**ISSMGE FOUNDATION**
**REPORT ON CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE**

| ***Your Name:*** Muhammad Naqeeb Nawaz | ***Your Organization:*** The University of Melbourne | ***Date of report:*** 31/08/2026 |
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| ***Conference Title:*** International Conference on Advances and Innovations in Soft Soil Engineering 2026 | ***Location of Conference:*** Delft, Netherlands | ***Dates of Conference:*** 24th – 26th August 2026 |

***What you learned:***

At Soft Soils 2026, the technical sessions I attended were closely related to my PhD research and provided valuable insights into the behaviour, characterisation and testing of soft soils.

In particular, I attended presentations on

1. Oven-drying effects on the characterization of marine and lacustrine soils
2. An accurate and direct approach for sample-free in-situ detection of quick
3. Recent developments in laboratory testing on soft soils at the Swedish Geotechnical Institute, SGI
4. Evolution of pore structure and creep characteristics of Indian black cotton soil under oedometer conditions
5. Strength enhancement of expansive and non-expansive clays using colloidal silica
6. Influence of permeability on creep development: a comparative study of oedometer testing and a field-scale berm.

These presentations along with others, broadened my understanding of sample preparation effects, sampling and testing quality, sensitive-clay characterisation, creep behaviour, permeability effects and laboratory methods for soft soils. The discussions were particularly useful for relating these topics to my own work on sampling disturbance and the deformation and strength behaviour of Coode Island Silt.

***People you met:***

I also had the opportunity to meet many PhD students, university faculty members, and professionals from industry, including:

1. **Professor Jubert Pineda**, Associate Professor, The University of Newcastle Australia.
2. **Martin Holmén**, Swedish Geotechnical Institute, SGI, Linköping, Sweden

3. **Dr Catherine O'Sullivan**, Professor of Particulate Soil Mechanics, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering - Faculty of Engineering, Imperial College London
4. **Minna Karstunen**, Professor, CHALMERS University of Technology
5. **Joost van der Schrier**, Leading Professional/Technical Director Geo-Engineering

***Main features of conference:***

Soft Soils 2026 was a three-day international conference held at the TU Delft Aula Conference Centre from 24 to 26 August 2026. The programme included keynote lectures, technical presentations and interactive discussions covering laboratory and in-situ testing, soft-soil behaviour, constitutive and numerical modelling, ground improvement, onshore and offshore applications, monitoring, climate resilience, and machine learning and data analysis. The conference also provided strong networking opportunities and an effective platform for exchanging research and practical experience in soft-soil engineering.

***Your comments on the conference:***

Soft Soils 2026 was highly relevant to my PhD research and gave me an excellent opportunity to present my work, learn from internationally recognised researchers and practitioners, and develop new professional connections. I particularly benefited from sessions on sampling and sample preparation, advanced laboratory testing, creep, sensitive soils and in-situ characterisation. My discussion with Dr. Jubert Pineda on sampling disturbance was especially valuable. Interactions with Martin Holmén, Professor Catherine O'Sullivan, GDS Instruments and SMARTEC also provided useful perspectives on current research and laboratory technologies. Overall, the conference combined strong technical learning, research feedback and networking that will directly support the next stages of my PhD research.

***Please attach short report (maximum 400 words) suitable for publication in the ISSMGE Bulletin:***

The International Conference on Advances and Innovations in Soft Soil Engineering (Soft Soils 2026) was held at the TU Delft Aula Conference Centre in Delft, the Netherlands, from 24 to 26 August 2026. The conference brought together researchers, practising engineers, industry specialists and students to discuss recent advances in the characterisation, testing, modelling and engineering of soft soils.

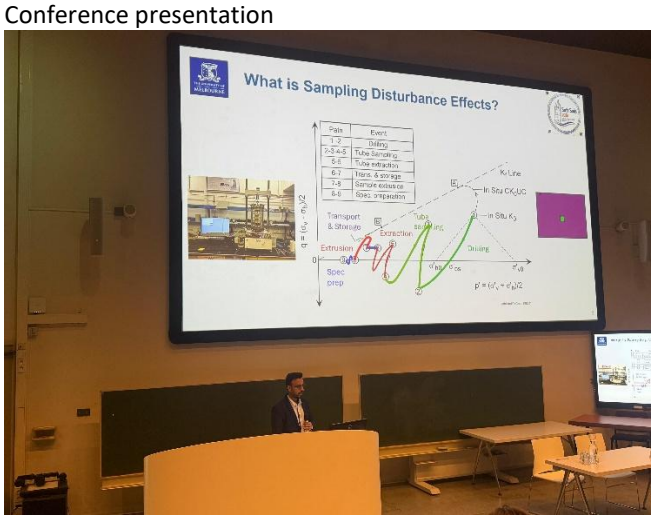
I presented my research on the effects of sampling disturbance on the deformation properties of Coode Island Silt. The conference was particularly valuable because several sessions closely aligned with my PhD research. Presentations I attended included oven-drying effects on the characterisation of marine and lacustrine soils; sample-free in-situ detection of quick clay; recent laboratory-testing developments at the Swedish Geotechnical Institute; pore-structure evolution and creep of Indian black cotton soil; colloidal-silica treatment of expansive and non-expansive clays; and the influence of permeability on creep development from oedometer and field-scale observations.

A particularly useful interaction was with Dr. Jubert Pineda, whose expertise in sampling disturbance is closely related to my research. His presentation and our discussion provided valuable perspectives on how sample handling and preparation affect measured soil behaviour. I also interacted with Martin Holmén from SGI and Professor Catherine O'Sullivan, as well as representatives from GDS Instruments and SMARTEC. These discussions provided useful insights into advanced laboratory testing systems, instrumentation, monitoring technologies and current research directions in soft-soil engineering.

Overall, Soft Soils 2026 provided an excellent combination of technical learning, research feedback and international networking. The knowledge and professional connections gained from the conference will directly support the next stages of my PhD research in sampling disturbance, soft-soil behaviour and uncertainty-aware modelling.

***Photographs from Conference:*** Insert here or attach to email

Conference presentation




Keynote lecture by Prof. Jubert Pineda




Additional Photographs

