

President's Report 2018

I'm pleased to report on another year of unprecedented activity and milestones for Roads Australia.

Membership

In 2018 we again experienced net growth in membership, welcoming the Australian Automotive Research Centre (AARC) Agonis Group, Building Queensland, the Caravan Industry Association of Australia, Clough, Donald Cant Watts, Fusion Advisory, HKA, Komatsu, Mott MacDonald, Tonkin Consulting and Turnbull Engineering. At year's end, our membership stood at 150 members.

Policy Achievement

At our May CEO's Workshop, attended by 44 leaders from industry and government, we distilled a list priority issues down to four key focus areas:

- Road and road worker safety,
- Improved procurement efficiency,
- Effective risk management in major projects, and
- Future transport.

None of these issues are easily resolved – they require ongoing focus, strong stakeholder partnerships and open communication. We don't pretend to have all the answers; what we do have is the ability to create coalitions of industry and government players who do.

These issues, as well as a number of other policy priorities identified at this year's workshop, will continue to inform and underpin our policy activities in 2019.

Over the past 12 months, RA through its various policy chapters has convened specific roundtables and workshops on road safety, capacity and skills, cyber security associated with autonomous vehicles, network management and journey reliability. Picking up on the Commonwealth's City Deals initiative, we've held workshops in Geelong, Hobart, Darwin, Penrith and Brisbane to bring focus to the importance of integrated land and transport planning.

Roads Australia has always claimed a unique place in the hierarchy of industry groups. We long ago abandoned traditional advocacy and instead took on the mantle of facilitator, building and cementing partnerships between industry and government.

One issue that raised its head this year underscored the value of that approach. In June, we convened a roundtable in Sydney comprising representatives of industry, government and the utilities sector to seek a better way forward for the relocation of utilities on major projects. This meeting was an opportunity for everyone to be heard, and out of it came a better understanding of the challenges each party faces, as well as a template for better communication and engagement to avoid future disputes.

In 2017 RA took a delegation of government and industry leaders to the US and Europe to investigate the impacts and regulatory challenges around connected and autonomous vehicles. This year we led a similar delegation to Japan, Korea and Singapore, this time focussed on how cities in the region are dealing with the challenges of density and mobility. If this trip taught us anything, it's that mass transit systems are critical to the functioning of growing cities.

Services to Members

This year RA has organised and hosted 92 events across the country, of which more than half have been free to members.

Our single-table events, in particular, continue to be an invaluable component not just of the networking experience, but our policy approach. As an example, we held lunches during the year with Treasury Secretaries in NSW and South Australia to discuss and put forward industry views on topics as diverse as state infrastructure pipelines, risk management and delivery models, and capacity and skills.

Our major industry events were again very well supported throughout the year. In May, we invited the International Road Federation Geneva to again share the stage with us at our annual Summit in Sydney, allowing for a broader focus on regional issues and learnings. Likewise, our annual one-day Forums in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth were very popular, providing opportunities to focus on the project pipelines and specific challenges in those respective states.

The John Shaw Dinner has taken on a life of its own and is now recognised as our industry's premier networking event – so much so that this year we had to cap numbers. It is, without doubt, the hottest ticket in town.

The work we are doing to deepen engagement within our member organisations continues to pay dividends. Our series of Young Professionals events for the under 35s, sponsored by Arup, was incredibly popular – so much so that I think if we'd had the resources we could have run an event somewhere around the country every week, and pack the room out. Earlier this month we hosted our second annual Young Professionals Annual Dinner in Sydney. It now sits firmly on the RA calendar.

In October we held the first of what I hope will be regular catch-ups with our members' comms people. Engagement with this group is not just an opportunity for networking, but for us to share key messages with them about what we're doing, and harness their reach into the community at large. Thanks to AECOM for sponsoring this first event in Sydney.

To John Holland, thanks for your dedicated support of the Fellowship Program. I don't think any of us ever envisaged what a powerful network the Fellows would become. To our mentors, thank you for taking the next generation of leaders under your collective wing.

Our newsletter, the Insider, extended its reach to almost 14,000 stakeholders this year. We've been distributing this newsletter for 11 years. Many have copied us, but the original is still the best. Thanks to Cardno for its continuing sponsorship of this initiative.

Diversity and corporate social responsibility

RA continues its support for gender diversity, the placement of skilled refugees and asylum seekers, emerging talent and indigenous enterprise.

Since establishing our partnership with CareerSeekers in 2017, Roads Australia members – led by Lendlease and GHD - have placed around 70 interns, with formal commitments to increase that number to 700. Many of the internships have already evolved into full-time positions.

Our Sydney Diversity Forum in July was a sold-out event, with industry leaders coming together to share experiences and practical initiatives. I'm also pleased to report that in the past two years, we have seen a doubling of the number of women at our single-table events - from 10 per cent in 2016 to 21 per cent in 2018 – which is above market composition.

We know we have a long way to go, and we appreciate our members joining us on the journey.

In September we held our inaugural social inclusion event in Melbourne. Jointly hosted with the Level Crossing Removal Authority and the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, it was an opportunity to mix industry leaders with select social enterprises.

Throughout the year we also continued to offer five free seats for industry parental leavers at all our industry lunches.

I would like to acknowledge our Diversity Champions – Lendlease and SMEC – as well as our Diversity Steering Committee - Ross Campbell, Emma Davies, Craig Laslett, Patrick Hill and Bryce Sentence.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge Sandra Dodds, our outgoing inaugural Chair who has been instrumental in driving our diversity program, and welcome our new Chair, Gillian Miles.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank all our member organisations who sponsored or supported our program this past year, led by our Patron Sponsors - Advisian, Altus Traffic, Arcadis, Arup, Aurecon, Cardno, Coffey, John Holland and SMEC.

Other members who stepped up throughout the year included AECOM, Transurban, WSP, GHD, pitt&sherry, Laing O'Rourke, Clayton Utz, Ingal Civil, TBH, WT Partnership, GTA Consultants, Lendlease, Roads and Maritime Services, KBR, CPB Contractors, Fulton Hogan, McConnell Dowell, BMD Constructions, Queensland Transport and Main Roads, the Department of Transport WA, the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure SA, Engineers Australia, Amey and Ferrovial Services.

The John Shaw Medal, our industry's highest accolade, was this year awarded to a very worthy Doug Jones AO, while Rod Troutbeck was our deserving 2017 Technical Excellence Award winner. The 2018 winner will be announced at today's lunch.

I want to thank all Board members for their dedicated service throughout the year, and in particular our Chapter Chairs - Clare Gardiner-Barnes, Greg Steele, Marko Misko and Scott Olsen. They were ably supported by Deputy Chairs Michele Huey, Kris Cooney, Steve Cooley, Jay Stricker and Dan Reeve.

Today we farewell Board members Greg Steele, Sandra Dodds and Dennis Cliche. It has been a pleasure to work alongside each of you, and on behalf of members I thank you for your sterling service.

We are blessed to have such an enthusiastic, professional and dedicated staff who provide all the legwork to make things happen at Roads Australia. On your behalf, I thank Lauren Streifer, Norm McIlfatrick, Mark Bowmer, Rachael Rooney, Hannah Sauvarin, Marlie Curtis, Thao Nguyen, Veronica Ong, Alex Stott and Anna Jabour.

As you all know, 2018 has seen a changing of the guard at RA. Last month we farewelled our long-standing Chief Executive, Ian Webb, and welcomed his successor, Michael Kilgariff.

Ian's achievements are too long to mention. Suffice to say, we are indebted to him for his vision and hardwork in making Roads Australia what it is today.

To Ian – it's been a year of thank you's, but let me add one more for the record.

And to Michael – welcome aboard. It's great to have such an experienced leader take the reins, and the Board and I look forward to working with you as we write the next chapter in RA's success.

Finally, I know I speak on behalf of all Board members when I say it is a privilege and a pleasure to serve this industry and the people who make it so great.