

## WHAT ARE GEOTECHNICAL REPORTS?

A geotechnical report is a report prepared by and/or technically verified by a geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist as defined by Council's Geotechnical Development Control Plan (Council's DCP) and prepared in accordance with Part 3 of that plan.

## DO I NEED A GEOTECHNICAL REPORT?

The Wollongong landscape is dominated by the escarpment and foothills, much of which has been shaped by ancient landslides and so provides variable and often deep soil profiles consisting of mixed boulders and soil. As these conditions are highly variable, it is necessary that all development which may be subject to slope instability be supported by appropriate geotechnical advice to ensure that any application for development accommodates known and anticipated geotechnical constraints on the land.

Council has identified many of the affected properties and is continuously reviewing the risk. When Council is considering applications for the development of sites that may be subject to slope instability, Council requires that any development that is proposed within such lands be supported by a geotechnical report that is less than two years old. However, older reports may be accepted provided they have been reviewed by a geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist who has completed and attached form M11 found in Council's DCP. To ascertain if your property has been identified as being affected by instability you will need to obtain a S149 certificate.

## STRUCTURES EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED TO PROVIDE A GEOTECHNICAL REPORT

- Exempt development as defined by Council's Exempt Development control Plan No 99/2.
- Complying development as defined by Council's Complying Development Control Plan No 99/1 relating to schedules 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.
- Building alterations comprising:
  - the making of, or an alteration to the size of, any opening in a wall or roof of a building, such as a doorway, window or skylight;
  - non-structural alterations or repairs to the exterior of a building, such as painting, plastering, cement rendering, cladding, attaching fillings and decorative work; or
  - non-structural alterations to the interior of a building that do not result in the current load-bearing capacity of the building being exceeded.
- The erection of any building within an existing site comprising:
  - an advertising structure or structures (in addition to those listed in schedule 9 of Council's Complying Development Control Plan No 99/1); or
  - a verandah or deck constructed of timber or steel which is articulated from the main dwelling (in addition to those listed in schedule 4 of Council's Complying Development Control Plan No 99/1) provided that work to an existing building does not result in the building suffering movement in excess of the acceptable level of performance described in AS2870; or
  - minor earthworks, including landscaping or involving excavations or fill not in excess of 600 mm in vertical height; or
  - minor construction/demolition works that do not increase the risk of slope instability on the site or related land as assessed by a geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist who has completed and attached form M14 of Council's DCP subject to section 2.1.5 of Council's DCP.

## IS THE REPORT DEVELOPMENT SPECIFIC?

A geotechnical report must relate to a proposal and verify that the level of risk to property and/or life posed by slope instability on the site or related land is equal to or less than the level of acceptable risk

as defined by Council's DCP. In many cases a report is produced in relation to subdivision works. These reports often have appropriate technical data however they lack the relevant specific requirements for an individual proposal.

Geotechnical reports that have been prepared in the subdivision of land will not be accepted for individual sites unless they have been reviewed by a geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist who has completed and attached form M11 found in Council's DCP.

## CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH COUNCIL WOULD NOT SUPPORT A DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

- Where a development application is not accompanied by a geotechnical report complying with this Council's DCP, where one is required to be lodged.
- Where a geotechnical report accompanying a development application, has been prepared or verified by a geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist with qualifications which do not meet the requirements of Council's DCP.
- On geotechnical grounds, if a geotechnical report or third party independent review of a geotechnical report accompanying an application, identifies the risk to property and/or life posed by the slope instability as greater than the level of acceptable risk as defined in Council's DCP after all reasonable and practicable measures to reduce foreseeable risk have been considered and/or where the geotechnical report does not follow the methodology of Council's DCP.
- Where there is a history of landslide on the site or related land until such time as the site or related land is remediated to an acceptable risk. Remediation must be validated by the installation of in-ground instrumentation that must be monitored until the slope instability is confirmed as remediated to an acceptable risk. As geotechnical hazards are often weather dependent, this process may extend over a period of many months or years. A geotechnical report for the remediation must be prepared and verified by a geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist, and a remediation certificate in accordance with form M15 of Council's DCP must be lodged with Council prior to any further development continuing on the site.
- A development where the risk cannot be reduced to an acceptable level either by design or by reasonable or practicable mitigation and maintenance of the site or related land.
- Any other circumstance as determined by Council.

## GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANTS

Council does not endorse any geotechnical consultants. You should undertake your own investigations into any geotechnical consultant you employ to prepare a report for you.

However, in order to be able to prepare geotechnical reports in accordance with Council's DCP, consultants will need to be members of a professional engineering institution and have achieved chartered professional status being either CPEng or CPGeo or RPGeo with Landslide Risk Management as a core competence. They will also need to have a minimum of five years practice during the last 10 years as a geotechnical engineer in regions of the Sydney Basin underlain by Narrabeen or Coal Measures geological strata, or who are able to demonstrate relevant experience with similar geology and either have or are employed by a corporation which has professional indemnity of not less than \$2 million in accordance with Council's DCP.

## Disclaimers

This information was believed to be correct at the date of its publication.

This information is for general information purposes only and should not be relied upon for legal advice.