

## Hanging about can be useful in building care

Recently there has been an increase in the number of companies using industrial rope access techniques to undertake a whole range of building maintenance works.

Thanks to recent self-regulation and increased training courses, the scope of works being performed on ropes has expanded from its prior domain of cleaning or working on windows, communication towers and sports screens, to now include building maintenance and concrete repair.

### Diagnose close-up

**A number of ACRA consultant members have been using rope access techniques for over a decade.**

While not for the faint-hearted, rope access is a safe and cost-effective way for professional engineers to inspect and test structures.

The option of having a qualified inspection of building facades, chimneys, etc, where purpose-built maintenance units are not available or temporary swinging stages, boom lifts, dog boxes, etc. are not practical, is valuable in managing a range of assets.

Because concrete repair generally involves considerable demolition work, ACRA's contractor members generally have limited use for rope access technique. However, **there are occasions when it is the most effective means of carrying out small repairs in difficult access situations.**

### Ground rules

The above comes with a caveat: **you can't do everything from ropes!**

The key criteria for determining suitability are: a) the ability to get to the top of the structure and b) to have the appropriately certified anchor points or engineer-approved structures to attach to.

The scale, type and safety of the work will determine whether rope access is viable.



**UP-CLOSE DIAGNOSIS IS VALUABLE**

There are industry standards that seek to maintain safety and there is an onus on building managers in particular to ensure that such things as anchor points are regularly tested and certified.

Working from ropes should not be considered a "cheap" way to get the work done. There are certain jobs that are just better, safer or more practically done using conventional access techniques.

Of course, the rope access option is less likely to be suggested by those who don't have the full range of techniques at their disposal.

On the other hand, the ACRA membership encompasses all the skills. This ensures that **you can with confidence leave the best access strategy to any ACRA consultant or contractor whose counsel you seek.**

### October awards

ACRA members put their abilities on the line by entering the **ACRA Awards of Excellence, to be judged by independent industry experts.**

About the time this goes to press, the winners of the Awards for 2004 will have been chosen.

The brief to judges is that if no entry is outstanding enough in its category (there are seven) then no Award will be conferred.

**Surely a sign of industry best-practice: hanging from ropes or not!** ■