Advanced Condition Assessment & Pipe Failure Prediction Project

Bulletin No. 2, October 2014

A non-technical overview of Fact Sheet No. 2 (December 2012)

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Progress on Activity 1

In August 2011 international water research organisations, Australian water utilities and three Australian universities came together through a collaborative research agreement, and committed overall funding of $16 million (including $4 million cash) over five years to find ways of finding a solution to the problem of failure in critical pipes.

The partners in this research project include Sydney Water Corporation, Water Research Foundation of the USA, UK Water Industry Research Ltd, Water Corporation (WA), City West Water, Melbourne Water, South Australia Water Corporation, South East Water Ltd and Hunter Water Corporation.
Monash University leads the research supported by University of Technology Sydney and the University of Newcastle.
Other collaborators include Water Environment Research Foundation and Dr Balvant Rajani of Rajani Consultants Inc.

Round 1 of the project covers three activities initially:

Activity 1 How, when and where will pipes fail within the entire network?
Activity 2 How do we assess the condition of the pipe cost effectively?
Activity 3 How do we calculate pipe deterioration rates accurately with respect to the pipe environment?

Further Activities planned for Round 2 include:
Activity 4 What is the time-dependent probability of failure along the pipeline?
Activity 5 How do we transfer the new knowledge to the industry for optimal pipe management?

All five activities are due for completion by 2016.

Activity 1 How, when and where will pipes fail within the entire network?

The aim of the Activity is to establish improved methodologies to predict remaining physical life of critical pipes taking into account the effect of external/internal factors, different material types and critical locations and factors within the network. This activity will draw from Activities 2 and 3 to establish the failure state and to determine the remaining physical life of pipes. Professor Jayantha Kodikara of Monash University is leading this Activity.

The expected outcomes of Activity 1 include:

- Databases for material properties, external (traffic and soil loads) and internal factors (static pressure and transients) on the basis of data collection and measurement.
- Improved methods of prediction of pipe stress and failure for cast iron and steel pipes.
- Detailed methods for pipe remaining life calculation taking into account external/internal factors and for pipe deterioration (from Activity 3).
- Identification of critical factors and locations along the pipeline causing failure.
- Concept development for the use of optical fibres for smart pipe monitoring.

Industry Partners

SA Water, Sydney Water, City West Water, Melbourne Water, South East Water, Water Corporation, Hunter Water

Research Partners

MONASH University, The University of Newcastle Australia, University of Technology Sydney

International Partners

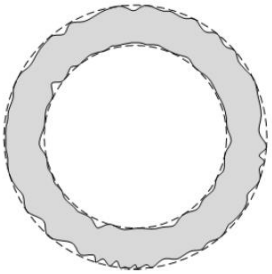
Water Research Foundation, UKWIR

Progress to date includes:

- Past pipe failure data from partners and observed failure modes and corrosion patterns were compiled. In addition, a large amount of literature was collected and reviewed. An online database was developed and was shared with the partners.
- Two reports were produced: (1) Critical review of historical information on large diameter pipe failures (mostly on the basis of partner data collected); (2) Concepts for monitoring of new critical water pipelines using optical fibres.
- Material testing is in progress on failed and corroded pipe samples received from local partners. These include stress-strain behaviour and tensile failure of coupons, ring tests and joint tests.
- Patterns of corrosion were categorised (see Figure – Patterns of corrosion) and development of detailed models for their analysis have begun using a bottom up approach. Detailed three dimensional finite element analyses were undertaken and simplified models are developed for field application.
- Measurements of pressure transient development is being undertaken in the Hunter Water network (NSW, Australia and numerical hydraulic calibration modelling is underway.
- Detailed plans have been developed for strain gauging and measurement of pipe and soil strains due to traffic and soil ground movement in the Sydney Water pipe test bed.

Figure – Patterns of corrosion

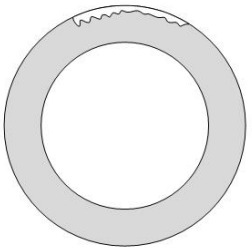
(a)



(b)

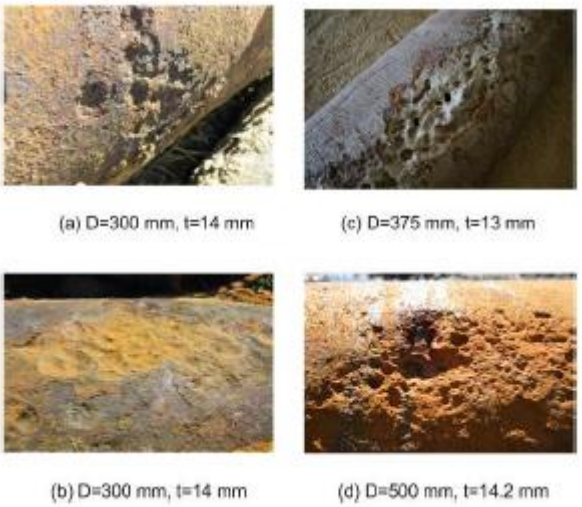
(A) General corrosion: (a)field observation; (b) Idealization for analysis

(a)

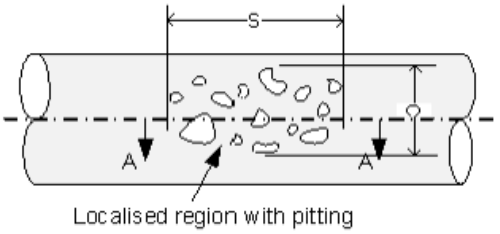


(b)

(B) Patch corrosion: (a) field observation; (b) Idealization for analysis



(a)



(b)

(C) Pitting corrosion: (a) field observations; (b) Idealisation

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