

## Chairman's Report

The membership and activities of The Railway Technical Society of Australasia are continuing to grow and the Society is providing support and services for its members involved in the various engineering disciplines within the rail industry.

An example of this can be seen from the recent 7th International Heavy Haul/AusRAIL conference held in Brisbane during June 2001. The RTSA was proud to be a co-host of this conference and would like to thank our hardworking members who contributed to its outstanding success of the event. This international conference was based on the theme of "Confronting the Barriers" and a total of 79 excellent technical papers were delivered. If you were not present at the conference I would recommend you get a copy of the proceedings and read some of the papers applicable to your area of expertise. In addition at this conference the IHHA launched its publication entitled "Guidelines to Best Practices for Heavy Haul Railway Operations: Wheel and Rail Interface Issues". Details on how to purchase copies of the book can be obtained by e-mailing [ihha@erols.com](mailto:ihha@erols.com) and any comments can also be sent to the Technical Review Committee at this address.

The AusRAIL component of the conference with the theme "Pushing the Boundaries" also provided excellent sessions. In particular the joint session on "International experience with separation of infrastructure and rolling stock" provided the basis for much debate.

The IHHA keynote speaker for the conference Mr Braam le Roux was persuaded to undertake an eminent speaker tour to all RTSA state Chapters. Braam is both a civil engineer and a railway signalling engineer having previously enjoyed a distinguished career with Spoornet, the South African rail network.

His presentation focussed on the need for the engineering staff to challenge their way of thinking and to ensure that we fully understand the principles and reasons why things are done the way that they are. He also emphasised that it is those people on the engineering staff, and those who are members of the RTSA and the IEAust, that can and will shape the way that railways will become both profitable

and effective in achieving the transportation needs of the future. It is planned for more speakers of Braam's calibre as they become available to also undertake an eminent speaking tour. If you know of anyone who would make a good candidate please let someone on your local RTSA committee know.

At this time I would like to warmly and sincerely thank John Broadley for his past involvement on the RTSA national committee being an active member of both the Awards and Standards sub committees. John is finally retiring and his interests will see him overseas for a while.

As usual the various committees and Chapters have been working very hard for you during the last few months and their reports are also contained within this newsletter and I encourage you to read them.

**Rob Schweiger**  
*RTSA National Chairman*

## POINT OF VIEW

*by Max Michell*

Have you noticed when the plane backs out from the aero-bridge that the forced air is cut off and the lights dim? Presumably to divert all the available energy to actually start the engines. Well I suspect that there is a similar but somewhat more tenuous interlock between the mouths and brains of those who we elect to govern us.

Every so often, particularly when away from the adversarial chamber they are elected to, parliamentarians do speak more from the visionary lobe and some sense begins to emerge. Take for instance a speech by Democrat Andrew Murray to a Corporate Taxation Conference late May this year (shortly after the incident where a Labour shadow minister in all honesty answered a schoolboy question about spending and revenue and was pilloried by the press, government and his own party). Murray argued that there is a need for the Feds to raise more revenue. To the tune of about \$10 billion per year in his estimate. Made up as (and I quote) "...Roughly I would make that up as

---

---

\$4 billion for the environment, \$3 billion for education, **at least half a billion to upgrade existing rail networks**, and the remainder for very strong claims being made on the social and economic fronts ....” So at least there is some recognition of the need for investment in rail; and so there should be since we taxpayers have funded many investigations into rail reform and efficiency at the behest of the government.

While the mountain of paper continues to build, there is a conspicuous lack of action. John Anderson, Minister for Transport and Deputy Prime Minister, in response to a question in the house on 27 June said inter alia “It is worth acknowledging that there is a case for more investment (in rail)..... I commissioned ARTC to undertake a Rail Track Audit. It found that real benefits would be achieved from future investment in rail in this country only if there was a more streamlined access management arrangement to the track ... across the nation and to a single set of management principles ... But we are not going to waste taxpayers money on rail until we know we will get a return. .... You have got 77% of the freight across the nation on the east-west corridor on rail but you have only got 10% on the north-south. Who stands in the middle of that corridor? ... New South Wales.”

So the Deputy PM is pointing the finger at NSW, who no doubt will be doing the same in reverse. The statement in the house obscures the fact that John Anderson and his NSW counterpart Carl Scully, are engaging in an increasingly poisonous slanging match over just about every issue of joint interest with little if any real progress to show for it all. In the mean time the nation waits, and waits, for some serious outcomes from the policy end of the rail reform process, including some genuine attempt by government(s) to actually do some of the worthy things highlighted by Paul Neville, Smorgon, Prod Comm, ARTC et al. Perhaps it is time for the PM and the Premier to jointly promote a reconciliation between these two, in much the way prototyped in the recent very public Wooldridge - Phelps case.

Speaking of policy on the run, the Deputy PM recently issued a press release crowing about his ‘victory’ in having automatic indexation of the national heavy vehicle registration in line with CPI rejected. In other words it is now fixed at existing quite inadequate levels for evermore (or at least until enlightenment settles on the transport policy world). Having defeated the Labour states of Queensland, NSW and Victoria (he forgot to mention SA, but then they are a Liberal state for now) in their entirely reasonable attempt to keep heavy vehicle registration and inflation more or less in line, the Deputy PM goes on to

remind us how the current government has abolished wholesale sales tax on trucks, allows business claim back the GST on trucks, removed 23 cents/ litre on diesel fuel, and brought forward input tax credits (worth up to \$30,000 on a truck acquisition). He didn’t mention the ‘free’ highways. It is one thing to run a biased policy (or is it simply a right side vacuum?), but something else to feel so smug about the results that he feels the need to crow about it. I refer you back to the beginning of the piece.

On a more cheerful note there are quite a few looming opportunities for rail on the horizon. You may have already picked up the 10% market share reference above. That indicates that rail traffic would have to increase 10 times for it to carry the whole lot. An unrealistic proposition, but consider that a doubling of the rail market share would actually only take 11% of the non-rail market. See where I am getting at. Rail stands to make big gains from small incremental shifts. Small shifts are manageable and realistic. They can be achieved. Sure, there needs to be some policy help (hello Sydney, hello Canberra) but there is a lot rail can do for itself. Not necessarily itself as in Company, but itself as in Rail.

Opportunities are all around; some simple, but most hard to see and even harder to do something about. But if we (the rail industry) actually do something about these opportunities it is all the more likely that other issues of importance, such policy, equity and investment, will start to get the attention they deserve.

---

---

## RTSA Government Relations Committee

The RTSA has welcomed the release in May 2001 by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) of their National Track Audit. We also welcome the findings of the Neville Committee in their report ‘Back on Track’ also released in May. More details on both items follow below, and our support for these two reports has been conveyed to the Federal Government, and to the Productivity Commission’s National Access Regime inquiry, which is due for release later this year.

The Committee welcomes all members of the Rail 2000 group to membership of the RTSA, and is pleased that Mr. Max Michell has accepted an invitation to be a member of the Committee.

A Sydney - Canberra - Melbourne ‘Up to Speed’ brochure was enclosed with the April Newsletter. The brochure suggests that now, after numerous studies, is a good time to upgrade rail track for faster and heavier Melbourne –

Sydney freight trains, plus the introduction of Sydney - Canberra tilt trains.

The option of a T-Line between Goulburn and Yass with a spur to North Canberra was first raised in 1981 by the IE Aust National Committee on Railway Engineering (NCRE). When proposed in 1981, the cost with two XPT sets was only \$200 million. The failure of government to take up the T-Line, or the Sydney - Melbourne 1980 electrification offer of the Fraser Government, undoubtedly was a factor leading to the CSIRO Very Fast Train proposal in 1984.

Since 1984, NSW, Canberra and Victoria have seen numerous VFT studies. In the meantime, Queensland, starting with Mainline Electrification and then the Main Line Upgrade, has upgraded track for faster and heavier freight trains. The track upgrades have also supported the highly successful operation of the Queensland tilt train.

The United States experience with track upgrades and tilt trains is similar. The brochure mentions the new Acela service linking Boston, New York and Washington by a tilt train running over upgraded track. This is similar to a Los Angeles - Las Vegas service that is now due to start later this year. Yet in 1991, Transrapid were working to build a Maglev between Anaheim and Las Vegas. It did not proceed.

On the Federal front, along with the expected national track audit, RTSA is looking for a rail and urban public transport statement to match a summer of major road funding statements and the reduction in petrol excise. Such a statement is being requested of both the Government and the Opposition. The RTSA note the pertinent questions of Democratic Transport Spokesman Brian Greig in the Senate on 5 March 2001 as to allocating more Federal funds for rail and public transport.

Now that the NSW Legislative Council (LC) has approved the sale of FreightCorp, the RTSA trusts that the NSW Government will accept a recommendations of a LC Committee for release of a long promised NSW freight strategy and applying half the proceeds of a FreightCorp sale to track upgrades. The RTSA would also like to see part of the proceeds of any National Rail sale go towards track upgrades, and a resolution of the long standing question of ARTC and NSW reaching agreement on NSW interstate track access. After three years since the formation of the ARTC, it is time for progress in this access question, and NSW interstate track upgrading.

On happier state issues, the RSTA welcomes the new Rail Network Strategy for Queensland released by Premier Beattie at AusRAIL 2001.

*Philip Laird*

*Chair Government Relations Committee*

## ARTC Track Audit

This many volume work comprises a summary and final report with appendices by Booz, Allen & Hamilton, a report on the Melbourne - Sydney and Sydney - Brisbane corridors by Maunsell McIntyre Pty Ltd, a report on the East- West corridor by GHD and a report on the Inland Railway Proposal by Arup-TMG. These reports may be found on <http://www.artc.com.au/post.htm>

The Track Audit reviewed the Australian Transport Council speed weight targets, examined minimum market improvements (the S1 scenario), significant track improvements (the S2 "stretch" target scenario), and after economic analysis, recommended optimised investment of \$507 million with a combined benefit cost ratio of 3.2. The benefits include not only faster and heavier freight trains, but also savings in road system cost and road trauma from fewer trucks on the roads.

Most of the proposed optimal investment has been recommended for works on the North - South Corridor amounting to \$398 million. This includes \$146 million for Stage 1 of a Sydney Freight Priority Project, \$73 million for Main South deviations, \$63 million for crossing loops, \$30 million for a Southern Control optimisation project, and \$16 million to replace the 1880 bridge over the Murrumbidgee River. The ARTC Track Audit identifies present terminal to terminal times of 13 hr 30 min for Melbourne - Sydney, 21 hrs for Sydney - Brisbane, with 36 hrs for Melbourne - Brisbane. These transit times would be expected to be reduced, respectively, to 10 hrs 30 min, 17 hrs 30 min and 29 hrs 30 min on completion of the optimal capital works.

Under the "stretch" target scenario S2, at a cost of \$1614 million the Melbourne - Brisbane terminal to terminal time would be expected to fall to 27 hrs. The following is a list of major S2 works envisaged of cost \$100 million or more comprises the

- The 'Hoare' Deviation - Bowning Frampton  
**\$300 million**
- Sydney Freight Priority Project Stages I and II  
**\$226 million**

- Dedicated Freight Track - (North) Sydney  
**\$262 million**
- High Speed Passenger Tunnels (North) Hornsby  
**\$100 million**
- Dawson River to Johns River deviation  
**\$126 million**

The 'Hoare' Deviation is noted in the Track Audit as a new 93.3 km line between Bowning and Frampton suggested by Mr John Hoare of Concord CE Pty Ltd to the University of Wollongong. [The idea was a follow up to the RTSA brochure Fix the Rails NSW that showed a need for a Goulburn - Yass rail deviation]. This direct Bowning - Frampton route would save 22.6 km in route length, an estimated 51 minutes for down trains, and would much improve present Bowning - Cootamundra - Frampton train operations. Other major Main South proposals noted in the Maunsell McIntyre report include the "Wentworth" rail deviation at a cost of \$218 million reducing route length by 19.6 km, saving an average of 19 minutes (averaging \$12.2 million per minute), and, the "Centennial Deviation" between Goulburn and Yass. These two rail deviations, along with the need for a new rail bridge over the Murrumbidgee River are noted in the RTSA brochure 'Up to Speed' which has a map of the "T-Line" otherwise known as the "Centennial Deviation"

The Federal Budget of May 2001 noted \$20 million for "...a scoping study, with Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT to examine the feasibility of an east coast Very High Speed Train network. The proposed network would link Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and major regional and coastal centres. The study will examine possible routes, technical performance requirements, risk management, patronage, project structure, indicative project costs, economic impact, government involvement and financing."

RTSA would like to see this major study, whose findings are due in December 2002, settle on the most cost-effective deviations for bringing the railway lines linking Australia's three largest cities and Canberra 'up to speed'. Failure to undertake the necessary rail track straightening after three decades of straightening out the Hume, Pacific and other highways is a recipe for more trucks on roads, and more loss of rail traffic.

Meantime, the ARTC Track Audit has found that the optimal Melbourne - Sydney - Brisbane track and signal upgrades at a cost of about \$398 million would be economically justified and should be completed, whether or not the inland route proceeds. RTSA would like to see a start on this work in 2001.

## The Neville Committee

Towards the end of last year, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts revisited its excellent July 1998 *'Tracking Australia'* report and reported back to Government on progress since that report. In late April 2001 the Committee release its follow up report *'Back on Track'* which had three quite clear recommendations for further action by Government, which the RTSA fully supports.

**Recommendation 1** The Minister for Transport and Regional Services should take a leading role in continuing to reform the Australian rail industry by:

- legislating to establish a national rail network manager;
- legislating to establish a national rail transport commission, modelled on the National Road Transport Commission, to be responsible for strategic planning in the industry and establishing harmonised accreditation, operational and safety standards on the national network; and
- Considering again the establishment of a single land transport commission (involving all States and Territories and incorporating the National Road Transport Commission and the rail transport commission proposed above) to ensure that national transport planning is conducted in a coordinated fashion across all transport modes.

**Recommendation 2** The Minister for Transport and Regional Services should, when considering the package of reforms we have recommended, give the highest priority to declaring a national track for interstate rail services on the standard gauge network from Brisbane to Perth.

**Recommendation 3** Upon receipt of the results of the Australian Rail Track Corporation's national infrastructure and performance audit, the Minister for Transport and Regional Services should urgently put in place a 10 year below track infrastructure re-development program of a magnitude comparable to that recommended in *Tracking Australia*. This program should be in addition to funding already made available to projects such as the Alice-Springs to Darwin rail link and the Sydney freight corridor.

## CORE2002 – Call for Papers

Inserted with this edition of the Newsletter you will find a copy of the Call for Papers for CORE2002. We have used a number of avenues for distributing the Call for Papers and it is quite possible you will receive more than one copy. Please assist in promoting the Call for Papers by passing any duplicate copies onto your colleagues.

Closing date for abstracts is 31 August 2001.



To improve the performance and updating of the RTSA web site and to provide a better service to members via the Internet, the Society has decided develop its own dedicated web site.

The RTSA web site has been relocated to

<http://www.rtsa.com.au>

It has been revamped with current information and will go online on 16 July, 2001. This site will be progressively and regularly updated with news of RTSA activities.

You are invited to visit this new site and forward your feedback, including any ideas for possible enhancements to: [webmaster@rtsa.com.au](mailto:webmaster@rtsa.com.au).

Current information for CORE2002 can be found at

<http://www.core2002.on.net>

## Chapter Reports

### Western Australia

The Western Australian Group is enjoying a relatively successful year with good attendances of members and guests at each of its technical meetings.

During the first half of the year a total of four meetings including the Annual General Meeting have been held. It

has been an objective of the Group to present quality technical papers which are stimulating and provide information for the railway industry which reflects current technical advancements.

An attendance in excess of 50 was present for the presentation by Mr Gary Willox, (Project Director, Perth Urban Rail Development) who provided an update on the rail projects which are currently being planned for Perth. Well over 20 members were present for the next meeting where Mr Raymond Marks (Longrun Pty Ltd) outlined the potential of the duoblock concrete sleeper, and a good turnout witnessed the presentation provided by the Heavy Haul Conference eminent speaker Mr Braam le Roux despite the short notice.

Further interesting papers are being planned for the remainder of the year commencing in July when Mr Tim Ryan (General Manager WestNet Rail) will report on the progress of the WA rail freight industry since privatising the management of the infrastructure late last year. Other papers planned include a report of Signalling Developments from the Lisbon 2001 Conference, Modern Wagon Braking Systems and Rail Wagon Control Systems. In line with the Group's theme for the year, which recognises the Centenary of Federation, a paper is being proposed later in the year to cover the history of railways in the country.

Committee meetings have been held at regular intervals to discuss future meetings and to develop strategies for the advancement of railway engineering within the educational institutions. In addition Group members have been encouraged to participate in the Engineering Photographic Competition being conducted by the WA Institution.

All members are reminded to maintain their correct e-mail address with the Institution office to ensure advice of future meetings is given. Any further information regarding matters associated with the WA Group should be forwarded to the Secretary, Mr Bill Singleton (phone 9281 6247).

### Victoria & Tasmania

Mr Colin Rees, Executive Director of CRT Group, gave an interested group a broad description of the "CARGO SPRINT" freight train (due to commence operation in November) at our members' meeting, on Wednesday 16 May 2001. Colin gave some insight into his visions for this interesting concept, and how it keys into his business

plans. Brian Charter was also on hand to provide more technical details.

Immediately after the highly successful IHHA/AUSRAIL Conference in Brisbane, the RTSA Eminent Speaker, Mr. Braam le Roux of Spoornet (South Africa) gave a large audience a challenge to "Understand" the principal technical issues of railway systems, particularly interface issues. This stimulated vigorous discussion as to how such critical issues might be managed in a vertically separated railway.

All who attended were well pleased with the presentation.

In July, the meeting will cover ECP brakes – the latest technology available for long freight trains. Brake equipment manufacturers and users will participate in the presentation.

Arrangements for the September Dinner Meeting are under way; we are hoping for a very high profile after dinner speaker. More details soon.

After the very successful STORE Tour of Tasmania last year, the Committee is considering options for an even more challenging tour for next year. Members may soon be requested to comment on several proposals.

*David Ferris*

## New South Wales

### Engineering Passport Scheme

Letters were sent to the CEO's of various NSW based companies seeking their comment on a passport scheme, which would allow graduate engineers to gain experience working on selected projects in their companies. The responses were generally in favour of a scheme, however issues of confidentiality and possible poaching were raised.

A trial placement of a Graduate Engineer from the UK and administered by the Interfleet Technology's Sydney Regional Office, will be undertaken in July and August in Sydney. The graduate will spend 6 weeks at the MainTrain Auburn Service Centre and undertake investigation into a number of new projects

A response from the Institution on the support and administration of a national scheme is awaited.

## CORE 2002

CORE 2002 will be held at Wollongong in November 2002, and the organising committee continues to meet regularly with our Conference Manager.

The Call for Papers was distributed to all attendees at the recent International Heavy Haul and AusRAIL Conferences. Abstracts of papers are due on 31 August this year and potential speakers can register on the web on [www.CORE2002.on.net](http://www.CORE2002.on.net) All Exhibitors at the IHHA conference were given a letter of invitation to exhibit at CORE 2002 and sponsors are now being approached.

The Minister for Transport of NSW has been invited to open the Conference and he will confirm in early 2002. Keynote Speakers are also being considered.

A preliminary budget is in place and the format of the conference has been decided. Possible visits, exhibitions and a partners program have also been tabled for discussion.

### e-mail Listing

At long last we have implemented an e-mail listing of members and now, over half of the notices are sent out by this method. This arrangement will continue to reduce mailing costs as more and more names are added to the list.

### Meetings

The Dapto - Kiama Electrification Project was presented in April by John Storer of Fluor Global Services, the Project Managers.

The extension of the 1500 VDC System covering the 25 km section of the Illawarra line, will allow commuter trains to operate through to Sydney. Major improvements to the infrastructure are being undertaken on the single line section to facilitate crossings and a regular service. The project is well advanced with completion planned for September this year.

In May, Ron Christie, the Chief Executive of State Rail, addressed a well attended joint meeting with the Institute of Railway Signaling Engineers where he described his experiences as head of a number of government instrumentalities. These included the Olympic Roads and Traffic Authority, Public Works and the Roads and Traffic Authority. The newspaper reports of rail happenings before, during and after the Olympic Games showed the changes implemented as a result of some very wide range ongoing planning that made the Games transport so successful.

He noted the RTA has developed, over a long period of time, a comprehensive planning group that has successfully developed and later implemented numerous road upgrading projects. He believes that the various Rail Authorities must develop similar groups so that comprehensive rail project plans can be presented for evaluation when funding becomes available.

Our meeting in June featured the Eminent Speaker, Braam le Roux, on his around Australia speaking tour following the IHHA Conference in Brisbane. Among the attendees, we were pleased to welcome National Chair, Rob Schweiger to the meeting

At our meeting on July 19, Brian Duncan from Goninan will give a presentation on the design of the new Prospector Rail Cars for Western Australia. Brian is leading the project design team for the cars that will feature the very latest in passenger comfort and amenity.

A further joint meeting with the Signaling Engineers will be held on August 16, where an insight into the new SRA Passenger Information System will be given.

Meetings for the remainder of the year will cover the Parramatta – Chatswood Rail Link, vehicle braking systems and a full day study tour of various sites in Newcastle. More details later.

We look forward to seeing all members, especially those from interstate, at our meetings that are held at the Institution of Engineers, Harricks Auditorium at Milsons Point from 5.30pm for 6.00pm.

**John Watsford**



**Our June meeting featured Eminent Speaker Braam Le Roux. (centre), who was presented by National Chair Rob Schweiger (left) and Sydney Division and Deputy National Chair John Watsford.**

## Queensland

The Queensland Chapter is continuing to grow. The chapter membership grew some 14% over the previous 6 months, and currently stands at 133.

The major activity in the quarter for the chapter was providing “in-kind” support in the organisation of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Heavy Haul Conference that was held in conjunction with AusRAIL 2001 in Brisbane in June.

In addition, the Chapter also hosted two successful technical meetings; on the 22 May and 18 June. The 22 May meeting was a presentation by Mr Paul Blake, Executive Director of the National Transport Secretariat on the activities of the secretariat. The secretariat was created to assist the Nation’s Transport Ministers to resolve the more complex national transport problems i.e. those that a cross-modal, cross-jurisdictional, strategic and of national significance. A major point to emerge out of the presentation and subsequent discussion was the lack of proposals from the rail industry to significantly improve the nation’s land transport efficiency when compared with the road industry.

The 18 June meeting was a presentation by Mr Braam Le Roux, a recently retired CEO of Spoornet, South Africa and a keynote speaker at the 7th IHHA Conference. The presentation and subsequent discussion centred on the need challenge current practices by understanding the underlying science to further progress this science e.g. the wheel rail interface. It was clear that the railway industry needs to have active R&D programs for the industry to grow and prosper.

A meeting had been scheduled for 24 April and flyers issued. However another IEAust group subsequently scheduled a conflicting “site visit” to Brisbane’s AirTrain, the new line and train service to Brisbane’s airport which commenced operations on 9 May. Consequently the RTSA Chapter meeting was cancelled as the bigger attraction of the site visit would have significantly reduced the audience and hence would not be fair to the presenter. The Queensland Chapter Committee apologises to those who were inconvenienced by the late cancellation. Ironically, the site visit to AirTrain was also cancelled.

The program and topics up to October 31 are as follows:

24-Jul-01      Outlining the new Co-operative Research Centre for Railway Engineering and Technology – 18:00 at the Hawken Auditorium, Engineering House

- 28-Aug-01 Half Day Seminar – “Is above rail competition good for Queensland” – 13:00 at the Hawken Auditorium, Engineering House
- 25-Sep-01 Interstate Speaker - Presentation in relation to the issues associated with sleep deprivation for the rail industry – 18:00 at the Hawken Auditorium, Engineering House.
- 23-Oct-01 Site Visit to QR’s Redbank Workshops – Re-engineering the Brisbane EMU Fleet”– 18:00 at QR’s Redbank Workshops, Weedman Street, Redbank

Please note that due to unforeseen circumstances, the date, time or venue may need to change. Please contact the Queensland Chapter through the Queensland Division Office for specific details e.g. time and venue.

To encourage undergraduates to consider a career in the rail industry the Chapter has proposed a scheme whereby rail related projects undertaken by undergraduates would be eligible for an award. It is also intended that the scheme would also encourage competition between participating tertiary institutions. Letters to all Queensland tertiary institutions offering engineering were sent mid May 2001. The response to date however has not been encouraging, with only one response received. Both the IEAust Qld Division and the RTSA National Committee have agreed to support the scheme.

### **Premier Launches Rail Network Strategy for Queensland**

The Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie whilst opening the AusRAIL 2001 Conference, launched the *Rail Network Strategy for Queensland*. Its aim “is to identify specific strategies relating to policy and planning for the future of Queensland’s rail infrastructure and rail corridors”. The strategy commits to some very encouraging actions which should lead to growing use of rail within Queensland. The strategy also contains a reference source detailing the rail corridors within Queensland and their individual capabilities. The RTSA had commented on the draft strategy issued by Queensland Transport for the purpose of seeking public comment. For a copy of the document, you should contact: **Rail Ports and Aviation Division, Queensland Transport, GPO Box 1549, Brisbane Qld 4001. Telephone: 07 3006 4602; WebSite: [www.transport.qld.gov.au](http://www.transport.qld.gov.au)**

*George Nikandros*

## **South Australia**

There are approximately 135 RTSA SA members, though the number of members who came across following the winding up of Rail 2000 has swelled this number.

There has been some residual funding left over by Rail 2000 and the Chapter Committee is considering the possibility of creating an annual award using these funds to acknowledge the most significant honorary contribution to the betterment of rail during the year.

SA chapter members were pleased to be able to host Braam Le Roux on 19 June as part of his eminent speaker tour around the country.

A varied program of meetings is planned for the remainder of the year including a joint site visit with the PWI to view the significant works being undertaken as part of the extension of the Pichi Richi tourist railway’s operation. 7 kilometres of new narrow gauge track is being laid from Stirling North to Port Augusta, paralleling the ARTC interstate track for several kilometres.

## **Cooperative Research Centre for Railway Engineering and Technologies**

Did you know that there is a new Rail CRC in Australia?

This is a rare opportunity for the rail industry to build a national focus for rail related research.

The Cooperative Research Centres or CRCs Program is the flagship for scientific research in Australia. A defining feature of a CRC is that the collective efforts of all the participants are greater than what they can achieve individually. CRCs bridge the gap between those who conduct the research and those who need to use the results of the research.

The CRCs Program was established in 1990 to address the overall research and development effort in Australia and to keep pace with the rapid scientific and technological progress occurring internationally.

With the nine new CRC’s approved in 2001 there are fifty-six CRC’s and for the first time there is a Rail CRC. In fact this is the first time any CRC has addressed transportation research.

The specific objectives of the CRC Program are to enhance:

- The contribution of long-term scientific and technological research and innovation to Australia's sustainable economic and social development.
- The transfer of research outputs into commercial or other outcomes of economic, environmental or social benefit to Australia and to enhance the value to Australia of graduate researchers.
- Collaboration among and between researchers and industry and to improve efficiency in the use of intellectual and other research resources.
- Central to achieving these objectives is the implementation of high-quality research, intellectual property development and education and training.
- There are six universities and fifteen industry partners in the Rail CRC with 72 research staff, 37 doctoral candidates and 75 nominated participating engineers and scientists from the rail industry

The research activities of the CRC will be embedded in the following six research themes:

- **“Smart Train” Intelligent Systems**
- **Innovative / Automated Maintenance and Upgrading Technologies**
- **Optimal Traffic Control and Scheduling**
- **IT Systems and Standards for Rail Management**
- **New Materials, Systems and Components for Railways**
- **Industry Skills Development (Education and Training).**

The CRC aims to promote the development of an internationally competitive, efficient and sustainable rail service and to facilitate the development of an Australian export industry in railway technologies.

**For further information contact:  
e-mail [railcrc@cqu.edu.au](mailto:railcrc@cqu.edu.au)  
phone +61 (0)7 49309597  
fax +61 (0)7 4930 6984**

**Centre for Railway Engineering  
Central Queensland University  
Rockhampton Qld 4702**

## From the Editor

As this is my first issue as editor of the RTSA National Newsletter I thought it would be beneficial to introduce myself to members and to outline the direction of the magazine over the next few months.

First of all, I would like to thank David Ferris for the excellent work he has done as the inaugural RTSA National Newsletter editor and for the encouragement he has given me as I take over this role.

It is my intention over the next few issues to develop the newsletter into a journal worthy of the professional standing of the RTSA's membership.

I hope in future editions to include short technical papers on work in progress or of completed projects that would be of interest to RTSA members. News items of interest that may not make the mainstream media would also be welcomed as would 'Letters to the Editor'

**Please send all contributions to**

**Mark Carter  
GRMS Media,  
3 Bruce Street, Broadview South Australia 5083**

**Phone: 08 8261 2292 Fax: 08 8261 2219  
e-mail: [grms@bigpond.com](mailto:grms@bigpond.com)**

## IE Aust Infrastructure Report Card

The Institution of Engineers, Australia (IEAust) has repeated its call for the establishment of a National Infrastructure Advisory Council and the removal of significant regulatory and taxation barriers to private sector investment in infrastructure.

Speaking at the national launch in Sydney of the *2001 Infrastructure Report Card*, the IEAust Chief Executive Officer John Boshier said, "One hundred years after Federation, the development and maintenance of our infrastructure assets suffers from a lack of integration and coordination. This obviously is related to our form of Government, with each sphere having separate and sometimes overlapping roles and responsibilities."

The Report aims to highlight that infrastructure is critical to every Australian and that should not be neglected. Grades for various components of infrastructure include:

National Roads (C); State Roads (C minus); Local Roads (D); Rail (D minus); Ports (B); Airports (B); Telecommunications (B); Electricity (B minus); Irrigation (D minus); Potable Water (C); Stormwater (D); Wastewater (C minus); and Gas (C).

“The grades in the Report Card clearly indicate that the quality of infrastructure is uneven amongst sectors and in some essential areas there are few signs that the future is being safeguarded,” John Boshier added.

The *2001 Infrastructure Report Card* is an initiative of the IEAust that has brought together for the first time an alliance of 20 major representative bodies. Concern over declining quality and investment in Australia’s infrastructure has brought together the group of infrastructure users, owners, operators, investors, industry groups and other stakeholders under the title of the Australian Infrastructure Report Card Alliance. The Australasian Railway Association is a member of the alliance. The Report can be accessed at [www.InfrastructureReportCard.org.au](http://www.InfrastructureReportCard.org.au).

### From One Extreme to Another

The *Report Card* recognised that performance in some areas of the rail sector such as the worlds-best-practice iron ore rail operations the Pilbara (A+) and Central Queensland coal trains (A-) was of a very high level. However rail’s overall rating was dragged by other extremes such as the Melbourne – Sydney – Brisbane interstate standard gauge line with its poor track co-ordination, steam age alignments and inadequate signalling and communication systems (F).

Since the last report, significant investment in expanding and improving the Victorian passenger network, a strong service orientated audit of the standard gauge network and continued investment in rail projects, notably the Alice Springs – Darwin line, have lifted expectations of improved performance.

However, the lack of progress in reform of the planning, enhancement, and maintenance of the existing network assets is disappointing. Asset management policies and processes show few signs of progress towards best practice, although the controls in place in the privatised franchises of the Victorian system have potential.

In order to lift rail’s rating the *Report Card* found that in the future, resolution of the management and investment in the national standard gauge network is essential.

Integrated planning for rail is required if the climate for investment by both government and private sector is to be improved. Improved management of the rail assets with focussed investment to improve service delivery is required if industry and community expectations for social, environmental and efficiency outcomes are to be achieved.

The improvements noted to date are insufficient to raise the grading level from that reported in the *2000 Report Card*. This is because of the unresolved issues of the national standard gauge network, and the lack of Government commitment to adequately fund or encourage the private sector to make investments in both rail passenger and freight infrastructure.

The *Report Card* rating for rail in 2001 is D-.

### RTSA Office Bearers

**National Chair:** Robert Schweiger  
Ph: 08 8218 4014 Fax: 08 8297 0992

**Immediate Past Chair:** Philip Laird  
Ph: 02 4221 3421 Fax: 02 4221 4845

**Deputy Chair & NSW Chapter Chair:** Jon Watsford  
Ph: 02 9330 7900 Fax: 02 9330 7902

**Secretary:** Chris Venn-Brown  
Ph: 02 6556 7217 Fax: 02 6556 7024

**Treasurer:** Ravi Ravitharan  
Ph: 03 9905 1986 Fax: 03 9905 1972

**Queensland Chapter Chair:** George Nikandros  
Ph: 07 3235 1473 Fax: 07 3235 2747

**SA Chapter Chair:** George Erdos  
Ph: 08 8218 4000 Fax: 08 8227 0992

**Victoria & Tasmania Chapter Chair:** David Ferris  
Ph: 03 9620 3600 Fax: 03 9740 7917

**WA Chapter Chair:** John Syers  
Ph/Fax: 08 9387 1946

**RTSA Secretariat:** Cindy Huber, IE Aust  
PO Box E303, Kingston ACT 2604  
Ph: 02 6270 6539 Fax: 02 6273 2358



**The Railway Technical Society of Australasia**