

Welcome

Charles T J Bubb

President, Australian Earthquake Engineering Society, GPO Box 378, Canberra ACT 2601

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our third Annual Seminar on Earthquake Engineering and welcome to Canberra.

Our first and second seminars were held in Sydney and Melbourne respectively and in those we concentrated on Codes and Standards, mainly for buildings and structures and damage to buildings and structures in earthquakes, especially in Australia. This time we want to broaden our outlook and look more at the lifelines, the infrastructure and the community.

Our speakers will cover water supply, the electric power industry, bridges, the telephone system, pipelines and the availability of infrastructure after an earthquake.

As we consider and think about these matters based on our past experience and expectations I want to ask you to take the time also to consider changes that might be taking place both in the real world and in attitudes and expectations in the community, and in litigation.

For example, a real world change - *Rising salinity now threatens country towns* says a recent Sydney Morning Herald headline. Dry land salinity is causing house foundations to crumble, waterpipes to corrode, roads to breakup. Will this exacerbate future earthquake damage? as corrosion did in Newcastle?

Another example - litigation following the Newcastle earthquake may have as big an effect on the building professions as did the earthquake itself. Just recently the personal damage claims of 13 people injured or whose relatives died when the Newcastle Workers Club collapsed in 1989 were settled on terms not to be disclosed.

However this is not the end of the matter and the Club's claim for costs and for the loss of the building associated costs and loss of profit against the Council, the engineer, architect and the builder has been listed for hearing in March 1995.

One more instance of a ruling on warnings of possible risks. A patient succeeded in an action because the surgeon did not warn her of the possible loss of sight even though the odds against it happening were 14 000 to 1. If given that advice she may have decided not to proceed with the operation.

It occurred to me that we probably do not warn our clients of all such possibilities . We know that our Codes and indeed our best efforts in earthquake resistant design are directed to prevent loss of life and not to limit damage. We know that damage will probably occur in an earthquake, but do our clients know?

It would appear that we must warn them of all risks they are taking when they undertake a course of action based upon our advice. ¹So please keep these things in mind and lets proceed with the seminar.