

President's Report 2003

It is my pleasure to present the President's Report for the 51st Annual General Meeting of the Australian Road Federation.

The mammoth task and commitment of putting on the regional international IRF/ARF conference in Sydney last year left all those involved drained and as expected we suffered from post conference syndrome.

In the months following the conference and up to the early part of this calendar year was spent tidying up the loose ends of the conference aftermath.

Federal Government issued its Auslink Green paper in November 2002 and your Federation made appropriate submissions to this Federal Government initiative in February 2003.

In late February the ARF gave support to the ongoing formation and operation of the Committee for Adelaide Roads (CAR) and attended a meeting in Adelaide for that purpose on 26th February.

In late February the first stage plans were developed to hold a Road Summit in Sydney for late February 2004.

The Australian Road Federation Road Safety Award for 2002 Academic year was awarded to a Mr Trent Purdin and a student award ceremony on the 1st July 2003. This prize is given in the faculty of Building, Environment and Engineering of Queensland University of Technology and sponsored by the ARF.

We had a record number of applications for the John Shaw Award this year which shows both the success and influence of last year's international regional conference and the increasing awareness of the role of the ARF. We were delighted that Peter Balfe, the Deputy Managing Director of VicRoads, was the chosen person to receive the 2003 John Shaw Award. This award will be presented to Peter at the Sydney Road Summit on the 24th and 25th February next year where we will also make a small presentation to Kay Thorne and officially farewell her.

Our financial position to the 30th June, 2003 has improved significantly from prior years thanks to the bold step taken by Council to dramatically increase the fees and raise an appropriate levy to cover previous shortfalls. This action together with our new plans and focus on membership recruitment is expected to see a significant improvement in both what the ARF is able to deliver and its financial outcomes. We were simply under resourced for too long.

In late May Kay Thorne, our Executive Director for the past 10 years, gave notice of her intention to resign and plans commenced for a search for her replacement. Kay has served the ARF well over so many years and under very difficult circumstances with very limited resources. We will all get a further opportunity to thank Kay when we officially welcome her as our guest to our Sydney Roads Summit in February next year.

Kay's resignation has provided a catalyst for significant change in both the way ARF has traditionally operated and the potential scope of its activities.

The appointment of Mr Ian Webb as the new Executive Director, who has today officially taken up his role, punctuates the official start of a new era in response to a very significant challenge facing the national road system in the next 10 years or so.

There is a clear and present need for the ARF to become the clearly identifiable national body that brings all stakeholders together and ensures that there is informed public debate and action to deal with what is likely to be the greatest period of change in the road industry.

To this end, Ian Webb has already been working with us before he officially started to help develop the new strategic direction and to start the process of engaging a much wider group of stakeholders.

We held a strategic planning workshop in October this year and the outcomes of this very successful workshop have provided us with a clear focus and a new vision

"The ARF will develop into the recognised peak industry body for Australia's road sector. Its core activity will be to provide an independent and consolidated voice for roads."

The ARF will be:

- A fearless advocate for a vital public interest
- Motivated by vision for the needs of the future
- At a national level
- As the agency for first referral by government and the media
- Industry custodian for Australia's roads
- Respected and authoritative

Your President was appointed to the World Executive Board of the International Road Federation and attended his first board meeting in Brussels during this past month. This was an extremely useful meeting and I am sure we will be able to

leverage off the activities of the International Road Federation over this next period. The challenges of providing an adequate road system are the same throughout both the developed and developing world and are fairly consistent across national boundaries. We should be able to leverage both the flow of information and possible solutions to the problems facing us everywhere.

I am excited by the new energy that is quickly developing and look forward to working with our new Executive Director, Ian Webb in what should be an exciting year with some bold objectives which I am confident we will achieve together.

Ray Fisher

President