

EDITORIAL

Rajesh P. Dhakal

Dear all,

Having started as the Editor-in-Chief in early 2014, I have now completed almost two years in this role. In this period, I have led the production of seven issues of the Bulletin; the first being the special issue on *Seismic Behaviour of Unreinforced Masonry (URM) Buildings* published in June 2014 which received excellent feedback from the readers. The seven issues of the Bulletin I have edited comprise more than 500 pages of valuable materials which include 32 Articles and 3 Technical Notes.

In line with the plan I communicated when I took over as the Editor, the Bulletin has undergone some substantial changes in the last two years. Parting away from our previous practice of a single review, all papers published in my tenure have been peer-reviewed by at least two reviewers. For all submitted papers, at least 2 positive or negative reviews were strictly sought before making the final decision to publish (or decline) a submitted paper. In several cases, a third review was sought to arbitrate on a split recommendations from the first two reviewers.

The start of my editorial tenure also coincided with the establishment of an international Editorial Board (EB) for the first time in the Bulletin's history. The inaugural EB consists of experts (from NZ and abroad) in different facets of earthquake engineering. Keeping the Bulletin's aim to publish a fair proportion of practical project papers (not only research papers as targeted by most other scientific journals) in mind, several senior practicing engineers working in the earthquake engineering industry were also included in the EB. The two years tenure of the inaugural EB has come to an end with this issue; and I would like to sincerely thank all EB members for their valuable time and help in reviewing papers submitted in their area of expertise over the last two years. A new EB for the next two years will be formed before the next issue. I plan to retain several members of the current board and add some new members to synchronize the expertise of the new EB with the range of topics covered by the papers submitted to the Bulletin in the last two years.

As I stated in my previous communication, one of my main aims will be to enhance the Bulletin's international reputation and reach. The establishment of the international EB including leading earthquake engineers and earthquake engineering researchers was the first step towards this goal. As a result, I have already received a good proportion of papers from outside NZ. In the last two years, I have received more than 25 papers with overseas authors/co-authors out of which about half did not have any NZ co-authors. This is an encouraging sign indicating a substantial increase in the international reach of the Bulletin.

Two aspects on which the Bulletin has not made intended progress are: attraction of practice papers and review time of submitted papers. The proportion of practice papers submitted to the Bulletin in the last two years has been a miserly 15%. To improve on this, I hereby appeal

cooperation from all practicing engineers by submitting their key research/project outcomes to the Bulletin. Similarly, despite all the efforts I have not been able to meet the target of communicating the first round reviews of all papers to the authors within two months of submission. Although this target has been met for several papers processed, majorities have taken much longer. The average review time of the papers is between three and four months; although this compares favourably with most international journals, it falls short of the expectation we have set for ourselves. I am hopeful of a noticeable improvement on this aspect in future, and hereby request all members of the EB and reviewers to help me in achieving this by providing a timely review.

I would like to also take this opportunity to heartily thank my deputy Les Megget who is bidding adieu to the Bulletin after being involved for more than two decades (first as the Editor and lately as Deputy Editor). Les has communicated to us that the next issue; i.e. special issue on *Seismic Performance of Non Structural Elements (SPONSE)*, will be his final as the Deputy Editor. Thank you Les; you have been of tremendous help to me and I wish you all the best in your well-deserved retirement.

After Les's retirement, the Deputy Editor role will be replaced by an Associate Editor, which is in line with common international practice. I am pleased to inform that Dr Liam Wotherspoon from University of Auckland has accepted my invitation to step into the Associate Editor role. Liam has already been helping me in checking the formats/styles of the accepted papers for the last few issues; and I must admit that he has an uncanny ability to spot errors which can easily go unnoticed by most of us. Welcome Liam; I am sure your formal involvement in the team will be of great benefit to the Bulletin.

Last but not the least; I would like to recognise the invaluable help provided by the reviewers. Names of all reviewers who have reviewed papers for the Bulletin in the last two years are listed at the end of this issue. Thank you all for volunteering your precious time and expertise for the profession; you all are central to the success of the Bulletin and without your help the bulletin would not have achieved what it has. Needless to mention, I am counting on your continued support in future.

Finally, I am thankful to the Society for entrusting me with this valuable responsibility. I will keep trying my best to perform my editorial duties in a fair, transparent and professional manner.

Yours sincerely,



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