

***The Institution of Engineers, Australia; Sydney Division  
Engineering Heritage Committee***

***Oral History Program: Biographical Notes***

**Bryan John Hilton Besley? (1934 - )  
Civil Engineer**

**Birth and Family:** Bryan was born on the eighth of January, 1934, in Greenslopes, Brisbane, Queensland. His father was Owen John (b. 1900) and his mother was Irene Eleanor nee. Mallett (b. 1904). Bryan married Jocelyn on the third of January 1959 and had three children; Bill, Graham and Joanne.

**Schooling:** Primary School: Holland Park State School  
Passed a scholarship exam in 1947 to attend; Secondary School: Church of England Grammar School, East Brisbane, where he passed his senior exam in 1951. His best subjects were arithmetic, algebra and geometry.

**Qualifications:** March 1956 – BE (Civil) from the University of Queensland. His degree was interrupted at the end of his first year by a three month national service duty.

**Memberships:** Fellow, Institution of Engineers, Australia.  
Member, Association of Consulting Engineers, Australia.  
Member, Australian Concrete Institute.

**Awards:** Professional Engineers, Queensland. (registration). (*What does this mean?*)

**Work History:** On the sixth of January, 1956, Bryan attended his first and only job interview during his professional career. It was for Macdonald Wagner and Priddle, which was located in Brisbane. In 1958/9, Bryan was made the Resident Engineer of the Townsville Bulk Sugar Terminal in North Queensland and in 1959/60 he was made Resident Engineer at the Mourilyan Bulk Sugar Terminal Coal Loader in Gladstone, concerned mainly with structural design. From 1961 to 1965, Bryan was the Senior Engineer of the company's Brisbane office and also worked on the development of sugar cane farms in the Mackay region.

In 1966 he became the Manager of the company's new Melbourne office and in 1969 his work at the Long Island Point Liquids Pier project earned the company the first Award of Excellence from the Association of Consulting Engineers. In 1971, Bryan became the Associate Director and Victorian Manager of the company as well as

continuing his work on the Long Island Point project which, in Western Port Bay, was the terminal for the Bass Strait oil fields. This project involved the bulk handling facilities for cement, flour, grain and alumina.

1973 marked the beginning of Bryan's work in East Java, where as a World Bank Project, he assisted in the rehabilitation of sugar mills. His overseas work for Macdonald Wagner and Priddle continued when in 1976 Bryan journeyed to Nigeria to help in the development of a sugar plantation and factory. In 1979 Bryan worked in the Philippines on a 'Philippines National Coal Logistics System Study,' which included the evaluation of reserves, market facilities and policies for the establishment of a coal industry. At this time, Bryan was also the Project Manager for the construction of coal handling facilities in the Philippines.

In 1980, Bryan was appointed as a Director on the Board for Macdonald Wagner and Priddle and in 1982 he participated in the ASEAN coal utilization workshops. In 1984/5 he served as the Director for the civil section of the Sydney office of the firm and from 1985 to 1989 he was Director of the Adelaide office whilst still living in Melbourne. During this time he also worked as a Project Manager on the design of onshore facilities for the Australian Submarine Corporation in Port Adelaide as well as a Project Manager for the design of aircraft maintenance hangers in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In 1989 the company changed its name to Connell Wagner and in 1990 Bryan relinquished his position as Director in preparation for his upcoming retirement. In 1991 Bryan did retire from Connell Wagner but continued to work for them on a part time basis as he established his own company, Bryan Besly Pty Ltd (1991/4). This personal company was then employed by Connell Wagner to undertake some work into the quality assurance area. In 1994 Bryan retired completely and after undertaking an art course, he is currently pursuing a career in oil painting.

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Prepared by Patricia Taaffe, August 2002 from oral history interviews conducted on  
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