AINDT – The transition from Volunteer Organisation to modern Business Model:

I.D. Hogarth

Australian Institute of Non Destructive Testing,
Level 1 Suite 1.02
17-19 Yarra Street
Abbotsford VIC 3067

Abstract

From its early beginnings, the Australian Institute of NDT has had a strong history of selfless dedication by a large group of practitioners of the noble art of NDT who volunteered their time and energies to ensure that the NDT Industry in Australia was established on a solid foundation of integrity and competency. The work of the early councils established standards and ethical base lines that ensured industry was supported by trained, competent and qualified operators. As the role grew with the numbers of members over the years, and the need for involvement with the many aspects of industry increased the demands of the volunteers become difficult to maintain. It became obvious that change had to be implemented to ensure the continued growth and effectiveness of the Institute to develop and evolve with the growing needs of not just Australian Industry but the International community. This presentation provides some insights into the history of the institute and the issues faced with the transition from the volunteer organisation into the business model that has now been adopted by AINDT to continue into the future.

Introduction

It was with a degree of trepidation when I agreed to present an evolution of the AINDT; although I have been involved with the institute for a number of years and had been part of the transition from voluntary organisation to the current business model; what did I know its history? What lead to the formation of such an organisation with a focus on one small sector of industry in Australia; so began the journey of discovery.

For the history part I was lucky that a concerted effort had been undertaken a number of years ago to compose a book, a mechanism to preserve some of the stories and identities who had been part of the creation of the institute over the years. The History of Non Destructive Testing in Australia, authored by Mr David Barnett provide valuable insight into the numerous people who started to weave the rich tapestry of NDT in Australia today and the eventual creation of the Institute as it stands today. Many thanks to those who have come before me, there has been a litany of labours by so many over the fifty four years that the institute has been operating.
The Early Years

Early in 1963 Alex Wilson along with Don Fifer and Phil Onions germinated the idea of an Association. Soon Messrs Auberson, Gillespie, Spence and Robinson joined with them and formed a committee. The inaugural public meeting in New South Wales with 250 people in attendance met on 30th May, 1963 giving formal birth to the Non Destructive Testing Association of Australia.

In March 1965 Alex Wilson addressed 50 people at the University of Melbourne and the Victorian chapter was created with Tolbot Goldfinch as Chairman and Bob Sheldon as Secretary. August 1967 a National organisation was created with Alex Wilson elected the first Federal President and Jim Cole as Secretary / Treasurer. The memory of these two gentleman is held in perpetuity; Alex with a memorial Lecture and Jim, a meritorious award given to members of the institute who have been nominated for their efforts to continue the good work started by these men.

March 1969 saw the creation of the SA Branch. This was then followed by the creation of the Qualifying Board , (now called Certifying Board) being constituted in September, 1971. 1973 saw the establishment of the Western Australia Branch and this was followed closely by the creation of the Queensland Branch in April 1973. When it came time to register for incorporation, it was noted the name was very similar to that of one of the NDT companies operating in Australia which lead to a quest for an alternate title for the Institute. The organisation now known as AINDT was incorporated in 1974 under the Victorian Companies Act of 1961. From these early beginnings the institute has continued to evolve with a focus on the improvement and maintenance of NDT competency and standards within Australian industry.

The Institute did not only focus on local industry but become an active member of the international NDT community with a number of members attending conferences and becoming involved in the international committees filling a variety of roles over the years that followed. This has seen the Institute successfully bid and conduct a number of international events in Australia; the first being the 9th WCNDT in Melbourne November 1979, the 4th Pan Pacific Conference in Sydney 1983 and later the 10th APNDT Conference in Brisbane 2001. It is rumoured by the older members of the Institute that the then Australian Voting member Tolbot Goldfinch, suggested the name change from PPCNDT to APCNDT which was agreed and implemented after 6th PPCNDT Conference in New Zealand 1990.

Originally registered Not for profit association under the Associations Act of Victoria The institute operated under a Memorandum of Articles for several years as this was the best fit for an organisation primarily operated as a purely volunteer organisation. Secretariat services were subcontracted on a part time basis to allow the processing of the membership services; in addition the Certification services were supported by a paid secretary on a part time basis as well. As these functions were only
done on specific days of the week it led to a delay of operations with regard to applications and the issuing of results and certifications to its members. As these functions continued to expand the Federal council appointed a part time Executive Officer to coordinate the growing needs of the organisation.

The number of members continued to grow and the requirement for more efficiency with regard to the daily administration functionality, a change with regard to support was required and the Federal council made the decision to invest the funds it had accumulated for just such a contingency. A paid core staff was required to improve service efficiency and better service its members and Industry in general. When the focus evolved to that of a business model with paid employees under the direction of an Executive Officer guided by a Board of Directors, there had to be a paradigm shift and a number of changes to the way the Institute functioned. There was a need to have greater flexibility to react faster to issues that could impact on the effective operations of the organisation. There was also a need to provide greater liability cover for those people who had volunteered to continue to work with the institute to achieve the goals that were the corner stones of the foundation fifty four years ago. This lead to a Constitution drafted put into place, the original Memorandum of Articles which had become the foundation stones on which the Institute had been built was superseded.

This process was undertaken over an extended period of time with consultation with State Branches and members to ensure there was input from the whole cross section of the members. Once again the spirit of the volunteers was tested; a great effort was produced by the many people involved to ensure the transition was as smooth as possible. As with all processes of change there were robust discussion and eventual settlement on how the Institute should evolve; with guidance and advice in the various areas of Company operational requirements being sort. Once completing the ground work, the change was ratified and implemented at the Annual Federal Council meeting.

**New Structure**

With the changes of operation and employing a dedicated team of employees as opposed to a volunteer organisation, new modes of operation had to be introduced to allow the Federal executive to allow the office to operate and react more rapidly to the daily operation of the institute. The constitution was formulated to nominate the Executive committee to become a board of Directors; this board with the help of the Federal council would create a business plan which would be provided to the Executive Officer and his team to provide goals and measurable outcomes. Working proactively with the BOD the Executive Officer could work towards progressing the institute in a direction the Federal Council saw as the path forward as per the guidance of the Business plan.
This has seen the office work with a degree of autonomy within the business plan to provide real time services to its member base. A number of Authorised Qualifying Bodies and Registered Training Organisations have been established to provide more opportunity for members to be trained, assessed and certified throughout the country. Certification systems have been streamlined to allow the certification process to become extremely efficient; such that the turn around time for Certification currently stands at an average of thirteen days. The embedded efficiencies has seen the Institute providing world class services to Company, Corporate and rank and file members, powered by a small but highly motivated core staff.

APCNDT 2021

Australia has once again raised its hand to host a Conference; Melbourne has been selected as the venue for the APCNDT 2021. Preparations are now beginning to ensure that we have an event worthy of the prestige of such an event; AINDT would like to again show case its commitment to NDT at an international level. The weather bureau has been approached early to ensure we have perfect weather for the duration of the Conference to allow our international guests to appreciate what Australia has to offer our visitors, (we are still waiting for the response).

Melbourne, with a population of more than three million, is Australia's second largest city. It is regarded as the cultural and fashion capital of Australia and renowned for its fine restaurants. It is a true multicultural city with more than one quarter of Melbourne's inhabitants born overseas; it's no surprise Victoria's capital is regarded the world’s most livable city. So make sure you put these dates in your diary and book early; you are sure to be Educated, Enlighted but most of all entertained.

Conclusion

A lot of this history would be a common story among the many people present at this conference, with different Institutes being at different stages of development along the path of evolution as an organisation. It has not been a journey without it bumps and bruises but a journey, for my part which has been an enjoyable experience as I have enjoyed the company of a group of likeminded and dedicated people.

From initial trepidation to a humbling feeling of gratitude for the many people who have given so much of their life. A good many of those who were part of the evolution from the very beginning have since passed and cannot witness what the institute has become; I can only hope that they would approve of the direction we the current generation of volunteers have taken their legacy.