

## Move or stay? Sell or pay?

In most cases it is cheaper to repair a concrete structure than demolish and rebuild.

That's not to say it will be cheap. But because they usually provide vital amenities or income to someone, buildings, wharves and bridges aren't easy to vacate or take out of service.

Moving owners or tenants out of buildings is disruptive and costly, loss of income from berthing fees, rent and the like can "demolish" the bottom line and it's not easy to find several thousand square metres of spare real estate to build a new bridge or wharf!

### Bad to good news

Fortunately, repair and routine maintenance often provide the best answer.

Unfortunately, maintenance budgets or strata levies rarely cover the cost of a significant repair project, all because owners lack foresight about the problem and therefore don't budget for it. Lacking the funds, they are faced with a tough decision: Stay or go? Pay up or sell?

Fortunately, repairs can usually be done while a building is occupied or a wharf or bridge is in service, thereby maintaining the income stream or the traffic flow.

Unfortunately, a further disincentive arises in the inevitable restrictions of access or operation that will be necessary, and the more of these, the higher the cost.

Fortunately, owners may exploit the services of ACRA members, who are skilled at minimising disruptions while conducting remediation to world's best practice.

### Bail out

On the other hand, it is sometimes easier to abandon a ship with a few holes in it than try to find the holes, figure out how they happened and then find the best way to fix them.

The idea of continuously bailing out the boat and bog-



ging up the holes, takes a lot of energy and the task keeps coming back to bite you.

### Long term help

Fortunately, for asset owners with a sound long-term outlook (or an ACRA consultant to guide them in long-term repair and maintenance strategies) proper maintenance will prolong the life of their structures and provide them with the best return on their investment in the long run.

For this, LCCA (life cycle cost analysis) is a powerful tool to give asset owners the information they need to make their decision. Dollars spent on the protection and repair of concrete now will save later.

ACRA's consultants regularly carry out LCCAs on a range of projects for their clients to best assess optimal use of funds.

Again fortunate — at least if you exploit ACRA expertise.

### Course/seminars

"Corrosion and Repair of Reinforced Concrete" is a new course developed jointly by ACRA and ACA, to be held in Sydney June 29 and 30.

The course is a "must" for asset managers and engineers, architects, specialist contractors and construction material suppliers.

"Concrete Durability and Repair: Some Contemporary Issues" 2004 is a seminar series to be run July–August by ACRA and ACA nationally on: service life modelling; designing for durability and corrosion resistance; cracking; corrosion inhibitors; repair and protection; and cathodic protection.

Registration for both the course and the seminars will be through ACA. Watch the ACRA web site for details. ■