



June Meeting

**FAILURES AND NEAR MISSES IN A GEOTECHNICAL
CAREER**

JOHN PHILLIPS
Past Chairman, GHD

SYNOPSIS

John's talk will cover a range of experiences that he would have preferred not to have had in a 40 year career in geotechnical work. However, there are lessons to be learnt so that younger engineers will make their own mistakes and not repeat these ones.

The talk will initially cover two dam failures in Victoria, one of which failed one and a half times and the other two and a half times. He will then describe a legal failure with geotechnical overtones, but not a structural failure, for a swimming complex built on the infamous Coode Island Silt.

There will be a description of the "witchcraft-induced" failure of a waste dump at the Ok Tedi mine in which a dozer operator was killed. Finally the slip failure of the Cockatoo Island Sea wall will be described.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

John Phillips is the past Chairman of GHD, a multi-disciplinary consulting company which employs over 5,500 staff in Australia and 14 other countries. John is a member of the CELM National Board and was President of the WA Division of Engineers Australia in 2006.

He is a past Chairman of the Association of Consulting Engineers in WA and is a past Chairman of the Australian National Committee on Large Dams. He currently represents Australia at the International Congress on Large Dams based in Paris. He is a director on three boards and is a member of the Curtin University Engineering Advisory Committee.

After graduation at the University of Adelaide, John worked for the Commonwealth Government on rocket launching facilities at Woomera and on the design of foundations for a number of Reserve Bank buildings and the international terminals at Tullamarine and Mascot. In this period he also completed a Master of Engineering Science Degree at Melbourne University.

John then worked as a structural and geotechnical engineer for GHD in Victoria for 13 years, before transferring to Perth. He has worked in nine countries, specialising in dams, roads, mining infrastructure and water management.

DATE: **Monday 15 June 2009**

TIME: **6:00 pm to 7:30 pm (light refreshments from 5:30 pm)**

VENUE: **Engineering House, 11 Bagot Street, North Adelaide**