

*ASSOCIATION OF GEOTECHNICAL  
TESTING AUTHORITIES (QLD) INC*

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***NEWSLETTER***

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



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## **AGTA 2006 Committee Officers**

### **Chairman**

Paul Coker  
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### **Deputy Chairman**

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### **Secretary**

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Peter Davis  
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### **Treasurer**

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### **Deputy Treasurer**

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### **Non Executive Members**

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# A Note from the Chairman

My “baptism of fire” as your new Chairman has certainly been interesting. (I was warned there would be days like these). Lots of issues have come through the Executive Committee. Let’s have a look:

- **GENERAL MEETINGS** – Your Executive was concerned at the low turnout for these meetings. AGTA is your association, and as such, your input and attendance is much needed and most welcome. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our meetings this year.
- **MEMBERSHIP GRADES** – At the June 2005 General Meeting a proposal will be put forward to encourage those new to the geotechnical industry and students to join the Association. Our future lies in our members, so your input is vital.
- **HOW BUSY ARE YOU?** 2006 has continued on from where 2005 left off. Everybody seems to be working at a frenetic pace. My personal thanks to the hard working members of your Executive as they strive to keep the Association’s business on track. Staffing issues are continually a problem for laboratories. I guess this brings training to the forefront.
- **TRAINING** – AGTA has been working with NATA who are looking at this issue.
- **ADMINISTRATION** – Since Civil Quality Assurance ceased providing administration services to AGTA your Executive has struggled to come to terms with what is required to ensure that our legal obligations are met. I am pleased to report that after many hours of hard work, all is back on track.
- **WEB SITE** – YES, it’s true. Your Executive is looking at setting up our own web site. This is an exciting venture for AGTA and will help promote our association to the wider world.
- **CONFERENCE** – The first Annual Conference of Construction Materials Testing was held in Melbourne from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> May at the JICA International. It was great to see some 30 Queenslanders at this event. Hosted by the Victorian Construction Materials Association and NATA, the conference was deemed a success and a possible starting point for continuing conferences (perhaps every two years).

Topics covered included:

- Training – NATA government requirements and recognition of prior learning
- Asphalt testing
- Geotechnical testing – earthworks, soil conductivity and environmental factors
- Assuring the quality of testing – Measurement Uncertainty, proficiency testing
- Various road authority requirements
- Software demonstrations
- NATA – how can we be assisted?
- Concrete and aggregate testing
- Test methods
- Risk management

Tours to the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Docklands or to the CSIRO Laboratories at Highett were available to those who wished to participate at the end of the conference. Several displays of equipment, software and training packages were also available for those attending.

My congratulations are extended to the conference organisers for taking “the thread between the fingers” to see what rolls out. The geotechnical industry in Australia cannot afford to allow their boldness go to waste.

The conference provided some insight into what was happening around Australia from a geotechnical testing point of view and provided a great opportunity to set the foundations for highlighting our industry. Talking to many of the attendees, I gathered that many had come away with a renewed keenness that our industry can be moved forward.

AGTA has indicated its interest in hosting the next conference in Queensland, so your input will be sought over the next few months as we attempt to decide whether or not there is sufficient interest in hosting this event.

So, a lot has happened. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our future meetings as we move our Association ahead.

**“SOIL TESTING AS A CAREER? OH WELL, IT KEEPS ME ON THE STREETS.”**

***Regards, PAUL COKER***

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POSITIONS RESHUFFLED

You will be aware from the Chairman's Report that the Executive Committee has found it a struggle since the third quarter of last year to get up to speed with its administration and accounting duties. Despite the very best intentions, some committee members have experienced a workload in their **real** job (ie the one that pays the bills) that has limited the time they can donate to AGTA each month.

The committee has reshuffled office bearer positions from those elected at the November 2005 AGM to allow better use of available resources. The new positions are shown on Page 1 of this Newsletter.

You should also note the new postal address and contact details for AGTA Administration. Feel free to contact any of the committee members if you have any queries over AGTA business or wish to provide input in any way.

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**JUST A REMINDER.....**

## AGTA HAS EMAIL!!

*As a member of AGTA, you are entitled access to AGTA's yahoo email account.*

The minutes of every meeting - be it committee or general - are always posted to this website, so if you are not on the committee, or cannot make the general meeting this website is the perfect way to keep in touch with latest movements of AGTA.



For all usernames and passwords, please contact the Deputy Secretary on (07) 38700291 or email [pdavis@uneng.com.au](mailto:pdavis@uneng.com.au)

## TRAINEE GRADE OF AGTA MEMBERSHIP

The committee has been looking at the merits of encouraging industry trainees to become members of AGTA.

It is felt that such early membership will show trainees that there is a life after the broom, the splitter box and compaction hammer, and hopefully encourage them to stick with the training process.

At the General Meeting (Monday 26 June, don't forget), you will be asked to vote on whether we should introduce trainee membership, and how such membership should work.

The committee's general thoughts are as follows.

### Membership qualification

Membership will be open to trainees in the construction materials testing and geotechnical industry (and associated industries such as suppliers) who are in their first 12 months of work in the industry, as verified by their employer or supervisor.

### Membership Period

Membership period will be for 12 months from date of commencement of membership of AGTA.

### Membership Fee

Membership for a trainee will be free.

### Membership Limitations

A trainee member will have no voting rights, but will be able to attend meetings and will be eligible to receive an electronic copy of the Newsletter.

Please give this some thought between now and 26 June. Your ideas and comments are most welcome

## NEW INVOICE PERIOD

Fee paying members will recently have received subscription notices for 2006. This subscription covers the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007. In previous years, the subscription notice covered a different period, 1 October to 30 September, in line with AGTA's financial year.

The previous subscription period presented a number of problems, including

- the need for the committee to issue subscription notices at the time it was trying to get the Association annual accounts into order,
- the need for the outgoing committee to budget for the incoming committee,
- subscription accounts needed to be paid (ie members to be financial) by time of the AGM in November or December, for members to be eligible to vote,
- overdue subscriptions needed to be chased up by the incoming committee while it was in the process of "getting its feet under the table".

The new subscription period will allow the incoming committee full control of subscriptions and budgets, and ensure that members are financial by time of the AGM.

Members should be pleased to note that, once again, there has been no increase in subscriptions for the new period.

### MARK YOUR DIARIES NOW FOR 2006 AGM

#### WHEN?

Wednesday 28 November 2005

#### WHERE?

Hawken Auditorium  
Engineers Australia Building  
447 Upper Edward Street, Spring Hill

#### TIME?

6.00pm for 6.30pm

**Alan  
Bartlett  
Consulting**

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# **CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS TESTING CONFERENCE, MELBOURNE MAY 2006**

As noted in the Chairman's Report, some 30 delegates from Queensland made it to the conference – not a bad showing for about 140 delegates and exhibitors in total. In addition, six of the 24 papers came from Queensland authors, all of whom are AGTA members. Never let it be said that Queensland (and AGTA) cannot hold its own in the CMT world.

It was not so much that the conference delivered new material; more that the trials, tribulations, benefits, successes, problems, expectations etc of the industry were all aired in a convivial environment. It was refreshing to realise that you aren't Robinson Crusoe, fighting the injustices of the world all on your own. There are other people just like you in the same boat, but before the conference you did not know they were there.

Old associations were re-established, new friends and acquaintances made, as were promises that only time will tell if they have been kept. Everyone seemed to have a different opinion of the highlights of the conference. For me it was that common thread in many of the papers confirming that we live in a litigious world, with CMT currently close to the bottom of the industry barrel.

The papers by Max Ervin, Peter Bayetto, Peter Davis and Ernie Gmehling were particularly instructive in demonstrating the various risks currently facing our industry.

Associations such as AGTA, VCMLA, ECLA, WACMLA, CLSA and NATA, all represented at the conference, have a vital role to play in raising the profile and standing of the industry. The more we improve the standards we work by and the experience and qualifications of our staff, the better we will be able to take control the fee structure and the conditions of engagement. This will reduce our exposure to litigation and make life just that little bit less stressful.

One cannot help but think that if the state CMT associations can pull together and provide a united front, the industry will be better heard and

respected. Here's hoping that the next CMT conference can move us down that path.

At the 26 June General Meeting you will be asked for your ideas about AGTA hosting a CMT conference in 2008. The committee is in favour of the idea, but it will take more than the efforts of just the committee to pull off a successful conference. It cannot be done without input and assistance from members.

It has been suggested that a committee be formed to look into the planning of such a conference and, in particular, consider:

- will it be well patronised?
- how it will be funded?(increased subscriptions, industry sponsors, attendance fees etc),
- where it should be? (the Gold Coast has been suggested. It has good transport and accommodation facilities, and plenty of social activity!),
- whether there should be a particular conference theme,
- how we go about organising it

Between now and the General Meeting can you please give some thought to whether you will support the conference, should we proceed, if so how, what assistance can you provide. This thing won't happen unless some hands go up in the air.

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## TRAINING CORNER

So NATA is proposing that future signatories will need to be qualified to Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques.

Shock! Horror! Hours of lectures. Endless exams. What to do?

Don't despair, the training system has changed. If you are recruiting new staff, consider employing them as laboratory assistant trainees – similar to the traditional apprenticeship. The recruit will gain a Certificate III in Laboratory Skills, and if you consider them signatory material can progress relatively painlessly to the Certificate IV.

Subject to eligibility conditions the State Government will subsidise the cost of training with a small co-payment from the trainee that is usually paid by the employer. The Federal Government offers financial incentives to offset the cost of on-the-job training – that you need to do anyway.

Training is available through distance education methods in even the most remote locations.

### What about existing staff?

The Federal Government offers similar incentives to employers for existing workers to gain qualifications at Certificate III or Certificate IV level. In addition, subsidies may be available from the Queensland State Government to offset the cost of training.

But existing workers don't want to study for three years and anyway they know a lot of this stuff anyway! This is where a process called Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) kicks in.

RPL works by allowing (no, requiring) the training organisation to consider all manner of relevant evidence that the person can produce to show that they already have the skills and knowledge required to be considered competent.

### What sort of evidence can be relevant?

Certificates for previously completed courses; completed short courses; workplace training records as required by NATA; workplace documents such as minutes of OHS committee meetings, worksheets, reports; direct observation of tasks; testimonials from supervisors and clients; interview; and written or spoken questioning.

Training is then provided to fill any gaps in skills or knowledge identified by this process. This means that an experienced person can gain a qualification in as little as six months.

Traineeships are also called New Apprenticeships.

For further information on eligibility criteria, incentives available, and how to access the New Apprenticeship system visit the website at <http://www.newapprenticeships.gov.au/employer/default.asp>.

For information on laboratory qualifications in Queensland visit the Department of Employment and Training website at:

<http://tsx.dtir.qld.gov.au/cgi-bin/dycgi03.exe/inetsite/app/qtis/qtis.stm> and search Supporting Courses and Qualifications for pml30104 or pml40104.

## GUEST SPEAKERS AT NEXT GENERAL MEETING

Mark Owtrim, Principal Manager – Material Services Branch at Queensland's Department of Main Roads will be one of the two guest speakers at the AGTA general meeting to be held Monday 26 June at Hawken Auditorium, Engineers Australia Building, 447 Upper Edward Street, Spring Hill.

In his address, Mark will cover the QDMR system for registering laboratories working on QDMR road construction projects and also speak about changes to QDMR testing methods.

Also speaking will be Graham Stephens, of Brisbane-based Railway & Drilling Equipment. Graham will tell us about RDE and the wide range of products the company supplies to the CMT industry throughout Queensland.

### NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

**Monday 26 June November 2005**  
**Hawken Auditorium**  
**Engineers Australia Building**  
**447 Upper Edward Street, Spring Hill**  
**6.00pm for 6.30pm**

## LIGHTEN UP!

A motorcycle mechanic was removing a cylinder head from the motor of a Harley when he spotted a well-known heart surgeon in his workshop.

The surgeon was waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his bike.

The mechanic shouted across the workshop, "Hey Doc, can I ask you a question?"

The surgeon, a bit surprised, walked over to the mechanic working on the motorcycle. The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked,

"So Doc, look at this engine. I open its heart, take valves out, fix 'em, put 'em back in, and when I finish, it works just like new. So how come I get such a small salary and you get the really big bucks, when you and I are doing basically the same work?"

The surgeon paused, smiled, leaned over and whispered to the mechanic: "Try doing it with the engine running!"

OOOoOOO

There's nothing worse than a snotty doctor's receptionist who insists you tell her what is wrong in a room full of other patients. I know you all have experienced this, and here's the way one old guy handled it.

An 86-year-old man walked into a crowded doctor's office. As he approached the desk, the receptionist said, "Yes sir, what are you seeing the doctor for today?"

"There's something wrong with my penis," he replied.

The receptionist became irritated and said, "You shouldn't come into a crowded office and say things like that."

"Why not? You asked me what was wrong and I told you," he said.

The receptionist replied, "You've obviously caused some embarrassment in this room full of people. You should have said there is something wrong with your ear or something

and then discussed the problem further with the doctor in private."

The man walked out, waited several minutes and then re-entered. The receptionist smiled smugly and asked: "Yes?"

"There's something wrong with my ear," he stated.

The receptionist nodded approvingly and smiled, knowing he had taken her advice.

"And what is wrong with your ear, Sir?"

"I can't piss out of it," the man replied.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY  
**LORD, GRANT ME  
THE SERENITY  
TO ACCEPT THE THINGS  
I CANNOT CHANGE,  
THE COURAGE TO CHANGE  
THE THINGS I CAN,  
AND THE WISDOM AND  
STRENGTH TO HIDE THE BODIES  
OF THOSE PEOPLE  
I HAD TO KILL  
BECAUSE THEY  
REALLY, REALLY  
PISSED ME OFF!!**



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**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION  
RE AGTA GENERAL MEETING 26 JUNE 2006**

To: AGTA	Fax No: (07) 3875 1913
From: _____	Date: _____
No. of Pages (including this cover page): 1	
Name: .....	Signed: .....

**ATTENDANCE**

I can attend

I cannot attend

**PROXY VOTE**

I, ..... being a member of the Association of Geotechnical Testing Authorities (Qld) Inc., hereby appoint ..... as my proxy vote on my behalf at the General Meeting on 26 June 2006.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2006

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

***The appointment of a proxy must be provided prior to the start of the GM.***

AGTA19.doc

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



**APPLICATION  
FOR  
MEMBERSHIP**



**ASSOCIATION OF GEOTECHNICAL TESTING AUTHORITIES (QLD)**  
**MEMBERSHIP GRADES AND FEES 2006**

<b>MEMBERSHIP GRADE</b>	<b>FEES</b>
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Industry individuals or industry-associated individuals	\$50
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Construction materials testing laboratories, or industry associated company, business, partnership, group, department or body	\$150



**Association of Geotechnical Testing Authorities (Qld)**  
**PO Box 733**  
**Archerfield Qld 4108**  
**Phone: (07) 3875 1898**  
**Fax: (07) 3875 1913**



# 1 For completion by individual MEMBER applicants only

## Details of MEMBER

Name .....

Residential  
Address .....

.....

Telephone ..... Fax .....

## Details of Company

Name of Company .....

Position .....

Address .....

Telephone ..... Fax .....

---

# 2 For completion by CORPORATE MEMBER applicants only

## Details of CORPORATE MEMBER

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Address .....

.....

Telephone ..... Fax .....

## Nominated Representative Details

Name .....

Position .....

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

