

WHY CHOOSE US?

It can be difficult when choosing a consultant to determine what makes them the right choice for you. At SCE we believe that what we do is quite unique and stand alone in the field of engineering, particularly our forensic work. Our experience and methodology has led us to treating every client and their issues individually and tailoring our investigations accordingly.

This way of approaching each client's requirements has made us a leader in our field and we base our work solely on what will achieve the most cost efficient and technically sound solution for you.

To help you with your choice of consultant, you may want to consider the following:

DOES THE CONSULTANT HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF QUALITY & SUCCESS?

Many consultants make many claims, however in the Investigative, Remedial & Ground Engineering advice business, experience and a solid track record is essential.

At SCE, we have more than 80 years of combined experience, with a track record of stabilising many landslides and remediating otherwise 'unsolvable' problems; we also have a remarkable success record with matters involving litigation.

SCE have often been brought in on a matter on which other consultants have previously provided advice that has proved faulty, or was ineffective. In these cases clients have often spent considerable sums of money and other resources in attempting to resolve a problem, only to make the matter worse.

In some cases, clients involved in litigation have been at the point of losing everything before we became involved. After our involvement, the situation was reversed to a successful outcome.

WHAT TYPE OF SITE INSPECTION / INVESTIGATION DO YOU WANT?

If a consultant offers an inexpensive site inspection, it may be because it is undertaken by a relatively inexperienced person who is on site for a limited time and will only assess the site's issues at the 'superficial' level. Subsequently, when problems emerge on the site because the consultant 'did not see the particular feature that is now causing the problem', a client is often stuck with the ensuing costs and site difficulties.

By contrast, SCE believe that it is very important to properly prepare before going to site, and will spend sufficient time on site to enable appropriate professional advice to be provided. This means that prior to any site visit, SCE will in a systematic way:

- review the SCE in-house database of the area, the site geology and history;
- review all the documentation provided by a client, as well as establishing the various features to be identified in the course of the site inspection.

SCE also consider it very important that during the site inspection suitably careful site mapping be carried out, in conjunction with appropriate photography and relevant landform measurements.

The result of the SCE systematic approach is that during the site inspection or investigation, **all** the relevant site data is obtained, thus enabling appropriate engineering advice to a client on the proposed development, or other site issue.

ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR MONEY WISELY?

When a person is affected by the actions of an adjoining property owner or third party [e.g. an excavation next door], many clients first seek the advice of a lawyer. However, as the lawyer will almost inevitably then suggest you get advice from an engineer, it is usually best

to get the engineering advice first. Also, whilst it may later prove necessary for you to engage a lawyer, it is often possible to resolve such a matter with expert engineering advice, and the assistance of a Local Council.

Another factor to consider when spending your money, is whether the advice that you receive can then form the basis of an action plan to resolve your problem or issue. It is for this reason that SCE has adopted its systematic approach to site inspections and investigations, as this approach results in factual information that forms the basis of an action plan.

In other words, it is better to spend a bit more money on a proper and thorough site inspection / investigation to get a result, rather than spending money on a limited inspection or investigation which does not produce a result.

EXPERIENCE VS COST?

As you know, the adage “you get what you pay for” generally rings true for all aspects of life and the engineering field is no different. As such, an experienced engineer who has extensive and varied knowledge, as well as wisdom, will naturally command higher fees than those with less experience and knowledge.

We believe that with this experience comes the ability to determine not only the initial cause of an issue, but also the most cost efficient solution to ensure that the overall cost of the exercise is as low as possible.

At SCE our work over the years has been so extensive and varied, that we are extremely well qualified to gain the desired outcome for our clients.

SPECIALIST VS SIZE?

When choosing a consultant, it can often be tempting to believe that if the firm is large or international that they will provide the service that you require, often advertising the overall management of all aspects of your development or issue from project inception, through the planning and engineering stages to ultimately the project handover.

Whilst this approach may suit some large corporations and governmental clients, it rarely suits clients that need specialist advice on Investigative, Remedial and Ground Engineering projects. In addition, if it is a forensic & legal matter, then the court will always rely on the individual giving the evidence, and not consider at all that the individual is employed by a large engineering corporation.

Thus, as SCE is a unique engineering group in the Investigative, Remedial & Ground Engineering field, with its staff members having acted in many hundreds of forensic & litigation matters, SCE has unmatched specialist skills that can be applied to a client's particular project or problem.

In other words, it's better to engage an appropriately qualified and experienced specialist, rather than considering an organisation based on size alone.

ENGINEERING FEES & BUDGETS

When undertaking any project, be it in the Investigative, Remedial and Ground Engineering field or in the legal / litigation area, the engineering costs associated with the work are usually quite significant and are an important consideration for a client. However, the engineering costs associated with any remedial or forensic project always need to be viewed in the light of the ultimate outcome.

In this regard, as SCE's overall fees are typically larger than other engineering groups / consultants, these larger costs need to be viewed in the light of the following:

1. Remedial and litigation projects are always 'one off' matters; as such, considerable time and effort needs to be spent on a client's behalf if a good outcome is to be obtained.
2. SCE's rates and other charges are generally in line with those charged by other consultants; the usual reason for SCE's overall fees being larger is that SCE spend more individual time and effort on a client's project than others do.
3. If you are a Plaintiff and go to court seeking redress, then you need to make your case; if you do not, then you lose and pay the other side's costs as well as your own.
4. In engineering & construction matters, the expert you appoint to assist you is very important, and possibly the most important decision that you might make. If you appoint an expert who cannot survive the challenges of the other experts acting for the defendants, then you will most probably lose your case and incur considerable costs.
5. If you engage an engineer that does not have a good track record in expert evidence and litigation, then the chances are you will lose even with the best of legal advice. SCE has an excellent track record of being on the winning side over the past 25 years.