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## AUSTRALIAN ELECTROLYSIS COMMITTEE

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*The Electrolysis and Cathodic Protection Group of the Australasian Corrosion Association*

### HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTROLYSIS COMMITTEE

In 1977 there were Electrolysis Committees (EC) in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, but there was only relevant legislation in New South Wales and Victoria. Draft legislation had been prepared for Queensland but it was far more proscriptive than that in the other states. To air the issue the Queensland Branch of the Australasian Corrosion Association (ACA) arranged a "Cathodic Protection Legislation Symposium" for 25 May 1977.

During the symposium there was an informal meeting between the members of a number of EC including Roy Staples (Queensland EC Chairman), Bill Woodberry (New South Wales EC Secretary), Jack Dunn (Victorian EC Convener) and Brian Byrne (ACA Electrolysis Officer). The group decided that an Australian Electrolysis Committee (AEC) be formed of members of the various state EC and that they meet on a regular basis to assist with the coordination of interference testing regulations, and to provide a forum for information transfer on interference testing and electrolysis issues. Jack Dunn was charged with convening the first meeting of the AEC, to be held during the 1977 ACA annual conference.

The first meeting of the AEC was held in Brisbane on 15 November 1977, during the ACA Conference, with Jack Dunn in the chair. The attending members were:

- Queensland (Brian Byrne, Bob Thomson)
- New South Wales (Bill Woodberry, Brian Martin, Phil Aubin, G Johnston)
- Victoria (Jack Dunn, Len Jenkins, Lindsay Wilcox)
- South Australia (Reg Casling, G Law, C Moore)

The meeting discussed interference testing regulations in the different states, and DC components from AC electrical appliances causing corrosion of buried structures.

Meetings have been held twice yearly since that first meeting in November 1977.

Secretary/Conveners of the Committee have been:

- Jack Dunn from November 1977 until November 1978.
- Brian Martin from June 1979 until November 1992.
- Geoff Cope from May 1993 until November 2003.
- Bruce Ackland from November 2003 to November 2004.
- Mark Davidson from November 2004 until January 2011.
- Alireza Kouklan from January 2011 to present.

Initially the Chairman of an AEC meeting was elected from the members attending that meeting, until June 1979 when Bill Woodberry was elected. Bill left the Chair during an animated discussion on 'DC components from AC electrical appliances causing corrosion of buried structures' at the November 1981 meeting. He did not return. The Chairmen since then have been:

- Len Francis from June 1982 until November 1983.
- Reg Casling from June 1984 until November 1987.
- Geoff Cope from June 1988 until November 1992.
- Brian Martin from June 1993 until November 2004.
- Bruce Ackland from November 2004 to present.

The initial meetings discussed interference testing regulations, interference testing procedures and electrolysis issues, especially DC components from AC electrical appliances causing corrosion of buried structures. The scope was substantially broadened in 1979 when Brian Martin arranged two full day open forums in Sydney, with lead papers from Walter von Baeckmann (Ruhrgas – Germany) and Alfred Baltes (Pipeline Engineering – Germany).

# On 16 October 1979 there was the “Interference Testing Symposium” which opened a major discussion on interference testing criteria and errors in interference measurements. This initiated a research program into interference testing by the New South Wales EC, the results of which were published by Martin & Huckson in Industrial Corrosion in 1986.

# On 17 October 1979 there was the “Cathodic Protection Forum” which opened a full day debate on:

- Cathodic protection in crevices under disbonded coating.
- Cathodic protection shielding on closely paralleling and intersecting pipelines.
- Telluric effects.
- Mitigation of induced AC effects.
- IR drops in potential measurement.

Most of these discussions led to research work, which has subsequently been published.

A draft Constitution was put to the meeting of June 1980 and, after some heated discussion, it was agreed that membership could be extended beyond those belonging to EC. Membership was opened to anyone interested in cathodic protection, interference testing and electrolysis matters. There were minor changes to the Constitution in June 1982, but then it remained unchanged until the AEC incorporated into the ACA as its first Technical Group in November 1993. Presently, anyone on our mailing list is considered a member, although membership of the ACA is also encouraged.

The AEC ran the first ACA Conference Forum in Adelaide in November 1986. Conference organisers thought that it would be a side-show for cathodic protection specialists, however it was packed, leaving the formal sessions with embarrassingly small audiences. Cathodic Protection Forums have been held at all ACA conferences since, as well as the main full day mid-year meeting. Other technical groups within the ACA now also run conference forums.

In Melbourne on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 the AEC had its 87<sup>th</sup> meeting via the web due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting had about 100 members attending online from

overseas and all states and territories of Australia, celebrating the 43 year history of the AEC.

The mid-year meeting is the AEC's main technical event and is scheduled as a full day meeting with presentations and active discussions about corrosion, cathodic protection, stray currents and any other issues affecting our industry. These mid-year meetings are generally held in different states from year to year to allow as many members as possible to attend at least some of these. The next mid-year meeting is scheduled for Melbourne on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 in person and via the web.

Bruce Ackland  
Alireza Kouklan

10 June 2021