

Big conference and Big thinking

Has there been a QuarryNZ conference quite like that looming in Christchurch?

It will be our biggest-ever with nearly 100 trade stands all able to be accommodated inside the spacious new Te Pae venue.

That building is itself a testimony to the recovery of Christchurch from its earthquakes of 2010/11 – with the Canterbury quarry industry playing a huge role in the rebuild of the city and now helping host us.

A particular feature this year is the international perspective, benefitting from the meeting the AQA is hosting in previous days in Queenstown for the Global Aggregates Information Network (GAIN).

Apart from being able to swap notes with GAIN representatives from the EU, China, South Korea, Canada, Colombia and Argentina, we will hear from Dirk Fincke, Secretary-General of Aggregates Europe (UEPG) on sustainability initiatives in the industry. I think we have a lot to learn

from UEPG's successful efforts to gain traction with European policymakers by framing quarry issues in language which resonates with their own objectives (see page 3).

Similarly, I'm interested to hear more about the efforts of GAIN's chair Jim O'Brien to combat 'sand robbers' by sharing quarrying best practice examples (including our own) with nations afflicted by these rogues (see story page 4).

As Jim notes, in our ever-connected world, poor practices anywhere end up damaging the reputations of those of us who do a good job every day.

There are also no fewer than three site visits – Isaac Construction at McLeans Island, Fulton Hogan's new Royden quarry near Templeton and Road Metals' operation at Rolleston.

In our Technical Update (page 7) it's great to learn the revised M04 Specifications are all but complete after a couple of great years of work by the AQA Technical Committee and these will be outlined at the QuarryNZ conference.



Our small AQA office team has helped bring together a fantastic programme which will set a new benchmark.

Meanwhile, this year's Rock our Future competition (page 2) is underway. It's really heartening that a great early response by schools has been surpassed by the number of quarries offering to host students. Please consider adding your quarry to the list.

CEO Wayne Scott has also managed to develop two important documents for members which we unveil in this Aggregate News.

The first is his Election Briefing which sets out for all politicians the critical need for sound policies to allow our industry to provide the foundations for all their infrastructure and housing ambitions.

Wayne has also drafted (with help) a document providing some guidance for quarries on engagement with iwi.

Stevenson has been working on improving our own approach to such engagement and as Wayne outlines, mutual respect is the cornerstone of every relationship. We all need to be on that journey.

I hope another one will also soon take you to that big event in Christchurch.

Jayden Ellis
Chair, AQA





Lee Stream pupils at Blackhead Quarry for the 2022 competition.

Rock our Future rockets along

There's been an exceptionally strong start to this year's Rock our Future school's competition.

When this year's entries opened after Easter there were nine schools expressing interest in the first 24 hours.

AQA CEO Wayne Scott says what is even more pleasing is that he's had nearly twice that number of quarries putting their hands up to host schools.

"The competition is clearly getting some momentum and that's an all-round win for our industry as well as school kids, their teachers and parents."

Wayne started the competition in 2019 after talking to his daughter who is a school teacher in Australia.

"I could see other industries doing similar things and asked her what would work with teachers and pupils when it came to the quarry sector. The fact we have machinery they could see and draw was certainly part of the attraction – and not just for boys."

Girls have been entering in quite strong numbers and been winners of the competition.

This year's brief is for years 5-8 students to visit a local quarry where possible and each design a poster which shows three everyday uses of aggregate, along with an explanation. This can

be linked to technology, art and science learning.

"The children just love getting on a quarry. It really does inspire them. We are also building community knowledge of what we do as well as sowing the early seeds of possible career options."

All entries can be used for AQA's future communications to members and the public.

There are four \$1000 prizes for each student's winning school across the age groups and each individual winner gets a \$100 Prezzy Card.

Rock our Future is being run later this year than previously with posters needing to be received by the end of term three, Friday 22 September. Entry forms are on the AQA website.

Judging will take place in early October with winners announced by mid-November.

Teachers, parents and students are encouraged to approach local quarries or to contact office@aqa.org.nz or phone 021 074 5164.

Quarries hosting a visit are encouraged to read some tips and planning suggestions on the AQA website or contact the office. **AQA**

Put society first and win policymakers over

Europe’s aggregate association has recently gained real traction for the industry with European policy makers – and QuarryNZ attendees will hear how it came about.

Dirk Fincke, the Brussels-based Secretary General of Aggregates Europe – UEPG, is speaking at the Christchurch conference and looking forward to his first visit to New Zealand and hearing the local quarry industry’s experiences.

He says the turnaround for the European industry began with a Roadmap to 2030 strategy document published in late 2021.

“We listed the central policy objectives of the European Union, accepted those in principle, and then identified what industry needs to deliver as a partner for society,” he says.

“It’s changed the whole game.”

The Roadmap commits the European aggregates industry – covering 15,000 companies producing 3 billion tonnes from 26,000 sites – to achieving:

- An active role in climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Responsible environmental stewardship
- Net gains in biodiversity
- Prioritising employee/contractor safety, health and well-being
- Fostering better links with local communities
- Working to help the industry be more sustainable globally.

Dirk Fincke says while some of these commitments were barely heard of when he joined UEPG 17 years ago, they are now all achievable.

Listing legislative initiatives rather than simply our industry priorities, i.e. speaking the language of the policy makers had created an ‘aha’ moment for them.

“Policymakers just can’t ignore us because without us they have to stop the whole economy. They progressively understand that our industry produces what is demanded by society.”

One change the industry has made is in language, with 24 different languages spoken in the EU.

“The word aggregates is not really clear for a non-English speaker. ‘Essential raw materials’ is the phrase we use now while the United Nations Environment Programme in its reports has chosen the word ‘sand’ when speaking about aggregates.”

The Roadmap spells out the opportunities and challenges facing the European aggregates industry in the years to 2030.

It says, for example, the CO2 footprint of aggregates



Dirk Fincke, Secretary General of Aggregates Europe.

extraction and production is negligible (3-5 kg/t) but could reduce further by electrifying equipment and producing renewable energy on site.

It says the potential to contribute to carbon neutrality is closely linked with continued local access to resources to avoid long transport distances of bulky material.

And, “while quarries and sand/gravel extraction sites are going to be an essential partner in climate change adaptation, the industry is often still wrongly perceived as harmful to environment and climate.”

Meanwhile, the European Commission’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy acknowledges a massive need for sand and gravel to better prepare Europe for extreme weather conditions and rising sea levels.

Aggregates Europe – UEPG is now showcasing different examples of how the industry can support climate change adaptation.

It also backs the use of recycled and manufactured materials; providing technical standards are met, these are environmentally and economically viable and the indicated contribution is realistic.

“Even with the highest recycling rates, around 80 percent of natural aggregates will be needed to meet the total demand for construction across Europe.”

• *Dirk Fincke will speak on sustainability initiatives in Europe at QuarryNZ following the keynote address by European Aggregates Association President Antonis Antoniou Latouros. A handful of registrations may still be available for what is likely to be the biggest-ever industry conference.* **AQA**



Irresponsible sand extraction tarnishes our reputation

Illegal sand extraction overseas, often by people with mafia-type connections, is the biggest reputational threat internationally to the quarry sector says Jim O’Brien, Convenor of the Global Aggregates Information Network (GAIN).

Jim will be speaking to the QuarryNZ conference in Christchurch as well as chairing the earlier GAIN meeting which the AQA is hosting in Queenstown.

He says ‘sand robbing’ as it is often called, is still rampant in parts of the developing world including places like India, now the world’s second biggest producer and user of aggregates and sand.

While prices paid for illegally extracted sand and gravel are not high, the returns for people involved can be very lucrative.

“It is like gold dust. It is put on boats and taken to the cities and sold.”

Jim says the international reputation of quarrying is unfortunately being dragged down by these sand robbers.

“The single biggest challenge for GAIN and the industry globally is to get on top of this illegal extraction.”

He notes the United Nations Environmental Programme now refers to all quarried materials as sand and is running an active campaign to stop the robbing because of its disastrous environmental and social impacts.

Jim says GAIN is working with the UNEP and making clear its members who operate responsibly are utterly opposed to illegal sand extraction.

Two years ago, he was invited by the Vietnam branch of World Wide Fund for Nature to study illegal sand and aggregate extraction in the Mekong Delta.

Despite various Government efforts, sand robbers contribute to significant losses in fish and rice production in the Delta and compound riverbank erosion and saltwater intrusion.

The study draws on how various GAIN members including New Zealand responsibly deal with sand and aggregate extraction.

It says Canterbury’s River Gravel Extraction Code of Practice

2017 provides an excellent example of responsible river extraction governing 30-40 percent of local supply, now followed by a voluntary industry Code of Practice for quarries.

This and other best practice approaches from around the world are summarised in the study. It recommended Vietnam create a single regional authority to implement a rigorous permitting regime, comprehensive compliance monitoring, strongly increased royalties, penalties and deterrents and forming a national aggregates association.

The Vietnamese Government is now starting to implement the recommendations to systematically phase out illegal sand extraction.

Jim says it takes a very tough approach because of the mafia-type organisations involved.

China, which is a GAIN member, faced similar environmental issues some years ago but has cracked down hard on illegal extraction.

GAIN started with only five members in 2010 and now has 21 members on six continents representing about 80 percent of world aggregate production.

Jim started GAIN when President of the European Aggregates Association UEPG, convinced that sharing aggregates industry best practices would benefit the industry globally.

“Over a decade later that conviction has been proven absolutely true.”

The Queenstown meeting is the first since one in Barcelona in 2018 and Covid disruptions. The key focus is to chart the GAIN strategy to 2030 and beyond.

“When (AQA CEO) Wayne Scott proposed hosting the meeting, we were absolutely delighted. We are really looking forward to being in New Zealand.” **AQA**

Respect the cornerstone of iwi engagement



The AQA has produced a document providing some guidance for quarries on how to engage – with local Crown-recognised Maori tribes, a requirement under some council consenting processes.

CEO Wayne Scott says engaging with iwi impacted by quarry operations is required under law.

“That’s a starting point for some but there’s the view that those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in decision making.”

The Treaty of Waitangi as interpreted by the Government provides for commitments that can only succeed where relationships are based on trust and mutual respect.

He says engagement with iwi is not about talking to “stakeholders” but “partners”.

Wayne says it’s often not easy to ensure you have engaged fully, or with the right tangata whenua. Quarries need to be aware that there may be more than one iwi with an interest in an area.

Some council websites contain information regarding engagement with iwi groups and Maori Maps is a great source of online information along with a Te Puni Kokiri directory on iwi of a region.

He says quarries should not use getting on with iwi as a box ticking exercise.

“You need to reach out to all identified iwi as you won’t know if what you are doing is significant to more than one iwi. If those who are seeking to develop land don’t know or truly understand iwi concerns and aspirations in any specific significant area, it makes for an uneasy relationship.

“Take the time to carry out meaningful engagement and understanding and it will prove mutually beneficial.”

He says quarry companies don’t necessarily need to use consultants or advisers.

“Iwi themselves are the advisers and building personal relationships are an important part of engagement.”

“If you get it right up front, unlocking the opportunities together will be better for iwi, better for the community and better for the future of your development.”

There will be costs associated with iwi engagement depending on the level of engagement required. Meetings will be charged for along with the preparation of a Cultural Impact Assessment by an iwi or its nominee.

These look at the impact a proposal may have on cultural values and recommend measures to mitigate the effects.

The AQA document recommends allowing plenty of time for iwi engagement “as it will take as long as it needs!!”

“What you may want to achieve may not be completed in one meeting, or five meetings and early engagement is key.”

It says many iwi groups are deluged with requests and are under-resourced to deal with them.

“Early engagement is critical as the process may take more time than you expect. Don’t expect iwi to work to your timelines.”

It says to never underestimate the small things you do such as a simple greeting in te reo Maori (language). Respect is the cornerstone of every relationship.

“Ideally you should start engagement with an open mind and the ability to make changes to your proposal. If the proposal is unable to be changed it is not genuine engagement,” says the guidance document.

This is available to AQA members in the members only section of the website. [AQA](#)

The Aggregate & Quarry Association appreciates the support of our associate members 



"Make your voices heard" – Infrastructure Commission CEO Ross Copland told the QuarryNZ conference in July 2021.

Getting to the polities

If you want to have an influence on policies that affect your quarry, now is your chance.

AQA CEO Wayne Scott says with the General Election now only four months away, quarries should consider inviting local MPs and those who seek the job to visit their site.

"I'd wager that a majority of current members haven't ever been on a quarry site. Yet MPs frame up the laws that affect every aspect of our operations from ACC to Zeolite extraction. How on earth they can make rational decisions on a sector like ours with no knowledge is beyond me."

Wayne has recently drafted the AQA's 2023 Election Briefing.

"This is being sent to every current Member of Parliament. It will be available on our website and we will happily send a copy to any quarry that wants to supply political candidates."

The Election Briefing opens with a quote from Ross Copland, Infrastructure Commission CEO.

"...bulky, low-value materials like sand, stone and rock are unlikely to go out of fashion any time soon – they're needed for almost everything we build from cycleways to cell phone towers and wind farms. With a growing pipeline of major projects on the horizon we need to protect the availability of our best resources for generations to come."

Wayne says the Infrastructure Commission provides the best shot for the quarry sector in a generation to start getting policy settings which allow for reliable, local supplies of aggregate and other materials.

"They understand you can't deliver the billions of dollars of infrastructure that our nation desperately needs without existing quarries which are able to continue operating and new ones to open."

However, Wayne says good policies require politicians who understand them and can implement them.

"Our election briefing lets them know how we fully expect to meet stringent environmental and resource management requirements, how quarries work with local iwi and communities, how increasingly important we will be as New Zealand deals with increasing climate change effects."

The first of six recommendations in the document calls on whichever parties are in Government to develop a National Environment Standard with the sector.

"We need streamlined resource consenting processes which ensure quarries can operate in an environmentally and socially responsible way, while providing direction to councils to protect existing quarries from encroachment of land uses like housing."

Other recommendations include Waka Kotahi, roading contractors and the aggregates sector developing fit-for-purpose road designs using regionally available aggregates and a cost/benefit analysis to increase recycling and re-use of construction waste.

The Election Briefing document concludes by saying any Parliamentary candidate will almost certainly have one or more quarries in their electorate or community.

"Every voter is dependent on quarries for the roads, rail corridors, cycleways and footpaths they use, the schools they attend, homes they live in and places they work."

Candidates wishing to discuss issues in the briefing document or wanting to visit a quarry are asked to contact Wayne.

"We can also be pro-active and offer quarry visits to people who want to represent us. I hope to hear from some quarry operators around the country." wayne@aqa.org.nz 021 944 336. **AQA**

AQA Technical update

M04 Coming to a head

- The final draft of the revised M04 (previously known as M/4) Specification and Notes, with accompanying test result control chart (spreadsheet) was issued for comment in March/April.
- A working group has for the last couple of years been focused on getting a specification that is suited to our country and, most importantly, incorporates the usage of higher (and lesser) quality stone by way of a class system.
- Current M04 (2006 specification) will be roughly the equivalent of Class 3 aggregate, with Classes 1 and 2 introduced as higher classes (higher designed traffic loadings) and Class 4 introduced for lower volume roads.
- Comments have closed and the working group will review these prior to ratifying the documents.
- Suppliers will be well aware of the impending new specification and AQA will be able to assist members with any queries with the new specification, which will be discussed at the QuarryNZ conference.

B10 Hi-Lab Specification

- The Hi-Lab specification has been updated to version 10.1 following a very productive discussion between designer, constructor and supplier in Tauranga at the end of April.
- We are grateful to Waka Kotahi for organising this discussion day and feel it had some very good outcomes.
- The specification is now in the ratification process before its release on the Waka Kotahi website.
- AQA will update its Hi-Lab Production Guidance for members (based on version 4) with changes from the revised (version 10.1) specification.



NZIHT / NZTA Conference

- AQA participated in a facilitated panel comprising constructor, designer, supplier and asset owners at the conference in New Plymouth at the end of May.
- It was a chance to share quarry industry wishes with the other parties and work together for better roading outcomes in NZ.

QuarryFact Files

- The Fact Files available on the AQA website will be updated shortly with the 2021 statistics.
- Thank you again to those who supplied production data. We are aiming for a much higher proportion of reporting for the 2022 year, which will open shortly.

Mike Chilton, AQA Technical Adviser. [AQA](#)

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