

ROADS AUSTRALIA

President's Report 2012

Roads Australia is sixty years old this month. RA is one of the longest-established industry associations in Australia. Only a handful of the original members still exist as corporate entities, notably Shell who have maintained their membership throughout. Our association began life in 1952 and evolved into Roads Australia in 2008.

Roads Australia has never been stronger than it is today. In this, our anniversary year, our membership grew from 78 to 94. This is an achievement which I and other Board members would never have imagined possible when, less than ten years ago, we had only eleven members.

However, our success is more importantly measured by our contribution to industry and the community. Roads Australia has engaged policy makers in an open partnership. We are not an advocacy organisation, but a supportive participant in the policy making process. Australia's road agencies are all members and their Chief Executives sit on the Roads Australia Board as equals with their industry counterparts. This collaboration with policy makers distinguishes Roads Australia from most other industry associations.

Roads Australia embraces the entire road transport sector – including constructors, consultants, local government, freight, road operators, material and professional services providers, other industry bodies including all of Australia's motoring clubs, professional associations and other industry organisations which are peak bodies in their own right. This is another unique distinction.

Roads Australia has expanded its services to members in almost every area. During the present financial year RA will offer the industry the opportunity to attend over ninety events - compared with 43 the year before. Over half of these events are offered without charge to members, including practical workshops conducted within the road agencies.

Our single table lunches with policy makers continue to be extremely popular. Last year I reported that a lunch with Michael Bushby was fully subscribed within an hour and a quarter. This year I have to report that a lunch with Gary Little was fully subscribed within six and a half minutes.

RA's fortnightly news update, RA Insider, now has 4900 subscribers – up from 4000 last year and 2600 three years ago. The RA Insider, with valuable support from Leighton, has become the accepted vehicle for management communication throughout our industry. Its success mirrors the evolution of Roads Australia itself.

The growth in our activities has coincided with a more professional approach to service delivery. This year we offered a range of sponsorship options based around an annual program. The response from members exceeded our expectations. Although the number of events doubled, over 90% were sponsored by members. I particularly acknowledge AECOM, Hyder, Leighton and SKM who achieved Patron Status. I would also like to congratulate the other members who sponsored our activities – Abigroup, ARRB, Aurecon, Boulderstone, Coffey, Cut and Fill, Department of Transport NSW, Fulton Hogan, GHD, PB, Pitt and Sherry, Queensland Motorways, RACT, Roads and Maritime Services, SMEC, TBH, Thiess, Transurban, URS, Vicroads, DPTI SA, DIER Tasmania, WA Main Roads & TMR.

Policy Achievements and the Transport Reform Network

During 2012, RA expanded its policy initiatives and output, with 22 workshops nationally attended by more than 400 members. Policy workshops consisted of a freight roundtable, one day sustainability forum, establishment of the local government chapter, tendering and procurement, skills shortages, capacity, pipeline of projects, network reliability and maintenance.

RA lodged six major submissions with state and federal governments, and attended a Federal Parliamentary Inquiry. These included issues of great importance to industry, including the Metropolitan Planning Strategy in Victoria and the NSW Transport Master Plan. RA took an active role with COAG and is a formal member of the Heavy Vehicle Charging & Investment (HVCI) Group's Transport Consultative Forum.

The Capacity Policy Chapter conducted another major industry survey on tender and procurement processes in each State of Australia. This provided valuable information to the Chief Executives of Road Agencies in relation to documentation, tender periods and feedback to industry.

During the year four international speakers visited Australia under RA auspices – Derek Turner from the UK Highways Agency, Paul Buchanan from SKM in the UK, David Threlfall from Hyder UK, and Jack Opiola from the USA. We received valuable support from SKM and Hyder for this.

In August we launched the Transport Reform Network chaired by Dennis Cliche with more than 130 companies and 400 people attending. The TRN released a key paper as part of the launch; *Running on Empty: the Case for Transport Reform* and supporting documentation. The TRN received media attention at a national level. Speakers included the chairs of iconic Australian community organisations and companies, including the National Farmer's Federation, the Australian Local Government Association and the NRMA.

Acknowledgments

We congratulate Ken Mathers on receiving the John Shaw medal in 2012 and Dr John Metcalf, the inaugural recipient of the Roads Australia Award for Technical Achievement.

On your behalf I thank our two Vice Presidents Tim Boyle and 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, John Pitt, Brett Smythe and Peter Walton. I acknowledge Alan Tesch who retired from the Board after great service to Roads Australia as a Chapter Chair, Committee Chair and tireless champion for our mission. During the year we welcomed three new Board members - Michael Caltabiano, Peter Duncan, and Dennis Cliche.

Finally I would like as always to express the Board's and my own appreciation to our members whose enthusiasm for Roads Australia and involvement in its activities is a constant reward to the Board and our dedicated staff lead by our CEO Ian Webb who is supported by a professional team, Donna Findlay, Sarah Hendy, Lauren Streifer, Mark Bowmer and Rachael Rooney.

David Stuart-Watt, President

13 November 2012