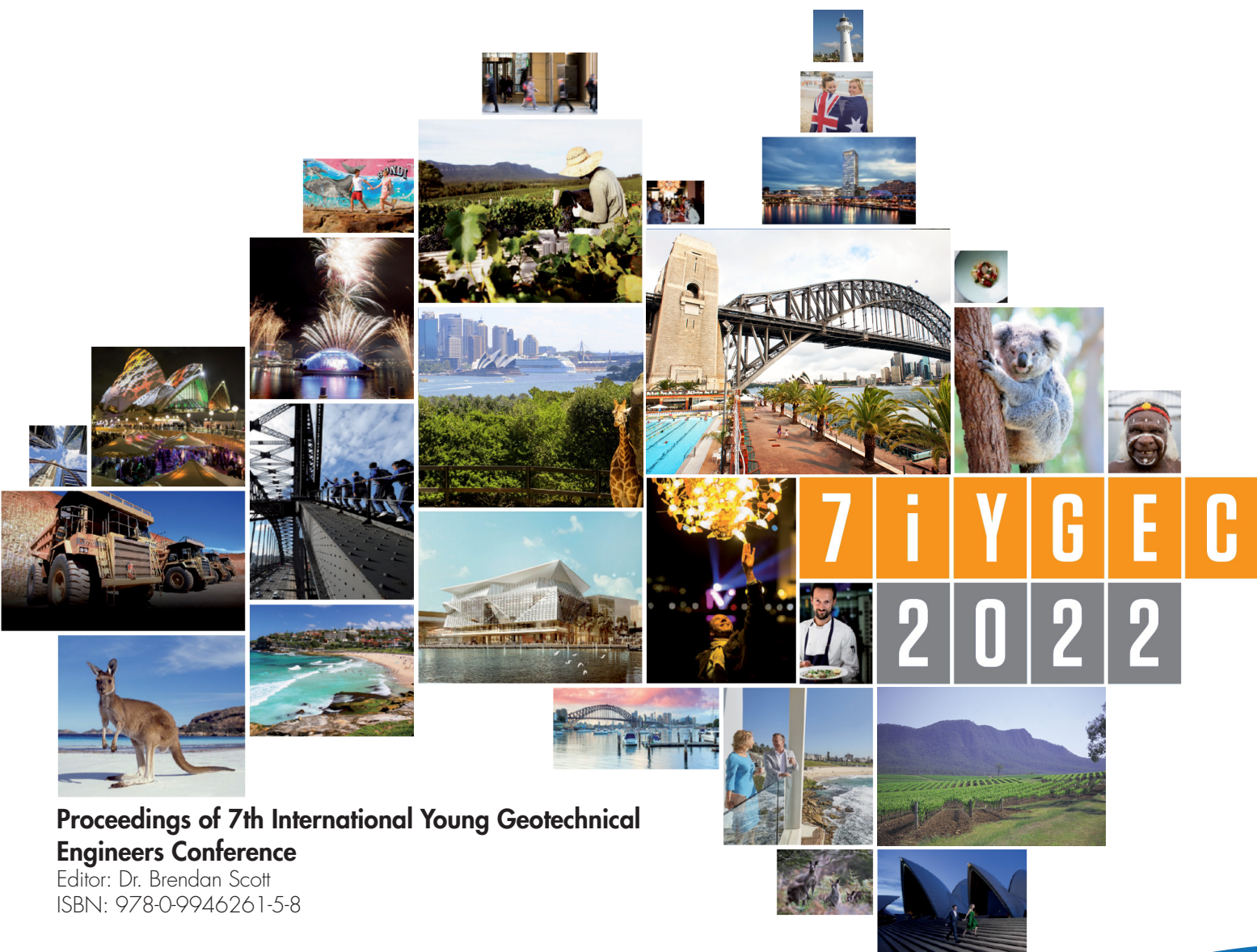




## A GEOTECHNICAL DISCOVERY DOWN UNDER

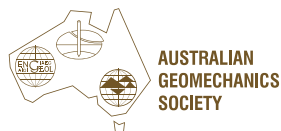
7th International Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference  
29 April – 1 May 2022 | Sydney, Australia



### Proceedings of 7th International Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference

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(7iYGEC 2022), SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA, 29 APRIL – 1 MAY 2022

# Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference

*Editor*

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**AUSTRALIAN GEOMECHANICS SOCIETY**



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## **Preface**

This volume presents the proceedings of the 7th International Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference (7iYGEC) held in Sydney, Australia, from 29 April to 1 May 2022. This event was organised by the Australian Geomechanics Society (AGS) under the auspices of the International Society of Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE).

Key objectives of the 7iYGEC are to bring young geotechnical practitioners together to participate in their own dedicated conference ahead of the 20<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ICSMGE 2022), in a relaxed, friendly and supportive environment to share their research, ideas and experience, build international networks and discuss the challenges facing young geotechnical engineers in a rapidly changing world.

Traditionally, the iYGEC conference series has addressed the aforementioned objectives by running in-person conferences. The intention was to run this conference in the same format; however, the global pandemic has necessitated that a hybrid conference model be implemented. The organising committee thanks the conference delegates for their participation in the technical paper peer review process, the submission of their technical papers and pre-recorded presentations ahead of the conference, as well as their participation during the conference in panel discussion sessions.

The topics covered by the papers included in this volume encompass a wide range of categories, from fundamentals, to applications, to impact on society. Within this volume, there are 109 papers that are organised by ISSMGE Region; Africa (7 papers), Asia (37), Australasia (7), Europe (43), North America (8) and South America (7). Delegates from 50 ISSMGE member societies are represented at this conference.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the ISSMGE and the AGS for their financial support of the 7iYGEC.

We are grateful to the member societies of the ISSMGE who helped to review the manuscripts and the 7iYGEC delegates who participated in a peer review process, which improved the overall technical standard and presentation of the published papers.

We appreciate the support of our keynote speakers, Prof. Harry Poulos and Dr. Fleur Loveridge. Additionally, we are grateful to the senior members of the geotechnical community who have helped with this conference as chairs and facilitators of the panel discussion sessions.

We thank the conference delegates for their participation in this conference, whether they could attend online or in-person. We also thank the sponsors of this conference for their support and trust that they have benefited by engaging with future leaders of the geotechnical industry.

The organising committee would like also to acknowledge the contribution of the staff at ICMS Australasia Pty Ltd for their help and support, in particular Ms. Ainslie Bishop (formerly of ICMS) and Ms. Lieke Scherbeijn who have worked closely with the organising committee to deliver the 7iYGEC. The assistance of Mr. Robin Lehane in preparing this volume of the proceedings is also greatly appreciated. Finally, we would like to thank Prof. Harry Poulos for writing the introduction to this volume.

Darren Paul  
Brendan Scott  
Daniel King  
Somaye Sadeghian  
Jonathan Sutton  
Lauren Foote  
Lucy Wu

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## Introduction

I am delighted to contribute this Introduction to the Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference. This is the most recent of a series that commenced in 2000, and was aimed at assisting the career paths of young professionals under the age of 35. The first event took place in Southampton in the UK, and featured contributions from such geotechnical luminaries as Ralph Peck, Evert Hoek, Peter Fookes and Victor de Mello. This conference series has featured technical contributions from the younger cohort of our profession world-wide, many of whom have become, or are destined to become, the leaders of our profession in the years ahead.

I have been given license to offer what I consider to be some relevant comments in this Introduction, and so I will outline my own career development, and then focus on some aspects that have been important in this development, and on some lessons that I have learned. I will also reflect on how the geotechnical profession has developed over the past 50 years or more, and some of the possible directions that it may follow in the future.

I began my professional career undertaking a PhD, under the supervision of E.H. Davis, on the subject of three-dimensional settlement analysis of foundations. After completing my research, I spent a year working largely as a structural engineer within a Sydney consulting company, and then secured an academic position at the University of Sydney. I continued to undertake research on foundation settlements, extending the work that I had done on shallow foundations to deep foundations. This broad subject has occupied my attention for over 50 years and still continues to provide stimulating challenges today. After 24 years as a full-time academic, I changed direction and joined the consulting firm of Coffey Partners International, while retaining a part-time appointment at the University of Sydney. I held these dual roles for 12 years until my retirement from the University in 2001. I am still associated with the University of Sydney as an Emeritus Professor and am also a Senior Consultant with the company, now re-branded as Tetra Tech Coffey.

Among the aspects that I have found to be beneficial in my career development, and which I could commend to younger engineers, are the following:

1. Having a dedicated mentor to guide me through the early stages of my career was a crucial factor. The late Professor E.H. (Ted) Davis taught me to think critically, to understand the fundamentals of a problem, and to write as clearly and as simply as possible.
2. As an engineer, relating research to practice is a logical process. While there is scope for “blue-sky” research, it is generally much easier to find sponsorship for, and acceptance of, research if it is oriented towards a specific practical outcome.
3. My dual career as an academic and practitioner was probably the most fruitful period of my professional life. Real-life problems identified during consulting projects became research topics for my post-graduate students, and the results of their work were subsequently incorporated into practice.
4. As an academic, having consulting experience was invaluable in being able to develop more interesting lectures that included real projects as examples of the application of theory. I can heartily recommend the benefits of doing some consulting work to academics who wish to both broaden their knowledge of real-world geotechnics and who wish to enhance their teaching.
5. I benefitted enormously from periods of sabbatical leave during (and even after) my academic career. I had the privilege of spending two periods of sabbatical leave at MIT under the guidance of Professor T. William Lambe. It was there that I gained a better appreciation of how theory can be applied to practice, and the virtues of making real (“Class A”) predictions and subsequently comparing them with the outcomes. I also spent two months in 1977 working with McClelland Engineers in Houston, and it was there that I became much more familiar with offshore geotechnics and issues such as the cyclic loading of piles. Again, this was to influence my research over the ensuing 12 years or so.
6. As a consultant, I soon learned that time is a much more critical factor than it had been in academia. Time had to be accounted for, and the commercial success of an organization depends on projects being undertaken on time and within budget. For example, whereas one might wish to spend extra time on exploring finer points identified during a project, if the budget did not allow for this, then it should not be done, at least within company hours.
7. As a consultant, it is most important that, when carrying out geotechnical analyses, a check be done on the results of the analysis. In particular, many contemporary computer programs are very powerful but the user does not always understand how they work, and what some of the implicit assumptions may be. As a consequence, the results may turn out to be at best inaccurate, and at worst, misleading or wrong. Checks can be made in one or more of the following ways:
  - a. Via previous experience with similar problems in similar ground conditions;
  - b. Via review by another experienced professional within the same organization;
  - c. Via third-party peer review;
  - d. Via undertaking simplified analyses which incorporate the correct engineering principles of the problems, even though they may require a simplification of the ground conditions. This is an approach that I strongly advocate as an adjunct to any of the above procedures.



8. I have benefitted greatly from being able to attend conferences during my entire career. Not only do they provide a means of presenting one's work, whether research or project-related, but perhaps even more importantly, they provide a means of networking with fellow professionals, not necessarily only in the geotechnical field, and thus developing both professional and personal friendships that can endure for a lifetime. There are so many conferences these days that it is difficult to decide on which are most relevant, but preference can perhaps be given to those that will result in publications in proceedings or journals that are likely to be widely read, and those which tend to address issues that are likely to be of research or project-related benefit.

Since I began to carry out research for my PhD in 1961, I have seen remarkable developments in the field of geotechnical engineering. In the early 1960s, the main topics of interest can be gauged from the General Reports in the Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering, held in Paris in 1961. These topics were as follows:

1. Soil properties and their measurements.
2. Foundations of structures, other than piles.
3. Foundations of structures, piles.
4. Roads.
5. Forces on structures.
6. Earth dams, slopes and open excavations.
7. Other problems, including soil stabilization and foundations in seismic areas.

Since that time, various broad areas have been developed that have extended the scope of the above topics, including:

1. Ground improvement techniques.
2. Soil reinforcement.
3. Geotechnical earthquake engineering.
4. Geo-environmental engineering.
5. Offshore geotechnics.
6. The application of probabilistic approaches to design.
7. The application of high-level numerical techniques, including finite element and finite difference methods.

The International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE) has established 38 Technical Committees that address specific issues within 3 broad categories:

1. Fundamentals.
2. Applications.
3. Impact on Society.

Most of the traditional topics are addressed within the first two categories, although the Applications category has expanded to include such topics as reinforced fill structures, scour and erosion, transportation, land reclamation, safety and serviceability, and system performance.

Perhaps the most significant extension in our profession has been the focus on the impact of our subject on Society. The specific topics addressed are historic sites, forensic geotechnics, floods, risk, megacities, geo-education, sustainability, energy geotechnics and machine learning. It is clear from this list that soil mechanics and foundation engineering has expanded well beyond its rather limited traditional base and is rapidly becoming much more multi-disciplinary. Moreover, there is an increasing trend towards the incorporation of other facets of science, including chemistry (whose importance became very prominent with the development of geo-environmental engineering), microbiology, as exemplified by the increasing number of methods of bio-geo treatment of soils and wastes, and artificial intelligence techniques that have the potential to be an invaluable adjunct to human-based geotechnical design. Such techniques can incorporate precedent and prior experience to facilitate checking and calibration of designs.

There has been a perception among some that research in geotechnical engineering is passé, and that all our problems have been addressed adequately. I would challenge this view! I believe that the years ahead will provide remarkable opportunities for younger engineers to become more proficient in what we might term "scientific geotechnics", an area that is much broader than that in which I developed my professional career. If I were starting my career today, I would relish the challenge of blending traditional soil mechanics and geotechnical engineering with science, not only the well-established areas such as geology, mathematics, statistics and computing, but in emerging areas such as microbiology, remote sensing and monitoring, and "green" energy production. I hope that attendees at this conference will feel the same enthusiasm as I do, and be able to forge interesting and dedicated careers that will benefit Society as well as themselves.

H.G. POULOS



## Table of contents

Preface	iii
Acknowledgements	iii
7iYGEC Organising Committee	iv
Introduction	v
 <b>AFRICA</b>	
Predicting the CBR of a lateritic soil for road construction from index properties using fractal analysis of grading <i>A.K. Ampadu</i>	3
A comparative study between the performances of polypropylene and polyester non-woven geotextiles in landfills <i>N. Ehujuo, D. Kalumba, L. Sobhee-Beetul &amp; J. Oriokot</i>	9
Assessment of extreme multi-day flood events on tailings storage facilities <i>D. Labuschagne &amp; P. Oelofse</i>	15
Thermal resistivity of soils: A geotechnical investigation perspective to support renewable energy projects <i>A. Lodenkemper</i>	19
Effects of water content on the strength and deformation characteristics of a heavily compacted lateritic soil <i>J.P. Monkah</i>	25
Assessing spatial variability of Bouregreg Valley deposits based on CPTU tests <i>A.H. Mridakh, F. Lahlou, H. Ejjaouani &amp; H. Labied</i>	29
Discrete element modelling of backfill settlement behind integral bridge abutments <i>S. Ravjee</i>	33
 <b>ASIA</b>	
Tilt sensors for monitoring of unstable slopes: A case study from Kalimpong in Darjeeling Himalayas <i>M.T. Abraham, N. Satyam &amp; B. Pradhan</i>	41
The effect of mechanical surcharge on single energy pile foundations: 1g physical modeling <i>S. Afzalsoltani &amp; F. Jafarzadeh</i>	47
Simplified numerical model formulation to examine the impact of viscous parameters on pile bearing characteristics <i>S. Al Kodsi &amp; T. Awwad</i>	53
Improvement of the leaching measurement procedure of collapsible gypseous soil <i>A.S.A. Al-Gharbawi, M. Fattah &amp; M. Mahmood</i>	59
Simulating the behavior of a piled raft foundation overlying a tunnel using FEM <i>H. Al-Laban &amp; M. Fakhraldin</i>	63

Experimental investigation of capillary rise in unsaturated gypseous soils <b>D. Alsalih &amp; A. Al-Obaidi</b>	67
Consolidation characteristics of over consolidated clays in Jakarta <b>S.D. Alvi &amp; P.P. Rahardjo</b>	73
Durability assessment of Cenozoic shale in Northern Sarawak, Malaysia <b>F. Anthony, V.H. Loo, K.S. Wong, J. Ben-Awuah, N. Ramasamy &amp; W.K. Leong</b>	79
Interaction between longitudinal ribs of geogrid during pullout <b>R. Bhowmik, J.T. Shahu &amp; M. Datta</b>	85
Changes in silty-clayed soil properties due to hydrodynamic water pressure at excavation of a deep pit <b>E. Bragar, Y. Pronozin, L. Bartolomei, &amp; P. Aminzoda</b>	89
Rehabilitation of Southern Cross-Island Highway in a complex disaster environment <b>H.-K. Chuang</b>	95
Effect of micro pore structure on the suffusion of wide-grading loose soils <b>J. Nie, Y. Cui &amp; Y. Yin</b>	99
Leaching behavior of selected elements in ash resulted from pyrolysis of plastic waste using catalyst <b>B. Dosmukhambetova, M. Mimura, A. Zhussupbekov, K. Gulzat &amp; E. Soyaçikgöz</b>	105
Natural rubber latex as a polymer additive to modify the cement stabilized recycled concrete aggregate for pavement base applications <b>N. Duong Vinh, M. Hoy &amp; S. Horpibulsuk</b>	109
A study on the deflection behaviour of diaphragm walls supported laterally by cross walls in deep excavations <b>B.L. Dwarampudi &amp; P.L. Teo</b>	115
Excavation in limestone formation of KVMRT Conlay underground station, Malaysia <b>C. Fong Wah</b>	121
Analyses of ground penetrating radar (GPR) signals for investigation of subsurface abnormalities <b>J.-S. Lee, W.-T. Hong</b>	127
A comparison on mechanical performance and durability of VA-based geopolymer and Portland cement for soil stabilization <b>P. Ghadir, H. Miraki, N. Malekahmadi, N. Shariatmadari &amp; A. Javadi</b>	133
Evaluation of post-liquefaction volumetric change based on the difference in initial and minimum void ratio <b>J. Kim, J.-T. Han, S.H. Lee, M. Kazama &amp; T. Kawai</b>	139
The study of compacted soil behavior due to wetting under anisotropic condition through a series of simulations <b>V. Komolvilas &amp; C. Srinil</b>	143
An investigation of effect of 2015 Gorkha Earthquake within the World Heritage monument zones of Kathmandu Valley <b>A. Kumar</b>	149
Pseudo-static stability analysis of caisson in porous media <b>M. Kumar &amp; K. Chatterjee</b>	155

Set-up and limitations of small-scaled verification load tests on hand-dug caisson pile: A Malaysian contractor's experience <i>C.S. Leow, C.W. Oh &amp; F.I. Yap</i>	161
Coupling effects of particle shape and internal pores on the mechanical properties of calcareous sand <i>Y. Lv, X. Li &amp; Y. Su &amp; J. Su</i>	167
Analysis on the behavior of soils to anti-frost additives <i>A. Montayeva, A. Zhussupbekov, S. Iskakov, S. Montayev &amp; A. Zhakulin</i>	173
Relating dynamic properties of gap-graded soils to the stress transmission in soil fabric <i>M. Otsubo, A. Ghaemi, Y. Li, R. Kuwano &amp; T.T. Dutta</i>	177
Effect of fiber and cement additives on the small-strain stiffness behavior of Toyoura sand <i>M. Safdar, T. Newson &amp; F. Shah</i>	183
Shear-strain behavior of progressive multistage interface direct shear test for argillaceous – overburden interface <i>F.H. Sagitaningrum, B.S. Soepandji, S.A. Kamaruddin, R. Nazir &amp; I.M. Alatas</i>	189
Seismic hazard analysis for public infrastructure in Metro Manila <i>P.A.Y. Selda, R.A.C. Luna, R.D. Quebral, J.M.B. Gargullo, K.J.R. Leobrera, E.D. Marasigan, M.J.P. Armario &amp; M.P. Baniquett</i>	195
Land subsidence evaluation for urban cities by time-series interferometric synthetic aperture radar analysis <i>J. Takami</i>	201
GIS-based landslide susceptibility mapping using frequency ratio (FR) method - A case study of Murree Hills, Pakistan <i>O. Ur Rehman, A. Latif &amp; M.N. Aslam</i>	207
Axial and volumetric strain response of biogas desaturated sand under undrained cyclic loads <i>K. Wang, J. Chu &amp; S. Wu</i>	213
Adaptive training of convolutional neural networks for slope reliability analysis in spatially variable soils <i>Z.Z. Wang, S.H. Goh &amp; S.G.S. Pai</i>	217
Analysis of soft soil lateral movement induced by vacuum preloading with finite element method <i>A.E. Wijaya &amp; P.P. Rahardjo</i>	223
Soil desiccation crack recognition and quantification using deep learning <i>J.-J. Xu, C.-S. Tang, Q. Cheng &amp; H. Zhang</i>	229
Monitoring and construction of high-rise building with underground parking space in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan <i>A. Yessentayev, A. Zhussupbekov, A. Omarov, I. Glushkov &amp; F.K.M. Ghaffoori</i>	235
Soil strength mobilisation around the building foundation in finite element analysis of shallow tunnelling <i>W.N. Yiu, H.J. Burd &amp; C.M. Martin</i>	241

## AUSTRALASIA

Influence of geologic and geotechnical dataset resolution on regional liquefaction assessment of the Lower Wairau Plains <b>O. Altaf, L. Wotherspoon &amp; R. Orense</b>	249
Mapping and monitoring urban landslides in New Zealand using Sentinel-1 InSAR data: A case study from Gisborne <b>M. Cook, M. Brook, J. Tunnicliffe, M. Cave &amp; I. Hamling</b>	255
Rawene Reserve landslips emergency response and stabilisation <b>S. Farquhar &amp; J. Seward</b>	259
Management of high wall failure at Dubbo Quarry, NSW <b>J. Hellmuth</b>	265
Designing a breakwater in Apia: Results, challenges and recommendations <b>C. Kraus &amp; N. Ridgley</b>	269
The use of early-works embankments in soft soil areas to optimize detailed design: Gateway Motorway case study <b>N. Manche, J. Alinur &amp; M. Phillipson</b>	273
Effect of landfill leachate on hydraulic properties of an organic soil <b>Y. Xie, J. Xue &amp; C.T. Gnanendran</b>	279

## EUROPE

Removable strand anchors, state of the art <b>J. Acebo Gómez &amp; P.R. Terán</b>	287
Determination of the stability coefficient of the slopes of earth dams by dynamic and pseudo-static methods <b>A. Almakaeva &amp; A. Ter-Martirosian</b>	293
Soil dynamic behavior of track ballast - experimental and semi-analytical verification <b>O. Barbir &amp; B. Antony</b>	299
4D probing of clay <b>G. Birmipilis</b>	303
Evaluation of long-term monitoring data of the energy foundations at metro station Taborstraße in Vienna <b>A. Brunner, R. Markiewicz, J. Pistol &amp; D. Adam</b>	307
Geotechnical properties of liquefied pumiceous layers in lakes <b>J. Chaneva, M.O. Kluger, V.G. Moon, D.J. Lowe &amp; R.P. Orense</b>	313
Lateral spreading prediction for induced earthquakes <b>J. de Greef &amp; F. Besseling</b>	319

XRD quantification of clay minerals: impact of sample preparation and quantitative interpretation methods choice <i>G. Di Remigio, I. Rocchi &amp; V. Zania</i>	325
Stability analysis of cemented soil slopes in a geotechnical centrifuge <i>H. Ebrahimisadr &amp; B. Teymur</i>	331
Deepening an old, verticalised pit: rock slope instability hazard assessment using a digitally augmented structural database (Flône limestone quarry, Belgium) <i>E. Frets, A. Gauffriau, N. Coussaert &amp; J. Vanneste</i>	337
Allowable bearing capacity of shallow foundations for low-density pyroclastic rocks <i>C.L. Garrido, R.A. Galindo &amp; A. Serrano</i>	341
Benchmark of small-strain shear modulus on Belgian North Sea soils with bender element testing <i>D. Gómez &amp; B. Stuyts</i>	347
Assessing the leakage rate through semipermeable bentonite-based barriers permeated with multi-electrolyte solutions <i>N. Guarena, A. Dominijanni &amp; M. Manassero</i>	353
Assessment and comparison of strength and stiffness parameters derived for normally consolidated sand using SPT and CPT <i>B.S. Heilmann &amp; A. Rosborg</i>	359
Seismic behaviour of structures with basements in liquefiable soil <i>F. Hughes &amp; G. Madabhushi</i>	365
Effects of chemical stabilization on expansive soil as a remediation solution for houses damaged by the shrinkage-swelling phenomenon <i>L. Ighil Ameer &amp; F. Ouendi</i>	371
An updated SPT-based seismic soil liquefaction triggering database <i>M. Ilgac, K.O. Cetin &amp; R. Kayen</i>	375
Suction characteristics of polymer-treated and untreated bentonite GCLs <i>M. Khizar Khan, G. Di Emidio, A. Bezuijen, W. Lieske &amp; T. Wichtmann</i>	381
Drone-based 3D slope stability analysis of the Hitura mine serpentinite waste rock pile <i>S. Kuoppamaa, A. Rauhala &amp; A. Tuomela</i>	385
In situ measurement of the permeability in a poorly-graded weathered rockfill <i>C. Laina-Gómez, D. Escudero-Merino &amp; E. Asanza-Izquierdo</i>	389
A contribution to the improvement of ground investigation using the pressuremeter <i>A. Lopes</i>	395
An innovative energetic approach to interpret liquefaction behaviour of non-saturated sandy soils <i>L. Mele, A. Flora &amp; S. Lirer</i>	401
Cyclic degradation of axially loaded piles installed in micaceous silty soil <i>G. Melin, S. Rezvani, S.P.H. Sørensen &amp; K.L. Kaufmann</i>	407

Slope stability monitoring of Vítkov Hill, Prague <i>M. Mixa &amp; J. Košťál</i>	413
Permanent sheet pile walls in complex soil conditions – surveillance, monitoring and safety <i>B. Naglestad, H.V. Sem &amp; S.B. Langelid</i>	419
Research into pile toe failure in Amazonehaven <i>R. Nejad</i>	425
Characterization of fine-grained soils by means of insitu and laboratory tests <i>S. Oberhollenzer, R. Marte, F. Tschuchnigg &amp; M. Premstaller</i>	429
The interface failure mechanism of energy piles <i>E. Ravera &amp; L. Laloui</i>	435
The engineering mitigation of a water bearing fissure in the Chalk at the Tideway Deptford Church Street Shaft <i>E. Riley</i>	439
Laboratory determination of cement consumption when using tube-a-manchette grouting <i>M. Ruseva &amp; A. Totsev</i>	445
Excess pore pressure estimation based on cyclic laboratory tests <i>J.-E. Saathoff &amp; M. Achmus</i>	451
Experimental and numerical comparison of soil behavior under wind turbine <i>A. Sahyouni &amp; P. Burtin</i>	457
Reconstruction of the building and conversion to hotel in the center of Zagreb, Croatia <i>D. Šain &amp; K. Bolanča</i>	463
Investigating railway track load bearing capacity using descriptive data mining <i>M. Sauni</i>	467
On the boundary conditions of suffusion tests and its relation to dam safety assessment <i>I. Silva, P. Viklander &amp; J. Laue</i>	473
Group effect on foundation solutions consisting of several suction piles <i>J. Bjerre &amp; E.R. Sørli</i>	479
Impact of the installation process on piles subjected to lateral high-cyclic loading: Back-analysis of model tests using a high-cycle accumulation model <i>P. Staubach, L. Rentzsch, J. Machacek, &amp; T. Wichtmann</i>	485
Single pile's displacement under action of negative friction forces in new design of a pile raft foundation <i>S. Tabachnikov, V. Naidonova &amp; A. Kupreichyk</i>	491
Influence of air flow on temperature distribution in culverts, measurements versus prediction <i>K. Tommik, S. Knutsson, J. Laue &amp; N. Lintzén</i>	495
Correlations between the deformation modulus, the liquidity index and the void ratio for moraine and lacustrine glacial clayey soils <i>T. Tronda</i>	499

On the foundation damping evaluation for monopile supported offshore wind turbines <i>Y. Tsiapas, D. Vallianatou, K. Papadopoulou &amp; G. Bouckovalas</i>	505
New insights for modeling the mechanical behavior of clays under different environmental conditions <i>A. Tuttolomondo, A. Ferrari &amp; L. Laloui</i>	511
The investigation of the use of automation in dike and embankment projects <i>L. van der Linde &amp; T. Cömert</i>	517

## ***NORTH AMERICA***

Analyzing dilatancy from triaxial compression tests: How to get more out of a simple test's data <i>V. Castonguay</i>	525
The time dependent behavior of a trial embankment on Mexico City clay <i>R.A. González Rodríguez, M.A. Mánica &amp; E.O. Shelley</i>	531
Horizontal directional drilling ground heave during watermain installation beneath a dike <i>S. Harms</i>	537
Proposed methods and considerations to allocate damages for deficient mechanically stabilized earth walls <i>A. Loyola</i>	543
Strain localization in a triaxial extension test on transparent sand <i>D.H. Marx &amp; J.G. Zornberg</i>	549
Analysis of backward erosion piping by critical secant gradient functions <i>B. Robbins &amp; D.V. Griffiths</i>	555
Evaluation of pile group effect under axial loading on foundations for storage tanks using numerical modeling <i>E. Vega Fernández &amp; F.A. Flores López</i>	561
Air jet setup for evaluating wind erosion resistance of soil <i>M. Woolley &amp; E. Kavazanjian</i>	567

## ***SOUTH AMERICA***

Performance of large diameter storage and sealing structures in a deep exothermic waste repository <i>M. Alonso, J. Vaunat, S. Olivella, A. Gens &amp; M.-N. Vu</i>	575
Triaxial tests on carbonated cement samples with bacterial nanocellulose in the context of carbon capture and storage <i>J.C. Barría, S. Orlandi, R. Guerreiro, D. Manzanal, S. Ghabezloo &amp; J.-M. Pereira</i>	581
Effect of pH on the stability in slopes in mine waste rock dump – A case study between geochemistry and geotechnics <i>C.J. Barriga Paria, E.L. Pereira &amp; H.M. Lima</i>	587
Subduction versus shallow crustal earthquakes: Intensities versus amplitude <i>N. Bastías</i>	593



Tailings dam breach analysis: Lessons learned from released volumes of recent environmental catastrophes <b><i>D. Inzunza</i></b>	599
A review of the hydro-mechanical behaviour of tailings and its importance to the stability of tailings dams <b><i>C. Morales &amp; D. Taborda</i></b>	605
Coupled hydro-mechanical analysis in the construction and operation of a homogeneous earth dam <b><i>M. Tincopa</i></b>	611
 <i>Author Index</i>	 617