

# ROADS AUSTRALIA

## President's Report 2015

Just over ten years ago Roads Australia had eleven members, but they had great aspirations. Today that small organisation has become a truly national representative body for Australia's road transport stakeholders, 118 members strong.

Along the way we have built a model for collaboration and engagement that is unlike anything else in our industry. Our road and transport agencies are integral to the success of this model; they are here because industry is here, and vice versa. Crucially, representative of both sectors - public and private - sit at the table as partners rather than adversaries.

This recipe enables all of us, as members of Roads Australia, to make a real difference.

### **Policy Achievements**

In 2015, our approach to policy formulation and influence was both strategic and pragmatic.

Our key policy focus areas were set at the beginning of the year at our annual Board workshop, where the heads of Australia's road and transport agencies came together to identify and align our joint policy goals.

We identified five key issues, and subsequently framed our Policy Chapter programs around these priorities.

On **road safety**, we worked closely with Austroads and key stakeholders to develop a national platform for road safety barrier installer accreditation. We also ran a national forum on road worksite safety, the outcomes of which will feed into a review of the relevant Traffic Control standard as part of the Austroads Safety at Road Worksites project. And in conjunction with key stakeholders, we also hosted talks by leading road safety design experts from Germany and Sweden.

Another focus area - **asset management and whole of life maintenance** - was a major theme at this year's Roads Australia – IRF Regional Conference, bringing local and international experts together to discuss best practice and review case studies.

**Harmonisation of standards and technical specifications** is an ongoing policy focus area. In 2015, we again conducted our annual procurement survey, which provides industry feedback to road agencies on a raft of public tendering and procurement issues and models, and provides a national overview of opportunities to better align processes.

In addition to the work we are already doing on road safety barriers and worksite safety, our focus will turn next to the standardisation and harmonisation of technical specifications in road line marking, asphalt and pavement.

We continue our commitment to advancing the **national road reform agenda** in the areas of funding and productivity.

Throughout the year we have hosted a series of national workshops to support national momentum on freight productivity and competitiveness, bringing stakeholders together to review the progress of the nation's freight strategies and share ideas to further enhance land freight productivity and safety.

**The Transport Reform Network** continues to advance the debate on road funding reform, and in particular road usage charging. We have been instrumental in placing the Oregon RUC pilot in front of policy-makers as a model for investigation in Australia. Indeed, we have brought to Australia on two separate occasions in 2015 experts from Oregon and other US States to explain the model to local stakeholders and policy makers.

The process of effecting genuine road funding reform is slow, but we are in this game for the long term. As a measure of success and encouragement, the debate here in Australia has never been louder or more visible. With tax reform once again on the national agenda, we will continue to push our case for a fundamental review that includes transport pricing and funding.

Another policy focus that has emerged in 2015 is the need to actively **build public trust** in transport infrastructure. Strategies to address this challenge have been explored at a number of events this year, including our Melbourne Forum. In 2016, we are planning a major event to focus community attention on the critical role our transport infrastructure plays in creating liveable cities.

## **Our Services to Members**

At its core, Roads Australia exists to bring our industry together to share, learn and grow.

On one level, we achieve this through our successful events program. In 2015, we have hosted more than 70 events, ranging from policy and single table events through to major industry lunches and Forums. More than half of these events have been complimentary to members.

Over the past few years the number of events we have hosted has steadily grown, and this year has been no exception. In 2016 we shall continue to ensure that each event delivers maximum value, both in terms of content and the networking experience.

In May we raised the bar to a new level with our Regional Conference and Exhibition. Jointly hosted with the International Road Federation Geneva. This event attracted over 350 delegates, including 90 speakers from 16 countries. Our annual John Shaw Dinner also broke records, with over 500 guests at the annual dinner in the Sydney Town Hall.

You might expect that events programs such as this would be assigned to professional conference organisers. However all our events – and every aspect of their management from planning to delivery – are delivered in-house.

We also facilitate the sharing of knowledge through our communications program, also managed wholly in house. Our fortnightly e-newsletter, *the Insider*, now goes to more than 7,000 stakeholders and has become the 'go-to' for industry news. In 2015 we farewelled Leighton Contractors as our long-standing sponsor, and commenced a new and exciting partnership with Cardno. We look forward to continuing to grow the newsletter with Cardno's support.

We continue to publish and update our Pipeline web page, listing key projects coming to market, and our website itself attracts around 56,000 visits a year, confirming it as an invaluable information hub for our industry.

### **Roads Australia Fellowship Program – Leaders of the Future**

In August 2014 Roads Australia established its Fellowship program, pairing experienced industry leaders with promising young professionals for mentorship. Our initial intake of 24 Fellows has recently concluded the formal elements of the year-long program, and we are about to commence our 2016 intake of 24 new Fellows.

The Fellowship program goes to the heart of RA's purpose that I alluded to earlier – sharing knowledge, learning from each other, and growing our industry. It has been a deeply enriching experience, both for the Fellows and their Mentors. It has enabled Roads Australia to broaden our engagement with members develop a partnership with the next generation of industry leaders.

In effect, we have created a network within a network. One of our aims in setting up the Program was to facilitate strong professional relationships that could exist beyond the immediate life of the Program – an active alumni of young industry leaders.

Our members have embraced this concept and lent their support at many levels. Special mention needs to be made of Community Training Initiatives, whose top-level sponsorship of the Fellowship Program has been invaluable.

I also wish to thank all of our mentors who have been so generous to our leaders of the future.

### **Acknowledgments**

Roads Australia's success is ultimately measured by the commitment of our members. I thank all our member organisations who have supported our activities in 2015.

I particularly acknowledge our Patron Sponsors - Advisian, Altus Traffic, Arcadis, Cardno, Coffey and Community Training Initiatives. I also congratulate members who have hosted and/or sponsored our many activities through the year – Arcadis, Arup, Aurecon, Beca, BMD, CPEE, Engineers Australia, Evolution, GHD, Golder Associates, GRT, Hyder, Jacobs, Laing O'Rourke, LGAQ, McConnell Dowell, Monash University, OneSteel, WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff, pitt & sherry, Roads and Maritime Services, SICE, SMEC, Queensland Transport and Main Roads, TBH, Transurban and VicRoads.

We continue to recognize our industry champions, including our 2015 John Shaw medallist, Reg Leach. We will shortly be announcing the winner of another significant industry accolade, the 2015 Roads Australia Award for Technical Excellence.

On your behalf I would like to thank all my fellow Board members for their commitment and contribution. I specifically mention our Chapter Chairs, Greg Steele, John Pitt, Michael Bushby and Scott Olsen. I also thank our Immediate Past President and Life Member, Ray Fisher, who leads and mentors us all in directing the Fellowship Program.

I also pay tribute to those Board members who we farewell in 2015 - John Pitt, David Saxelby, Professor Doug Jones, Andy Milazzo and our Vice President, Ken Mathers. Ken's record speaks for itself, not just in the industry at large but on our Board. I am delighted that the Board has recognized this by conferring Life Membership on Ken.

Since our last AGM we have welcomed three new Board members – Marko Misko, Greg Steele and Steve Troughton. I thank them for the significant contributions they are already making to the Board.

Finally I would like to express appreciation to our dedicated staff led by our Chief Executive Ian Webb - Juliana Stackpool, Lauren Streifer, Mark Bowmer, Rachael Rooney, Mandi Mees, Hannah Sauvarin, Thao Nguyen and Veronica Ong. It is extraordinary that with such a small team and a Board of passionate but unpaid directors Roads Australia is able to achieve so much.

**David Stuart-Watt, President**

**25 November 2015**