

Annual Report for 2013/2014**1. Introduction**

1.1 *The Council was elected on 7 June 2013 at the 34th Annual General Meeting (AGM). During the 2013/14 term of office, 7 Council meetings were held to discuss and administer the affairs of our Association. To strength networking within departments and communication with members, DCC representatives and young members' representatives were invited to attend the Council meetings as observers. The Council also met representatives of the Civil Engineering Graduates (CEG) and NCSC Engineers / Assistant Engineers (NCSC E/AE) whose major concern was undoubtedly their career prospects.*

1.2 *The Council received many valuable feedback and suggestions on various civil service issues from our Members. We also sought advices from our Hon. Advisers, (Ir Dr. Hon. LO Wai-kwok, Ir Prof. LAU Ching-kwong and Ir Prof. William KO Chan-gock) on issues concerning the civil service and engineering profession.*

1.3 *The Council has been maintaining active participations, close communications and liaisons with other government engineers associations, the Hong Kong Senior Government Officers Association (HKSGOA) and the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) concerning affairs affecting the interests of professionals in the civil service.*

1.4 *The Council has been maintaining close communications with PS for Dev (Works) and the Works Directors. We also continued to maintain a regular dialogue with DCED and DWS on issues such as staff resources, promotion prospects, performance appraisal for civil engineer grades, incremental credit for experience (ICE), prospects of existing NCSC E/AE, etc.*

1.5 *The Association is glad to see the appointment of two of our former members, Ir LAM Tin-sing and Ir CHUNG Kum-wah, as DWS and DDS on 13 November 2013 and 3 February 2014 respectively.*

2. Civil Service Issues

2.1 *In the past year, we actively participated in many major issues concerning the civil service. Salient points are mentioned in the following paragraphs:*

Inadequate Staff Resources

2.2 *In order to maintain Hong Kong's competitiveness as a top-class metropolis through the successful implementation of the current and upcoming mega-scale infrastructure projects, the Association considers that the creation of Engineer Grade posts in terms of ranks and numbers should be accorded with top priority.*

2.3 *The Association has discussed with the management the need to increase the number of engineers of various ranks to cope with the social demand, and in particular, to create more Directorate D1 and D2 Engineer posts in order to steer and uphold the timely delivery of the public infrastructure projects in view of the increased complexity / controversy. The Association has met with and will continue to work with Ir Dr. Hon. LO Wai-kyok, PS for Dev (Works) and Heads of Grade (HOGs) to raise the concerns of our members on staff resources to the Administration.*

2.4 *The Association also considers that measures should be in place to retain and attract a group of high-calibre "new blood" in the Engineer Grade so as to uphold the quality engineering service to the public. Such measures should include absorbing all serving NCSC and CEG into the civil service, creating sufficient interim NCSC AE and E vacancies during the transition period and re-establishing the previous CEG-AE-E career path as soon as possible.*

Promotion Prospects and Review of Multi-disciplinary (MD) Posts

2.5 *In the past years, we have been raising concerns of our members on the subject of the promotion prospects of the Engineer Grade and advocating for more professionals to take up posts of the Administration.*

2.6 *Our Association welcomes the Management's proposal and implementation of declassification of multi-disciplinary posts as mainstream posts under the central authority of DCED. This not only reinforces the multi-skill capability of members of our Grade, but also confirms the contributions having been made by members of our Grade in delivering quality civil service all along the years. We advocate a further review on the remaining MD posts with previous occupancy by members of our Grade as the next step in improving the governance structure of the Administration.*

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2013 Pay Level Survey

2.7 To safeguard interest of our fellow engineers, we conducted briefing and discussion sessions for all Post Holder Representatives (PHRs) in Works Departments prior to the Job Inspection Interviews of the Pay Level Survey (PLS) in July 2013. Though the result of the PLS is yet to be announced, we look forward to favourable outcome in view of the current boom in the construction industry resulting in the serious shortage of manpower.

Performance Appraisal for Civil Engineer Grades

2.8 The Council had raised the serious concerns of our Members on the subject of performance appraisal on many occasions in the past years.

2.9 While both the Association and our Members accept the justification in setting a quota for the outstanding performers for the obvious purpose of picking the high caliber candidates to move up the career ladder, we are not convinced that there is a need to set arbitrary quotas for the other grades, such as the “Very Effective” grade. This arbitrary quota mechanism could deprive the good performers of proper recognition of performance simply because of the limitation imposed by the quota. This is most demoralizing, and in fact, the grievances have been increasing to the limit.

2.10 CSB Circular No.10/2009 sets out the latest guidelines and best practices in performance management in the civil service. Besides stressing that a performance appraisal system that facilitate honest, fair, accurate and timely appraisals of staff is essential for successful management and amongst other points, the Circular has promulgated that “it is not unacceptable for the performance of the majority of officers to be in the “Very Effective” category for so long as honest reporting is practiced.”

2.11 We advocate that the spirit of CSB Circular No. 10/2009 in relation to the “Very Effective” grade should be upheld and the appraisal report should be a true reflection of the staff’s performance. Any quota or ceiling for the “Very Effective” grade is considered unnecessary. The Association will continue to pursue the subject matter with the Grade Management.

2.12 While we appreciate the Management has accorded effort in aligning and aiming to improve the performance appraisal for civil engineer grade by launching the new Guidance Notes on the Completion of Appraisal Form for Civil Engineer Grade, the issue of supplementary notes by end 2013 has

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aroused discussions amongst our fellow colleagues, when the annual appraisals for the Engineer rank were being conducted. We had requested the management to ensure that the rating of appraisal report would be consistent across the board among all departments and fairness would be achieved.

Incremental Credit for Experience (ICE)

2.13 *The Association remains deeply concerned with the promulgation of CSB Circular No. 10/2007 which makes “recruitment difficulty” a mandatory requirement when considering the granting of ICE; unlike previously HODs/HOGs were delegated with the authority to judge whether there were operational reasons (e.g. the specific requirement for a certain skill set/experience in a certain post) to do so. The Council considers that this circular has wrongly placed financial consideration as the overriding factor in its employment policy instead of the capability of the candidates. We have continued to raise our objection on the arrangement to the Administration and will continue to pursue the matter.*

3. Contract Engineers and Assistant Engineers, including Assistant Civil Engineers (Graduate Training Scheme) and Colleagues in the Geotechnical Discipline (NCSC E/AE)

3.1 *As with over the past years, the Association cares much about the continuous employment and career prospect of the NCSC E/AE and has continued to spend considerable amount of time and effort on this issue.*

3.2 *Annual civil service Engineer recruitment exercises have been held since the lift of the civil service recruitment freeze in 2008. Last year, the Association has continued to work together with PS for Dev (Works) and HOGs to raise the concerns of our members on the arrangement of the civil service Engineer recruitment exercise. The Association congratulates the NCSC E/AEs who have succeeded in entering the civil service.*

3.3 *We advocate in-service recruitment among the serving NCSC E/AE in civil service Engineer recruitments and retention of this group of high caliber staff, who have been working with loyalty and good performance in the government for many years, by creation of more permanent civil service Engineer posts and additional NCSC E posts or by extension of existing NCSC E contracts. In the long term, we hope that all our capable NCSC E/AE can be absorbed into the permanent civil service and a clear career ladder can be re-established for our engineering graduates.*

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3.4 *We appreciate the Management also shares the same view with us on the continuous employment and career prospect of the CEG/AEs within the government team as they are important asset after receiving training in the works departments and welcome the launching of the new proposal on the recruitment of Civil Service (CS) Assistant Engineers (AE) as it will provide better employment opportunities to the CEGs and will ultimately attract graduates of high caliber to join the civil service. Though it's not the ideal arrangement being pursued by us, we believe it's an acceptable arrangement under the current situation.*

4. Government Young Engineers Sub-Committee (GYES)

4.1 *Our GYES has not only coordinated among engineering graduates and NCSC AE/E in raising concerns regarding their career prospects in the Government, but also has collaborated with other young engineers organizations in organizing activities for our Members and for the well-being of the Society.*

4.2 *Following the previous success in 2008 and 2012, GYES has joined again with other fifteen prominent professional institutions and government staff associations in organizing the Young Professional Delegation to Visit Zhuhai and Macau from 12 to 14 October 2013. Participants benefited from the tour by learning about the infrastructure development in the Pearl River Delta, the economic development of the region as well as the opportunities laid ahead for Hong Kong young professionals brought by the enhanced regional cooperation amongst Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau due to the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the development of Hengqin. Our young engineers had the opportunity to meet and network with their counterparts working in the private sector and in other engineering disciplines.*

5. Collaboration with Other Government Engineers Associations and the Hong Kong Senior Government Officers Association (HKSGOA)

5.1 *The Association has been in the last few years working in collaboration with the nine other government engineers associations on issues of common interest. Our motto is "Unity is Power" and unity can lead to good result. In the past years, the ten government engineers associations met from time to time for exchanging views on government engineers' concerns.*

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5.2 *Five of our Council Members are also either Council Members / Co-opted Members of the HKSGOA, which is one of the three Staff Side representatives in the Senior Civil Service Council. GCEA has decided this year to join as an Alliance Association Member of the HKSGOA. To enhance the collection of view from government professionals, HKSGOA has held a networking dinner on 24 April 2014. GCEA took the lead and has successfully invited representatives from all the nine other government engineers associations to join the dinner to exchange view on issues of common interest. We will work together with HKSGOA on issues concerning "Pay Trend Survey", "Extending the Retirement Age of Civil Servants" and etc.*

5.3 *The Association will continue to maintain collaboration with other government engineers associations and HKSGOA with common objectives in order to safeguard the interest of our Members.*

6. Liaison Office of Central People's Government in HKSAR

6.1 *We have, in the past year, maintained close liaison with the Education, Science and Technology Department of the Liaison Office of Central People's Government in HKSAR on issue of common interest.*

6.2 *We are grateful to the Liaison Office for their assistance in the organization of previous visits to various parts of the Mainland. We look forward to upcoming visit in the coming year to meet with the government officials and to visit the major infrastructures and sites thereat.*

7. Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE)

7.1 *Four of our Council Members are also Council Members of the HKIE and they have been maintaining close communications with the other eight Civil Service EOM Council Members in the HKIE Council to exchange view on issues of common interest.*

7.2 *The AGM of the HKIE this year will be held on 26 June 2014 (Thu). The election and re-election of Vice-Presidents and Elected Ordinary Members (EOM) will also be held on the same day. The Council appeals to all Members to show your support by attending the AGM and casting your votes.*

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8. Membership Drive

8.1 *Unity plays an important part in our fight for the benefits for our Members as well as for the civil service at large. It is encouraging to see that our membership has been growing. We hope that our Association will continue to grow. Once again, we appeal to Members to **encourage more fellow engineers to join our Association** so as to boost our representation.*

8.2 *Please contact our Hon. Secretary or your department's representative in Council for membership application, and visit our Association's official website at <http://www.gcea.org.hk/> regularly to keep updated of the latest activities of the Association, benefits of Members as well as issues of the Engineer Grade.*

9. End-Piece

9.1 *I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and to thank the Council Members for their dedication and devotion to the affairs of the Association in the past year.*

9.2 *Finally, I look forward to receiving your unfailing support to the Association in the years ahead.*

By Order of the Council



(Ir CHOI Chun-ming)

Chairman

5 June 2014