



Roads Australia Chair Aneetha de Silva's 2023 AGM address

This year has been one of growth and change at Roads Australia.

As the peak body for the sector, we have brought together industry, government and communities, both across Australia and internationally, to share expertise, ideas, and ensure that the future of our sector is being co-designed by a diverse range of stakeholders. As your peak body we understand that our members and stakeholders need a sector which is an employer of choice – collaborative, strategic and innovative.

Everyone here today is familiar with the challenges the transport sector is facing. We are acutely aware that infrastructure pipelines and budgets are facing pressure, and the sustainability of the industry is increasingly a priority.

I am very proud to say that over this past year Roads Australia has provided many forums for our industry leaders and our highly talented emerging leaders to share their knowledge, insights and concerns, and to network with a shared focus on the long-term viability of our sector.

Our many events this year have included informative Leaders' Lunches, Industry gatherings, CEO gatherings, International Women's Day events and our Board networking dinners. In addition, we held our successful 2023 Transport Summit. A recap of our activities can be seen in our Annual Review, which can be accessed on our website.

Our events, which had more than 10,000 attendees in 2023, provided members with access to industry and government leaders, new information and strategic insights into our sector.

Our events are curated through member consultation and feedback, and have covered a range of topics from the future of transport, long term resilience of the sector, social procurement, sustainability, safety and community engagement.

I am particularly proud of the ongoing work of the Future Leaders Committee and our Fellowship program – this year was our largest and most diverse





cohort to date, with 40 participants, a majority of whom were women. Both the Fellowship Program and our Emerging Leaders Program added new events, forums and opportunities across our membership this past year.

Roads Australia is keenly aware that it is only by transport leaders from both the public and private sectors working together will we, as a sector, be able to advance our industry and confront the environmental, social and fiscal realities we face.

We are also bringing global expertise to Australia and New Zealand, while sharing our world leading innovations with international partners. This was in particular focus as we co-hosted the Australian and New Zealand delegation at the PIARC World Road Congress in Prague in October. We used this opportunity to forge closer connections with key global partners, including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation officials, the German Federal Ministry of Digital and Transport and United Kingdom transport sector leaders.

2023 also brought much to celebrate. Our John Shaw Award celebrates excellence and recognises significant individual achievement in our industry – congratulations to Dr Charles MacDonald as our winner this year. Congratulations also to Fiona McDonald, winner of the 2023 Emerging Leaders' PPP Award. This Award is presented to an emerging leader who shows Promise, Passion and Pursuit within the transport industry. Lastly congratulations also to Geoff Ayton the winner of the 2022 Ray Fisher Award for Technical Excellence.

Internally Roads Australia had a number of exciting developments which included several new Directors joining the Board and the hiring of our new CEO Ehssan Veiszadeh. Ehssan has already met with many members to ensure the strategic vision for RA aligns with the needs of our membership, while strengthening our connections with governments across the country. Ehssan and his team are now developing a new three-year strategy for RA, which will position us as a modern and impactful industry body, with our members at the core of everything we do.

I'd also like to acknowledge our former CEO Michael Kilgariff who departed our organisation in May. We again thank him for his service to RA over the last five years.





I am also pleased to see the ongoing work of our Diversity and Inclusion Committee focussing on engaging and retaining women, supporting Indigenous engagement and fostering our emerging sector leaders.

As your peak body, Roads Australia will continue to address policy challenges facing our sector through extensive engagement with members and collaboration with other industry associations.

Before I wrap up, I would like to note that the Board unanimously requests that members vote to adopt a new Constitution at this meeting. We will be putting a Special Resolution to members to this effect shortly. We believe this proposed Constitution reflects best practice and positions our organisation to be a modern and contemporary industry association with you, our members, at its core.

A huge thanks to our patrons – Arcadis, Arup, Aurecon, SMEC, Stantec, GHD and CPB Contractors. We could not do what we do without you.

Lastly, a huge thank you to all our members. You are the reason we exist and we will continue to listen to you, work with you and provide opportunities for you as your peak body. It has been my pleasure to serve as your President for the past year.

