

# TAYLOR TAKES THE HELM AT ABERGELDIE

Greg Taylor has just taken the reins at Abergeldie as the company's newly appointed CEO. Here, he talks with *Trenchless Australasia* about his career so far, his predictions for the trenchless industry and his vision for Abergeldie.

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**Below:** Abergeldie's new CEO, Greg Taylor.

**Opposite page:** TBM entering installation shaft on the Burrows Road Pipe Jack Tunnel Project, a project Mr Taylor has been involved with.



“They are big shoes to fill, but I'm really looking forward to the challenge,” says Abergeldie CEO Greg Taylor, who took the helm of the company in September this year. Mr Taylor is only the second individual to hold the company's top job since Mick Boyle, former CEO and now Executive Chairman, founded Abergeldie in 1994.

Mr Taylor brings over 25 years of civil engineering experience to the position. He has been involved in a variety of trenchless projects across Australasia and is familiar with everything from large diameter driven tunnels to small-scale 80 mm horizontal directional drilling (HDD) projects.

“I've probably had exposure to the full suite of trenchless technologies,” he laughs.

Mr Taylor started his career as a project engineer working on the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, constructed in the early 1990s. The project involved sinking 100 m long precast tunnel sections across the harbour. This harbour crossing was then connected to drive-installed end sections at Milson Point and in North Sydney.

“The Sydney Harbour Tunnel was my first experience with underground works. On that project I was surrounded by an extraordinarily

talented group of engineers and managers. That group is still working on major infrastructure projects around Sydney and across the world.”

After the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, Mr Taylor moved on to work with BHP and was later involved in the delivery of complex stadium structures for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. With this tremendous breadth of experience in engineering under his belt, Mr Taylor embarked up building successful businesses in water and specialist engineering areas within the John Holland Group.

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Of the many projects he has worked on, Mr Taylor is most proud of his involvement in the Priority Sewage Program for Sydney Water. Many projects in the program utilised small diameter HDD to deliver low-pressure sewage schemes to the fringes of Sydney.

During his 14 year association with the program, Mr Taylor saw HDD technology and delivery techniques rapidly develop to improve the safety, quality and environmental performance of the final product, all the while reducing the impact of project works on the surrounding communities.

“The most memorable part of projects we delivered was the lack of disruption to communities. Installing sewage schemes is typically a very invasive type of project but by using HDD technology we could deliver the works with minimal disruption to the residents. It really was a tremendous evolution.”

Mr Taylor was also involved in the construction of two world-first desalination plants in Sydney and on the Gold Coast. These plants were unique because they were the first of their kind to incorporate inlet and outlet tunnels that linked directly to the ocean.

It was on the Sydney desalination project that one of Mr Taylor's personal traditions – he collects a small rock or piece of memorabilia from each major project he works on – made a lasting impression on his project team.



“Our tunnel manager called me towards the end of the project and said, ‘Next time you’re in the area call around the site office to pick up your memento.’ I turned up at the site office and sitting outside was what I could only describe as a boulder – it must have been 200 kg – and behind it was a site team absolutely in stitches thinking about how I was going to get this rock in my car, let alone in my office.”

Mr Taylor chipped a small piece off the boulder to keep on a shelf in his office, alongside his other project souvenirs.

Although his family travels have been put on hold while his daughter completes her HSC exams, Mr Taylor will no doubt continue to travel extensively as part of his job; in his 25 years Mr Taylor has worked across Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Middle East.

“Working overseas reminds you that new technologies and methods are constantly evolving. We always need to be searching for new ideas or techniques to bring back home to Australia. We really cannot afford to be closed-minded in this industry or we risk being left behind.”

### INDUSTRY TRENDS

Mr Taylor predicts that the future of Trenchless Technology in Australia lies in rehabilitation to prolong the lifetime of existing utilities. This includes pipe network optimisation and increased innovation in the cost effectiveness and performance of certain rehabilitation techniques.

“Even though our population is increasing, many of our water supply networks still have excess capacity. Utility users are more conscious of consumption, so we have consumption going down and population increasing; on balance this means our systems still have some capacity left in them.

“What this means is there will be a lot more projects revolving around maintaining existing assets to ensure they remain reliable in the future.”

Having observed the increasing tendency for clients to contract one-off projects, Mr Taylor also expects the trenchless industry will begin moving towards packaging programs of work to improve safety, quality, delivery times and cost.

“Contracting one-off projects is inherently inefficient. It leads to a lot of inconsistency in delivery and performance. This is slowly changing as clients consider programs of work in order to get some continuity with project teams.

“The benefits of program management are undervalued in Australia at the moment and I think the trenchless sector could really benefit in promoting this style of work.”

In the last 25 years Mr Taylor has seen an exponential growth in the capabilities of Trenchless Technology, including advances in the accuracy and capacity of equipment, and the increased use of hybrid materials in trenchless applications.

“Now, I rarely see a project that doesn’t include some form of trenchless work, whether that’s relocating utilities, installing services or putting in tunnels for roads or trains.”

### VISION FOR ABERGELDIE

Now sitting in the top job at Abergeldie, Mr Taylor is determined to continue the good work the company has been doing to date. He is passionate about Abergeldie’s mission

to provide the complex infrastructure needed to build better communities and is looking forward to delivering on this message.

“There’s an extremely exciting opportunity stemming from the diversity within the Abergeldie team – we have enormous talent, technology and skills available. I intend to leverage that diversity to further map out the growth path based on strong relationships with customers, suppliers and partners to the organisation.”

His short-term vision is to continue delivering the high standard projects and excellent customer service Abergeldie prides itself on.

“I’m a very strong believer that the last project we deliver is our best marketing tool. Completing each project safely and to the highest possible standards is the key to success.”

Into the future, he says the company will remain committed to the trenchless industry and continue to develop innovative technologies, such as the Skotchkote Liner 2400, which recently won New Technology of the Year at the ASTT annual awards night.

“Abergeldie will remain committed to securing and developing new techniques to make this sector more cost-effective and to drive innovative solutions for our customers. This will play a very important part of our work going forward.” T

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