



**HIGH-STRENGTH CONCRETE INCORPORATING
COPPER SLAG AND GROUND PUMICE**

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**School of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Faculty of Engineering & Information Technology**

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PUBLICATIONS

My publications under name of University of Technology Sydney (UTS) during my studentship are:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certificate of original authorship	ii
Publications	iii
Acknowledgment	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables.....	xiii
Abstract	xv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Research background and significance	2
1.2. Aim and objectives	5
1.3. Outline of thesis.....	6
Chapter 2: Literature review	8
2.1. Introduction	8
2.2. Pumice	11
2.2.1. Definition and specifications	11
2.2.2. Characterization of pumice.....	13
2.2.3. Pumice in concrete	19
2.2.3.1. Pumice as aggregate	21
2.2.3.2. Pumice as cement replacement.....	36
2.3. Copper slag.....	43

2.3.1. Production of copper slag.....	44
2.3.2. Chemical composition.....	45
2.3.3. Physical properties.....	47
2.3.4. Use of copper slag in cement.....	48
2.3.5. Use of copper slag in concrete.....	51
Chapter 3: Materials and experimental methods.....	58
1.1. Materials.....	58
1.2. Mix proportions.....	63
1.3. Concrete specimen preparation.....	65
1.4. Test methods.....	67
1.4.1. Workability (slump).....	67
1.4.2. Air content.....	69
1.4.3. Unit weight.....	71
1.4.4. Compressive strength.....	72
1.4.5. Splitting tensile strength.....	73
1.4.6.....	
Chapter 4: Results and discussions.....	75
4.1. Introduction.....	75
4.2. Fresh properties.....	76
4.2.1. Slump measurements.....	76
4.2.2. Air content.....	78
4.2.3. Unit weight.....	79
4.3. Hardened concrete.....	81
4.3.1. Compressive strength.....	81
4.3.1.1. Effects of copper slag.....	81
4.3.1.2. Effects of pumice.....	87

4.3.1.3. Combo effects of pumice and copper slag.....	94
4.3.2. Splitting tensile strength.....	100
4.3.1.1. Effects of copper slag	100
4.3.1.2. Effects of pumice.....	104
4.3.1.3. Combo effects of pumice and copper slag.....	109
 Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations.....	 117
5.1. Conclusions	117
5.2. Recommendations	125
5.2.1. Recommended content of pumice and copper slag	125
5.2.2. Research limitations.....	126
5.2.3. Recommended further research.....	126
 References.....	 127
 Appendix A: Green Star ranking system	 144
 Appendix B: Cost analysis.....	 165

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 2.1: Explosive eruption of Mount Pinatubo in Philippines in 1991.....	11
Fig. 2.2: Scanning electron microscope (SEM) image of pumice	15
Fig. 2.3: SEM images of pumice (a) scaled up by $\times 1000$, (b) $\times 250$ times	15
Fig. 2.4: SEM morphologies of (a) cement, (b) pumice powder and (c) silica fume	16
Fig. 2.5: XRD analysis of the pumice	17
Fig. 2.6. DTA–TG curves of the pumice	18
Fig. 2.7: Pore size distribution of pumice sample by MIP	19
Fig. 2.8: The Pantheon building which was constructed by the Romans in 126 AD.....	21
Fig. 2.9: Stress-strain curves for different concretes with different slumps and ratios of pumice replacement	24
Fig. 2.10: Compressive strength of concretes with different A/C ratios.....	25
Fig. 2.11: Compressive and tensile strengths of pumice concrete versus level of pumice coarse aggregate replacement	26
Fig. 2.12: Modulus of elasticity of pumice concrete versus level of pumice coarse aggregate replacement	26
Fig. 2.13: The infiltration zones in pumice and hydration products developed in these zones	28
Fig. 2.14: Density versus level of pumice replacement	28

Fig. 2.15: Fluctuations of water absorption of different concretes with pumice	29
Fig. 2.16: 12-week drying shrinkage of pumice concrete versus level of pumice coarse aggregate replacement.....	30
Fig. 2.17: Scanning Electron Microscope image of concrete with pumice aggregate and slag after exposure to elevated temperature at 900 °C a) cement paste, b) ITZ	32
Fig. 2.18: 12-week water permeability of pumice concrete versus level of pumice coarse aggregate replacement.....	33
Fig. 2.19: Half-cell potentials of reinforcing bars in plain and pumice concrete	38
Fig. 2.20: Results of XRD analysis of plain and pumice concretes.....	39
Fig. 2.21: Results of corrosion potential of concrete containing pumice and silica fume as cement replacements	40
Fig. 2.22: Relative compressive strength of different mixtures after exposure to high temperatures	42
Fig. 2.23: Sarcheshmeh copper manufacturing complex in Iran	44
Fig. 2.24: Compressive strength of NaOH-activated copper slag and Portland cement mortars.....	50
Fig. 2.25: Compressive strength of copper slag mortars as a function of replacement level	50
Fig. 2.26: Drying shrinkage strain using copper slag and river sand.....	52
Fig. 2.27: Compressive strength development of mortars containing copper slag sand with different water to cement ratios	53

Fig. 2.28: Compressive strength development of concretes containing copper slag sand with different water to cement ratios	54
Fig. 2.29: Resistance of sulphate attack of concrete using copper slag judged by (a) weight change, (b) relative dynamic young's modulus	55
Fig. 2.30: Carbonated thickness of concrete using copper slag and river sand	56
Fig. 2.31: Compressive strength development of concretes containing copper slag and limestone coarse aggregates	56
Fig. 3.1 : Sample of silica fume and pumice	59
Fig. 3.2: Samples of copper slag aggregate.....	61
Fig. 3.3 : The time of adding water to mixture in a rotating pan mixer.....	65
Fig. 3.4: Covering concrete specimens after casting with wet burlap and polyethylene sheet on top of the burlap	66
Fig. 3.5: Different steps of performing slump test.....	68
Fig. 3.6: Measuring air content of fresh concrete	70
Fig. 3.7: Set up of compression test using a hydraulic pressure machine.....	72
Fig. 3.8: Set up of splitting tensile test using a hydraulic pressure machine	73
Fig. 3.9 : Specimen is located between two plywood strips for splitting tensile test.....	74
Fig. 4.1: Slump values of different concrete mixtures	76
Fig. 4.2: Air contents of different concrete mixtures	77
Fig. 4.3: Changes of unit weight of different concrete mixtures	80
Fig. 4.4: Compressive strength development of concrete with limestone (FLS) and copper slag (FCS) coarse aggregate at different ages (w/b: 0.4)	83

Fig. 4.5: Compressive strength development of concrete with limestone (SLS) and copper slag (SCS) coarse aggregate at different ages (w/b: 0.3 and SF: 10%).....	83
Fig.4.6: Comparison different failure surfaces of concrete specimens containing: a) limestone; b) copper slag	84
Fig. 4.7: Debonding of aggregates from cement matrix (D) of concrete specimens containing: a) limestone; b) copper slag	85
Fig. 4.8: Comparison of SCI of two different series F and S with copper slag	87
Fig. 4.9: Variation of compressive strength of FLS concretes versus pumice replacement at different ages	87
Fig. 4.10: Variation of compressive strength of FCS concretes versus pumice replacement at different ages	88
Fig. 4.11: Variation of compressive strength of SLS concretes versus pumice replacement at different ages	88
Fig. 4.12: Variation of compressive strength of SCS concretes versus pumice replacement at different ages	89
Fig. 4.13: Combined effects of cooper slag coarse aggregate and pumice powder on compressive strength of F series	94
Fig. 4.14: Combined effects of cooper slag coarse aggregate and pumice powder on compressive strength of S series	95
Fig. 4.15: Splitting tensile strength development of concrete with limestone (FLS) and copper slag (FCS) coarse aggregate at different ages (w/b: 0.4)	102

Fig. 4.16: Splitting tensile strength development of concrete with limestone (SLS) and copper slag (SCS) coarse aggregate at different ages (w/b: 0.3 and SF: 10%).....	102
Fig. 4.17: Variation of splitting tensile strength of FLS concretes versus pumice replacement at different ages	104
Fig. 4.18: Variation of splitting tensile strength of FCS concretes versus pumice replacement at different ages	105
Fig. 4.19: Variation of splitting tensile strength of SLS concretes versus pumice replacement at different ages	105
Fig. 4.20: Variation of splitting tensile strength of SCS concretes versus pumice replacement at different ages	106
Fig. 4.21: Combined effects of copper slag coarse aggregate and pumice powder on splitting tensile strength of F series.....	110
Fig. 4.22: Combined effects of copper slag coarse aggregate and pumice powder on splitting tensile strength of S series.....	111

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Final CO ₂ emission factors for different concrete materials	10
Table 2.2: World mine production of pumice	12
Table 2.3: Typical chemical composition of pumice	14
Table 2.4: Mix design of low-strength concrete with pumice aggregate	35
Table 2.5. Chemical Composition of Copper Slag from Different Sources (%)	46
Table 2.6. Physical properties of copper slag	47
Table 3.1: Chemical composition of Portland cement (OPC), silica fume (SF), copper slag (CS) and pumice (P)	60
Table 3.2: Physical properties of coarse aggregates	61
Table 3.3: Grading requirements for coarse aggregate according to ASTM C 33	62
Table 3.4: Concrete mixture proportions	64
Table 3.5: Number of layers required for specimens according to ASTM C 192	66
Table 4.1: Slump, air content and unit weight of fresh concrete mixtures	77
Table 4.2 : Compressive strength of different concrete mixtures at different ages	82
Table 4.3: SCI values for concrete mixtures containing different levels of pumice.....	90
Table 4.4: SCI values for concrete mixtures containing copper slag (CS) and different levels of pumice (P)	96
Table 4.5 : Splitting tensile strength of different mixtures at different ages.....	101

Table 4.6: SCI values for concrete mixtures containing different levels of pumice..... 107

Table 4.7: SCI values for mixtures containing copper slag and pumice..... 111

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, concrete is the most widely used construction material which mainly consists of Portland cement, aggregate and water. For more than 200 years, concrete has been known as a durable and high strength construction material while its formability during its fresh stage results in building different shapes which are otherwise not possible. Due to widespread construction of high-rise buildings, bridges and other concrete structures, there is a growing demand from clients as well as technical requirements for using high-strength concretes in certain applications such as towers.

However, common belief is that more Portland cement should be used for obtaining a higher strength grade. In other words, producing high-strength concrete is synonymous with higher consumption of Portland cement. But, cement production is a high energy-consuming and polluting process to the extent that Portland cement production, on its own, contributes to over 7% of worldwide greenhouse gases (GHG) which is equal to 1.6 billion tonnes of GHGs. On average, production of each tonne of Portland cement results in releasing one tonne of CO₂. Current average consumption of concrete is about one tonne per year per every living human being. Because of large consumption of concrete and Portland cement as well as its energy-consuming and polluting production process, even small reductions in greenhouse gas emissions per tonne of manufactured concrete can make a significant and positive global impact.

Recent research shows that Portland cement and coarse aggregates have the highest environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, any attempt to make concrete more sustainable should firstly focus on these two materials.

On the other hand, using traditional materials such as natural limestone aggregate for producing concrete causes many environmental problems and such procedures are critically under scrutiny in terms of sustainability because it is not possible to renew these natural sources. Therefore, new procedures must be developed to use alternative raw materials for producing concrete.

Pumice is a volcanic rock which is made of highly vesicular rough textured volcanic glass. According to US Geological Survey Report, global production of pumice and pumicite was approximately 18 and 17 million tonnes in 2011 and 2012, respectively. Traditionally, pumice as aggregate has been used for producing light weight building blocks, concrete and assorted building products in construction industry. However, technical performance and properties of concretes with pumice aggregate conveys important concerns because of high water absorption of pumice aggregate. On the other hand, main chemical ingredient of pumice is SiO_2 and many researchers have reported that pozzolanic characteristics for pumice powder and its positive effects on mechanical and long-term properties of concrete. Therefore, it can be a good alternative cementitious material which can be used instead of Portland cement.

Copper slag is a by-product obtained during the matte smelting and refining of copper. Production of one tonne of copper produces around 2.2-3 tonne of copper slag. In the United States, the amount of copper slag manufactured is approximately four million tonnes, and in Japan is around two million tonnes per year. Although some researchers have attempted to use copper slag powder as a cement additive, a significant part of deposited copper slag is air-cooled slag which results in crystallised structure instead of

required amorphous structure for a cement additive. Furthermore, many researchers have reported promising results by using copper slag as coarse aggregates in concrete. This research aims to develop a novel type of green high-strength concrete by using copper slag coarse aggregate and pumice powder with less environmental impacts and carbon footprint with at least similar performance to common high-strength concrete. To achieve this purpose, a comprehensive assessment of results of an extensive experimental program on fresh and hardened concrete specimens including slump, unit weight, air content, compressive and splitting tensile strength measurements was undertaken.

16 different mixture proportions based on different levels of cement replacement with pumice and using copper slag instead of limestone coarse aggregate at two water to binder ratios of 0.3 and 0.4 were investigated. In addition, silica fume was used at level of 10% of cement weight in some mixtures. Compressive strength of concrete specimens were measured at different ages of 7, 28, 56 and 91 days while splitting tensile strength was measured at 7, 28 and 91 days to evaluate effects of pumice, copper slag and their combinations.

In general, it can be concluded that the presence of copper slag can increase compressive strength of concrete at different ages. This can be attributed to higher level of strength properties displayed by copper slag aggregate. In addition, the surface texture of coarse aggregate is partly responsible for the bond between the cement paste and aggregate because of the mechanical interlocking between cement paste and copper slag. At age of 91 days, all of concrete mixtures, except those containing finely ground

pumice as 20% of Portland cement replacement, showed approximately similar or even better performance in comparison with control mixtures.

In general, it can be concluded that using copper slag coarse aggregate increased the splitting tensile strength of concrete by around 12% in comparison with control mixtures with limestone coarse aggregate. In addition, adding finely ground pumice resulted in rapid reduction of the splitting tensile strength at all ages. However, satisfying results were obtained by combined use of pumice powder and copper slag coarse aggregate.

With regard to numerous test results of fresh and hardened high-strength concrete with and without copper slag coarse aggregate and finely ground pumice, it can be recommended that the most efficient and optimized value of finely ground pumice when copper slag coarse aggregate is used in concrete is 10% at water to binder ratio of 0.4 and 20% at water to binder ratio of 0.3 with the presence of 10% silica fume in concrete mixture. The 28-day compressive and splitting tensile strength were similar to control normal concrete with limestone coarse aggregate while at later ages they displayed superior performance in comparison with the control normal mixture in terms of compressive and splitting tensile strength. The recommended values of pumice and copper slag showed promising and excellent results at the age of 56 days which is the common age of measuring concrete properties including high level of supplementary cementitious materials. In this study, 30% of Portland cement was successfully replaced by silica fume and finely ground pumice while copper slag coarse aggregate as an industrial waste material was simultaneously used instead of whole of natural limestone coarse aggregate for producing sustainable high-strength concrete. With regard to the

Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star Mat-4, this novel type of high-strength concrete can achieve concrete credits as green concrete.