

Engineering Heritage Australia

National Engineering Oral History Program: Biographical Notes

Peter Charles HOLLINGSWORTH (1929 -)

Geotechnical Engineer

- Birth & Family:** Peter Charles Hollingsworth was born 9 June 1929 at Atherton in far north Queensland, the first child of Douglas Charles Hollingsworth (1893 – 1976), surveyor, and Frances Dorothy (nee Pitt) (dec'd 1936). Sister, Joan (born 1930).
- Schooling:** Hollingsworth attended the Malanda State School (1934-1937) and then the All Souls Church of England Boarding School in Charters Towers (1938 – 1947)
- Qualification:** Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) – University of Queensland, 1951; Licensed Surveyor (Board of Surveyors), 1954.
- Memberships:** Hon. Fellow, Institution of Engineers, Australia;
Life Member, American Society of Civil Engineers;
Member, American Society of Testing & Materials;
Hon. Life Member, Association of Consulting Engineers, Australia;
Member, Australian Institute of Company Directors;
Member, State Purchasing Council; Member, Industry Working Group – Project & Procurement Options and Contract Selection Processes;
Member, Professional Advisory Board Faculty of Environment Engineering, Griffith University;
Honorary Fellow, St John's College, University of Queensland;
Honorary Life Member, Rural Environment Planning Association.
- Awards** Professional Engineer of the Year 2001
Honorary Fellow Institute of Engineers Australia 2002
- Work History** While studying for his Bachelor of Engineering qualification at the University of Queensland Hollingsworth gained a variety of engineering work experience including with BHP in Port Kembla and Brisbane City Council. He also worked with his father, a land surveyor, in North Queensland.
- He spent his first few years after graduating from University of Queensland in 1951 with a Bachelor of Engineering, working with his father. He became a licensed surveyor in 1954.
- In that year he joined the Commonwealth Department of Works in New Guinea, working on design and construction of civil engineering projects, including road and bridge location, hydro power station design, water supply and airfields. During his time in New Guinea he contracted malaria which was to affect him for some years. Deciding to leave New Guinea he applied for and was offered a number of jobs, choosing to work on the Warragamba Dam site in the Investigation Section where he was responsible for precise survey control, concrete control, stream gauging and silt sampling.

From 1957 to 1960 Hollingsworth worked with Concrete Industries Ltd., in Sydney on the design and construction of prestressed and precast structures and established a foundation contracting company Monier Earth Drilling Pty Ltd.

In 1960 and 1961 he became manager / engineer of McKinnery Foundation Drilling Company working on foundation construction throughout Australia, including the foundations for both the Kings Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue Bridges in Canberra and work on the Sydney Opera House site.

From 1962 he was resident founding partner and later a director and managing director of Coffey and Hollingsworth Pty Ltd in Brisbane where he directed major geotechnical investigations including: Bougainville Copper Project, Alumina projects, ports and harbours in Australia, New Guinea and South East Asia. Some of these projects were associated with the development of major mineral deposits.

In 1972, he established the firm's environmental office to undertake multi-disciplinary environmental studies of large mining and industrial projects. During the 1970s he was engaged in a number of overseas projects including the assessment of a large road project in Algeria for the World Bank, a soils and ground water agricultural project in Nigeria and the feasibility of a power station in Turkey.

In 1974 Hollingsworth retired from Coffey and Hollingsworth Pty Ltd and established a new practice which grew significantly, and became Hollingsworth Consultants Pty Ltd in 1982.

The firm specialised in the coordination of multi disciplinary environmental impact studies, environmental planning and geotechnical engineering. As managing director, Hollingsworth was personally involved in the direction of all of the environmental and major geo-technical studies undertaken by the firm.

In 1989 Hollingsworth Consultants merged with Dames and Moore, a major US and international consulting firm, to form Hollingsworth Dames and Moore, where Hollingsworth became senior consultant and chairman of Dames and Moore Australia.

He retired from these positions in mid 1993 and has practiced as an independent consultant and recently as Hollingsworth Project Consultant.

During his very active career Peter also co-founded Neutralysis Industries, owner of a waste residue conversion process, and the lobbied Federal & State Ministers and the business community for development of a detailed study for the Brisbane Gateway Ports concept.

Hollingsworth's work was recognised in 2001, when he won the Institution of Engineers' "Professional Engineer of the Year" Award. In the following year he was made an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Engineers.