



20 March, 2014

Ms Sara- Jane McIntyre
Coroners Legal Support
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11 222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne

BY FACSIMILE

Land Surveyors
Civil Engineers
Planners
Development Consultants
Project Managers
Multimedia Cartographers

Dear Ms Sara -Jane

RE: REEDS CONSULTING RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION OF
CORONIAL INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF NIEL BUCKTON

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In relation to the findings of the Coronial Inquest into the death of Niel Buckton we provide the following information specifically in response to the Coroners recommendation No 3.

That recommendation being;

"That Reeds Consulting Pty Ltd review its recruitment and training needs assessment policies and protocols to ensure that new employees have adequate training, experience and peer support in the specific tasks they are to perform."

We confirm that Reeds Consulting has undertaken a review of both our historic and current practices in the above regard. We provide the following information in relation to this review.

Reeds Consulting has operated under an independently accredited Quality Assurance process since the company's inception in 1997. This system provides the basis for all operational tasks and defines all tasks that employees are required to undertake in the discharge of their duties.

At the time of Niels death the Reeds new employee process included interviews which were conducted by at least one of the directors of the company and upon appointment, a new employee was provided a written job description which defined their role and responsibilities and confirmed their direct superior. In addition each new employee underwent an induction process to familiarise themselves with the Reeds OH & S and Quality assurance systems as well as the general work environment. Employees were provided copies of these systems and given time to read and understand the systems prior to commencing duties. It has always been a requirement that employees sign a document confirming that they have been provided a copy of the systems and that they have read and understood them.

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Given the nature of the business the majority of employees require formal qualifications such as a degree in engineering or surveying. Additional training needs were then assessed against industry requirements and staff either mentored or placed on training courses if courses existed for a specific task.

In reviewing our current policies and procedures in relation to new staff we note that several changes have been made in the nine years since January 2005. The Reeds Quality Assurance Policy and OH & S Policy has been extended and further improved to be upgraded to an Integrated Management System (IMS). This system is independently certified to Australian Standards for , Quality ISO 9001:2004, OH & S ISO4801:2001 and Environmental ISO14001:2004. The system is externally audited annually to maintain accreditation.

In addition Reeds employs a full time system manager to conduct internal audits for compliance with the system as well as continually update the system as a result of both internal and external audits and feedback. The system manager is also responsible for maintaining ongoing training records for all staff.

We note that since 2005 several water agencies have adopted additional processes' in relation to the inspection of 'live' sewer assets, which is a common task within our business.

The requirements vary between water agencies; however Reeds Consulting has adopted a policy that requires the highest level of training available. All our engineering field staff and selected staff in our survey department are required to complete a full 'confined spaces entry' course and attend annual refresher courses to maintain a level of currency. We have maintained our strict 'No entry' policy that has always been in existence and the confined space entry training is only utilised in relation to the surface inspection of assets.

In the course of operating a consultancy business in the land development industry, all consultants are subject to an ongoing audit and assessment process by water agencies on a project by project basis. In addition to the project assessments, water agencies conduct 'office' audits of consultants systems. The feedback provided by these audits and our own internal systems provide management a system for assessing individual performance and competency. This allows an assessment of ongoing staff training needs. On-going training may be in the form of individual mentoring, e-training, or group sessions led by senior staff as needs arise.

Reeds is a mid-sized business and as such all staff interviews for new employees are still conducted by at least one of the company directors,



this allows for a consistent assessment process and review of training needs to be made at the interview stage. All employees have an ongoing training register, which lists all courses undertaken both prior to employment at Reeds and training undertaken whilst with the company, this then enables management to assess any future training needs of individual staff.

Upon review of our current systems we believe that an appropriate system of assessment and training for new staff is in place, and further we believe that our Integrated Management System and the internal and external feedback produced by this system allows ongoing monitoring of individual staff members to identify any opportunities for improvement by additional training.

As a company we remain committed to continual improvement of our processes and encourage active participation by all our staff in achieving this goal.

Accordingly, I can confirm that Reeds has reviewed its recruitment and training needs, assessment policies and protocols as recommended by the Coroner.

Yours Faithfully,
For Reeds Consulting Pty Ltd

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Brewster", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

RICHARD BREWSTER
Engineering Director.