ACA BRANCH NEW ZEALAND BRANCH

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ACANZ President's Message 2026

Happy New Year to fellow corrosionists

We are starting another year in the battle against asset deterioration caused by electron loss. Most of you do this by providing a barrier between the environment and the structure; some of us do it by providing extra electrons; a few specialists do it by material selection; and others provide technical solutions.

This year will be an exciting one with the ACA annual conference being held in Christchurch. Hopefully, many of you will be able to attend given the reduced travel and time away from work. For firms with quite a few staff, it may be an opportune time to open the eyes of less senior staff to the full range of activities involved in corrosion prevention.

2026 maybe a pivotal year in the surface preparation field, as it appears laser coating removal has become more efficient and will be competing against conventional techniques on coating refurbishment jobs.

Also this year, the ACA will have finalised its new structure/constitution and bylaws. This will provide more certainty for the organisation in the future and will now allow ACANZ Branch Inc. to update its own Constitution as required by the revised Incorporated Societies Act.

Last year, due to the reality of participating in a management role within the ACA while working for a small firm, Raed resigned from our Branch Committee, and I'm hanging out for the AGM when I will hand the baton over to Rene Hill. In a small firm, the cost of participation is a difficult-to-justify expense in terms of money and time. To address this issue, the ACA could be more efficient in the way we run meetings and make decisions. Maybe AI could provide some tools?

Keeping the ACA relevant going forward

When I first joined the ACA 33 years ago, the DSIR /Industrial Research existed, large businesses had asset integrity departments, coating inspection was becoming a recognised profession, abrasive blasting and coating firms were being recognised as specialists, cathodic protection was established and recognised in government regulation, and the ACA provided the opportunity for these specialists to chat over a beer and nibbles. We had monthly technical meetings or field trips in Auckland with approximately 30 attending each event, and the Wellington branch was also very active.

33 years on, we have the establishment of the AMPP branch in NZ, which is basically an opposition organisation. The fact that people are willing to give up their time to create this organisation is a strong indication that the ACA is not meeting its members' needs. We have yet to establish what needs are not being met.

The ACA is good at attracting members through its training courses, where it is cheaper to become a member and attend a training course than to pay the

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ACANZ would like to gratefully acknowledge this month's sponsor...

Date change for C&P26 in Christchurch

Traditionally, the ACA has held its annual conference in the second week of November, since the first one in 1955 which was timed to straddle the Melbourne Cup. However, in order to avoid a clash with the Christchurch Cup week (Royal A&P Show, horse racing events and their Anniversary weekend), the ACA has rebooked the new Convention Centre Te Pae for the nearest available alternative dates that are **6 – 9 October.**

This will result in different timing, since it means the Welcome Function will be held on Tuesday evening with the third day of technical sessions to be held on Friday morning and the outdoor trade exhibition on the Friday afternoon. It will also mean accommodation will be easier (and cheaper) to book. Overseas attendees (including North Islanders since it falls during Spring school holidays) will then have the option to stay on to explore Christchurch, or visit local tourist attractions like Akaroa, the TranzAlpine train trip to Greymouth, or further afield Central Otago, Queenstown and Milford Sound.

Abstracts Submissions Deadline: Midnight Friday 17th April

ACA Foundation Scholarship news

In 2025, The ACA Foundation Ltd (ACAF) awarded eleven scholarships to assist successful applicants to either attend an ACA Conference or an ACA Training Course.

Three $2,500 scholarships were awarded to ACANZ Branch members. These were to:

- **Matthew Meylan** from Lordco CWG who won the Carboline NZ Award and
- **Anthony Jujnovich**, formerly with Lumen, who won the Metspray Award.

They will both be using their award towards attending this year's ACA conference in Christchurch.

- **Grace Bryant** from Firstgas in New Plymouth who won the Ray Osborne Memorial YCG Scholarship sponsored by Universal Corrosion Coatings (UCC). Grace attended the 2025 ACA Conference in Melbourne and her report on this experience is included in this bulletin.

Members are encouraged to apply for the 2026 ACAF Awards when they are advertised in April. UCC, Metspray and Carboline have confirmed that they will be sponsoring their Awards again this year.

Any other Corporate Members who would like to have an ACAF Award in their name should request a prospectus with further information from acafoundation@corrosion.com.au

Submitted by: Willie Mandeno, ACAF Director

President's message - continued

non-member price. But once people are members, how do you keep them involved? How do we get scientists talking to coating applicators and asset owners so they can discuss problems found in the field, have science explain the causes, and provide solutions?

Is the ACA still relevant? Maybe not. We need to provide advice or point people in the right direction for their corrosion-related problems, but at present we don't get asked questions. For example, we have an annual conference where the attendees are mainly the same group of corrosion specialists. The ACA has recently developed an asset owners program that is encouraging asset owners to attend, which is a good initiative.

We need to build relationships with like-minded organisations, such as the Maintenance Engineers Association, universities, and others. The ACA then becomes the facilitator, creating opportunities for discussion and knowledge sharing. But all this takes time to organise, and time is money.

Here's looking forward to an exciting year with lots of questions to answer.

Suggestions and comments are most welcome; please get in touch with grant@cpnz.kiwi.

Grant Chamberlain

Q & A CORNER

Older ACA NZ members have probably seen a number of situations that may never have made it to a textbook.

If you have a question you'd like clarification on, email it to the Editor at lesboultonrust@gmail.com. We'll pose it to our panel of experts who will answer it in another Bulletin, so everyone can improve their knowledge.

Q: *Does AI replace the need to employ a corrosion specialist?*

A: The short answer is "no"

In 2026 the most successful firms are not going to be those who replace their corrosion specialists, but those who upskill them. A modern corrosion engineer will use AI as a powerful tool to eliminate the "grunt work", like manual visual inspections, allowing them to focus on high value asset integrity management and cost optimisation.

AI has fundamentally changed the role of a corrosion engineer to a partnership with AI. While AI excels at processing vast amounts of data and spotting patterns and trends, it lacks the high-level engineering judgement, ethical accountability, and understanding of business contexts required for critical infrastructure.

What AI can handle *(the workhorse)*

Rapid detection: scanning thousands of drone images to find surface rust with 90 percent accuracy

Predictive modelling: estimating corrosion rates based on sensor data and historical trends

Automated reporting: generating preliminary logs and severity maps in real time

Inaccessible monitoring: analysing data from underwater robots or drones in hazardous zones

What the engineer handles *(the brain)*

Root cause analysis: determining why the corrosion is happening; e.g. stray currents versus chemical attack

Risk management: deciding if a 10% failure risk is acceptable based on safety and environmental laws

Strategic planning: designing long term mitigation strategies or choosing the right inhibitors

Final validation: reviewing the "black box" AI decisions to ensure that they align with industry standards

Why corrosion specialists are still vital:

The 'black box" problem: AI can sometimes flag false positives- ie. it can make mistakes. An engineer is needed to interpret the AI's output and ensure the model hasn't been misled by "noisy" data.

Complex decision making: AI can tell you that a pipe is thinning, but it cannot negotiate the budget, manage the maintenance crew response, or navigate the regulatory requirements of a particular jurisdiction.

Liability and safety: in some high-stake industries, legal and ethical responsibilities rest with a licensed professional. An AI cannot be held liable for a structural failure; a human engineer must sign off on the integrity of the asset.

Material innovation: while AI helps to screen new corrosion-resistant materials, the actual design of these materials and the testing of their real-world application still require deep expertise in metallurgy and chemistry.

Reported by the Bulletin Editor with assistance from Gemini AI

2025 UCC Ray Osborne Memorial YCG scholarship report

“Being awarded the UCC Ray Osborne Memorial ACA Scholarship was an honour that I am genuinely humbled by.”

Attending the ACA Conference in Melbourne was not only a professional milestone for me, but also a deeply meaningful personal experience. I went into the conference hopeful and curious, and I left feeling inspired, encouraged, and more committed than ever to the work I do.

The conference opened my eyes to perspectives and ideas that I hadn’t encountered before. Hearing from passionate speakers, learning alongside dedicated colleagues, and immersing myself in discussions that truly matter had a powerful impact on me. I found myself reflecting not only on my current role, but also on the kind of professional I want to become. The sessions on Coatings particularly resonated with me, offering insights that I know will stay with me for a long time. The connections I made with people who share the same drive, challenges, and hopes made the experience even more meaningful.

What I will take away from this conference goes far beyond information or resources. I am returning with a renewed sense of purpose, a clearer understanding of how I can contribute, and a genuine excitement for the future. The inspiration I felt throughout the event has strengthened my motivation to continue learning, growing, and giving my best to the sector and the people we support.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Universal Corrosion Coatings and the ACA Foundation for making this experience possible. Their generosity through the Ray Osborne Memorial Scholarship has had a profound impact on me. I am truly thankful not only for the financial support, but for the belief and investment they place in emerging professionals.

This opportunity has uplifted me, empowered me, and reminded me why I am so passionate about the work I do. I carry immense appreciation for the doors they have opened for me and for the legacy of Ray Osborne that this scholarship represents.

from Grace Bryant, Coatings & Corrosion Apprentice, First Gas Limited

Taranaki Division's Christmas event

On 12 December ACANZ held its Taranaki Christmas get-together.

Members enjoyed good drinks and food, and great Taranaki weather, at the Rooftop Bar in downtown New Plymouth. We enjoyed recapping 2025 and looking forward to the opportunities and challenges of the year ahead – new technologies, improving within restricted budgets, new employment, and working with sunset, emerging, and enduring industries.

There was also a renewed enthusiasm for more ACA events in 2026, including the AGM to be held in New Plymouth on 27 March (look for announcements soon).

Bridges and associated soil structures are vital connectors between communities, and their performance depends on strong partnerships across disciplines. We're bringing together clients, designers and contractors to explore how we can maintain and deliver functional, resilient and cost-effective infrastructure that enhances the environments we live and work in.

The program will address practical challenges and strategic priorities — from seismic resilience and sustainability to doing more with less in asset management and new design.

Abstract submission open: November 2025

Abstract Submission Deadline: 2 February 2026

Author acceptance notification: 9 March 2026

Early bird registration deadline: 13 July 2026

Sponsorship and/or exhibitor packages are available to be booked online! https://confer.eventsair.com/bridgegeo2026/prospectus-request/Site/Register

Stay tuned for more details and view the official conference website — https://confer.eventsair.com/bridgegeo2026/

Choose CPNZ for your cathodic protection needs

Advertorial

Cathodic Protection (NZ) Limited was founded in 1989 by Bob James, who introduced Cathodic Protection (CP) to New Zealand. Known as "Mr CP of NZ," Bob played a pivotal role in designing, installing, and maintaining CP systems across numerous wharves and pipelines throughout New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

In 2021, Grant Chamberlain took over CPNZ. As an ACA Corrosion Technologist, he is certified to approve CP design, commissioning, and survey work in accordance with the AS2832 suite of standards. These standards cover:

- Pipelines (pipes and cables)
- Compact buried structures (e.g., LPG tanks)
- Fixed immersed structures (wharf and bridge piles)
- Internal surfaces (e.g., water tank internals)
- Steel in concrete structures (e.g., concrete bridges)

With over 32 years' experience in corrosion prevention—first as a coating inspector and later specialising in CP—Grant has worked extensively in the industry. CPNZ has successfully installed CP on wharves, penstocks, clarifiers, LPG tanks, water tanks, tidal gates, sheet piles, airports, and even historic buildings. CPNZ works throughout NZ, but specialises in South Island assets as the company is based in Christchurch.

Grant brings a holistic approach to corrosion prevention, recognising the risks of assuming corrosion is under control, especially under insulation.

CPNZ also specialises in DCVG surveys. DCVG surveys identify bare steel in contact with the soil. Excavating bare steel and finding that it's not corroding is the ultimate proof of the CP's effectiveness. The DCVG also identifies coating defects caused by third-party damage.

If you'd like to discuss your asset's integrity, Grant is always happy to chat and offer expert advice.

CPNZ
CATHODIC PROTECTION (NZ) LTD

ACA NZ BRANCH COMMITTEE & OFFICERS 2025-26

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