
 - lower risk activities
 - good claims experience
 - demonstrated risk management practices

Exposure of Professional Engineers

Industry claims experience is a key component of the current position in market cycle.

Through the 1990's have

- increasingly seen greater passing of risk from Principals to Consultant – particularly government contracts
- High Court decisions which have added to industry exposure
- Increased use of Trade Practices Act in actions against consultants

These changes have been reflected in the insurance industries paid losses.

Risk issues in these developments include

- Higher standards of care
- Fit for purpose warranties
- Responsibility for Principal supplied information
- Warranties on cost and quantity estimates
- Certification of compliance
- Indemnities against injury or damage
- Responsibility for acts of sub contractors

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Going Forward

In the medium to longer terms there are industry initiatives that need to be promoted by industry bodies such as

- Proportionate liability in all jurisdictions and under Trade Practices Act
- Limit of liability for professional service firms
- Redressing onerous contract conditions in government contracts

A slow ticking clock.....

The hard market has been at 9.00 – 10.00 for more than two years, it is likely the profitability for many insurers has not yet been reached. Despite when the required levels of profitability are met, PI insurers have now seen the resultant errors in the market of buying business by under pricing premium.

The probable scenario is a plateau of current premium levels from here onward in the interest of profitability, survival & future claims settlement. It is highly unlikely premium levels will return to the unsustainable levels of a soft market.....ever.

The bottom line – risk management

The management of your people & procedures has a vital role to play in the avoidance of litigation. Individuals with their highly individual attitude to risk must be protected by systems, procedures & checks that provide an early warning against potential problems that may lead to litigation.

Develop a culture of disclosure & a central focal point for all practice matters & those that may be troublesome.

Transfer of risk to the insurer is short term. If insurers can't keep premiums ahead of payouts, they walk away from the risk. Insurance is not a magic wand & occasionally the market is distorted by an insurer like HIH prepared to buy business by under-pricing premium.

The bottom line is that the profession will pay for its mistakes with higher premiums, so it's in your interests to minimise the mistakes.

Willis Australia © - August 2003

Industrial editorial
By Alan Bartlett
Training for laboratory workers

In AGTA Newsletter No 9 (August 2000) I reported on the implementation of the nationally recognised cross-industry training package as a means for geotechnical testing staff to access training and qualifications.

The training package is currently being reviewed in the process of continuous quality improvement, and AGTA members are invited to contribute to the review process. The review is being conducted by the responsible national industry training advisory body (ITAB) through consultant Dr Ivan Johnstone from CIT Solutions.

I have been involved as a member of the steering committee and have had appreciable input on behalf of the geotechnical testing industry.

In July Ivan Johnstone chaired a meeting in Brisbane of invited parties from the geotechnical industry to outline the proposed amendments to the package. Attendees included representatives from Main Roads Department, private testing companies, NATA construction testing materials, AGTA, and the quarrying/concrete industries.

During the meeting, Mark Owtrim foreshadowed that MRD proposed adopting the revised training package as the basis for its staff training system.

The main changes that will be of interest to the geotechnical industry include:

- Fewer core units, allowing greater choice of electives.
- Inclusion of a Certificate II qualification. Currently the entry-level qualification is Certificate III.
- An entry level unit on working in a scientific/technical environment
- Less emphasis on “wet chemistry” skills and knowledge in the generic competency units.
- An entry level unit on basic field measurements (eg. water levels)
- Lower level sampling and sample preparation units
- Separation of the data recording and processing functions as separate competencies
- Additional testing competencies and separation into physical/mechanical and chemical testing
- A diploma-level testing competency on the engineering properties of materials (eg. shear, consolidation, permeability)
- A unit on undertaking routine production trials
- New calibration units at Levels 4 and 5.

Several GTAs have already adopted the training package as the basis of their training systems. With MRD adopting the package, and proposed requirements for pre-qualification of GTAs for MRD contracts it can be expected that the package will become the de-facto requirement for laboratory training.

Proposed changes to the training package should make the package even more relevant to the geotechnical industry.

If you wish to provide input to the review process by commenting on draft standards and qualifications please contact me on 07 3343 7851 or at bartlett@gil.com.au.

**ASSOCIATION
OF
GEOTECHNICAL TESTING AUTHORITIES (QLD)**



**APPLICATION
FOR
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ASSOCIATION OF GEOTECHNICAL TESTING AUTHORITIES (QLD)
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2002

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Strathpine Q 4500
Telephone (07) 3881 1316
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2 For completion by CORPORATE applicants only

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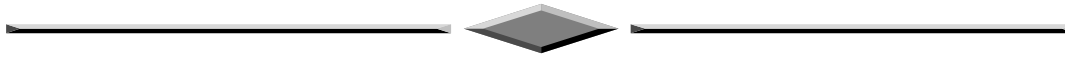
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Nominated Representative Details

Name

Position

Telephone Fax
(if different from above) (if different from above)



I,
Full Name (to be completed by nominated representative or industry individual)

declare that I will undertake to abide by the rules and ethics of the Association amended from time to time and also any regulations made by the Executive Committee in accordance with the rules:

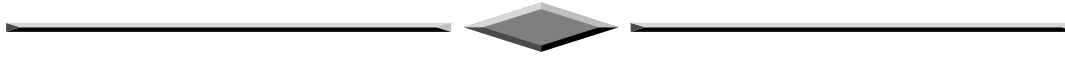
Signature Date

Return to: The Secretary
Association of Geotechnical Testing Authorities (Qld)
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STRATHPINE QLD 4500
Telephone (07) 3881 1316 Facsimile (07) 3881 3513

NOTES:

1. The name shown on the application form should be **EITHER** the full name in which the organisation is incorporated **OR** the full name of the industry individual.
2. The **nominated representative** is the person nominated by the organisation to represent it in all matters affecting the organisation with respect to membership of the Association of Geotechnical Testing Authorities (Qld).

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<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>	<u>Paid</u>	<u>Membership No</u>
being current members of the Association propose the above-named as a new members of the Association			



AGTA NEWSLETTER

ADVERTISING AGREEMENT

To the Editor AGTA Newsletter,

I wish to place the following advertisement/s in the AGTA Newsletter/s commencing with the Newsletter published immediately after / /

<i>Please indicate No. of advertisements</i>	Price Per Advert. *	\$
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