

ROADS AUSTRALIA

President's Report 2014

In the past our annual reports focused mainly on our growth and aspirations. The growth indicators were typically membership, activities, turnover and newsletter circulation. Our aspirations spoke about what we wanted to become – not only the national stakeholder body for our industry, but a unique partnership between industry and government.

The message on growth does not need to be labored. Over the last eleven years growth in most indicators has averaged over 20% per annum year on year. And, in the meantime, Roads Australia has evolved into the remarkable partnership that we hoped it might be.

Roads Australia has now climbed the first horizon. But this is not an end in itself. We must now think about what we do with the opportunities we have been granted. Our success must always be measured by our contribution to industry and the community. During the next phase in our evolution we must justify the fact that Roads Australia has engaged policy makers in an open partnership. We must explore what it means in practice to be a supportive and active participant in the policy making process.

Policy Achievements

I am confident that we can continue to evolve the policy relationship.

During 2014, RA expanded its policy engagement significantly. Our policy workshops attracted over 1,000 participants and included roadshows in most capital cities with key road agency chief executives and deputies on standardisation and harmonisation of technical specifications and procurement. A final report will be released early in 2015.

We continue to work with federal and state agencies, including treasuries, to encourage infrastructure expenditure and a clear pipeline of projects

Other themes included value for money workshops on transport infrastructure spend and best practice case studies to successfully drive the infrastructure dollar further. The evolutionary change in intelligent transport systems was led by the Network Reliability Chapter as a growing area to improve the productivity of existing transport networks. More than 160 transport professionals considered the twenty-five year road map towards a fully autonomous network.

Safety at roadwork sites, safety for professional drivers and road user behaviour were high on the agenda in 2014, with more than 150 members attending a full day Road Safety Forum in NSW to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on our roads and consider road user behaviour in a changing environment.

Asset management and maintenance investment strategies were reviewed to establish the best practice approach to maintenance.

RA lodged major submissions with state and federal governments and RA continues to work closely with policy makers to drive sound policy outcomes for industry.

The Transport Reform Network kicked goals this year, with a number of key submissions to government influencing road usage charging. For the first time we are seeing widespread debate about serious reform, supported by a variety of inquiries and audits including the Commission of Audit, the Productivity Commission report into public infrastructure and the Harper Review. All three reports have fundamentally supported the implementation of road usage charging. TRN members, IPA and AAA jointly released a discussion paper *Road Pricing and Transport Infrastructure Funding: Reform Pathways for Australia*. The TRN has contributed significantly to the fact that transport reform is now being considered and discussed openly. And with the Federal Government's Tax Review approaching we need to maintain the momentum.

Our Services to Members

Roads Australia is also a much more complex and diverse organisation than it was.

This financial year RA will offer the industry more than 60 events – compared with 40, three years ago. Over half of these events are offered without charge to members, including practical workshops and meetings conducted within the road agencies.

RA's fortnightly news update, *RA Insider*, now exceeds 6,400 subscribers – up from 5,300 this time last year. Our website attracts around 51,000 visits a year – a 10 per cent increase from last year. The RA Insider has become the accepted vehicle for management communication throughout our industry. Its success mirrors the evolution of Roads Australia itself. I would like to acknowledge the support we receive from Leighton Contractors, which has been the sponsor of our newsletter since its inception.

The growth in our activities has coincided with a more professional approach to service delivery. We received outstanding support from our members – with more than 90 per cent of events sponsored by members. I particularly acknowledge Altus Traffic, Coffey, Community Training Initiatives, GHD and Hyder, who achieved Patron Status. I congratulate members who sponsored our activities – AARB, AECOM, Aurecon, Beca, BMD, Civil Contractors Federation, Clayton Utz, DPTI in South Australia, Fulton Hogan, Hitachi, Jacobs, Kapsch, Leighton Contractors, Lend Lease, Northern Territory Government, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Pitt & Sherry, Roads and Maritime Services, Queensland Transport and Main Roads, Queensland University of Technology, Salini Impregilo, SMEC, Thiess, Tracey Brunstrom & Hammond, Transurban, UK Trade and Investment and VicRoads.

Roads Australia Fellowship Program – Leaders of the Future

In August 2014 Roads Australia established a Fellowship program which pairs industry leaders with promising young professionals for mentorship. We received over 60 nominations. Twenty-four outstanding Fellows were selected for the inaugural year.

This program has been universally welcomed by industry. It recognises, supports and develops our leaders of the future. It enables Roads Australia to interact with its membership at different levels within the management chain.

The partnership model was revolutionary. So too is the Fellowship Program. And we are only just beginning to tease out the implications. Over the years the Fellowship Program will profoundly affect Roads Australia. Each annual intake of Fellows will become a band of brothers and sisters with a strong engagement in Roads Australia. They will become a community within Roads Australia. In twenty years these people will be the keepers of the flame.

I would particularly like to thank Community Training Initiatives whose sponsorship for the Fellowship Program has made this wonderful industry leadership program possible.

IRF/RA Regional Conference Asia & Australasia

RA is partnering with the International Road Federation to host a regional conference in Sydney in May next year. This will be an exciting international milestone for Roads Australia.

In January this year, we saw the return of our Chief Executive, Ian Webb, who was seconded to the International Road Federation in Geneva as Director-General. In the process, Roads Australia secured IRF membership for all Roads Australia's members for the next five years.

Acknowledgments

We congratulate Mrs Janet Holmes à Court AC on receiving the John Shaw medal in 2014. And this year's recipient of the Roads Australia Award for Technical Excellence will be announced at the Melbourne Annual Lunch.

On your behalf I would like to thank our Vice President Ken Mathers and all my fellow Board members for the commitment and wisdom they bring to RA. I specifically mention our Chapter Chairs, Dennis Cliche, Scott Olsen, John Pitt and Michael Bushby. I also acknowledge Peter Walton, Phil Lovel and Bruce Munro who are retiring from the Board after great service to Roads Australia. During the year we welcomed five new Board members –Michael Bushby, Scott Olsen, Andy Milazzo, John Merritt and Scott Charlton.

Finally I would like to express appreciation to our members whose commitment is a constant reward to the Board and our dedicated staff lead by our Chief Executive Ian Webb who is supported by a professional team, Donna Findlay, Charis Heelan, Lauren Streifer, Mark Bowmer, Rachael Rooney, Mandi Mees and Thao Nguyen.

David Stuart-Watt, President

28 November 2014