

## Executive Chairman's Report

2007 has been a landmark year for the Railway Technical Society of Australasia (RTSA). The RTSA has become one of the largest and most successful technical societies within Engineers Australia. Its membership has steadily increased over the last year and currently stands at 937. A new corporate membership option has been introduced within RTSA, through which several railway organisations are collectively contributing to the development of professionals within the industry under the RTSA umbrella.

The RTSA Executive has recently endorsed the formation of a *RTSA New Zealand chapter* in addition to its five Australian chapters. To facilitate the formation of the New Zealand chapter, the RTSA has now become a joint technical society of Engineers Australia and IPENZ New Zealand.

The RTSA works closely with the railway industry to promote the science and practice of railway engineering and related technology. In the last 12 months, collectively the RTSA chapters have organised more than 30 technical meetings and field visits as well as joint meetings with other similar groups in the industry on topical railway issues. In 2007, two RTSA technical meetings were held in New Zealand with great success.

In February 2007, the RTSA successfully hosted a symposium on *Future Frameworks for Regional Rail*, in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. As part of the symposium RTSA sponsored Mr Ed Zsombor from the Rail Projects Saskatchewan Highway & Transport Agency, Canada to speak of his experiences of short haul railways. Mr Paul Neville MP, chairman of the parliamentary inquiry on Integration of Regional Rail and Roads and their Interface to Ports invited RTSA representatives and Mr Zsombor to appear at a special public hearing of the inquiry. The inquiry's report released in August 2007 incorporated several of the recommendations made by the RTSA.

Following the Regional Rail Symposium, the RTSA Ed Zsombor, conducted a successful Eminent Speaker Program, travelling to five States in Australia to present his successful experience with shortline railway operations in Canada. During these visits RTSA arranged for Mr Zsombor to meet with several local, State and Federal government representatives and policy makers, who expressed much interest in the successful transformation of shortline railway operations in Canada.

In 2007, the RTSA has implemented three major Professional Development initiatives to assist the rail industry to improve the standing of railway professionals and address the critical shortage of skilled work force.

- Conducting a short survey on professional development activities and skill shortages within the railway industry;
- Holding a series of Australia-wide symposiums on professional development involving a broad range of participants from the railway industry; and
- Launching the industry-based Professional Development and Assessment Program (PDAP).

The RTSA has worked closely with Engineers Australia to customise its Professional Development Program (PDP) to specifically suit the rail industry. It held a *Professional Development* symposium in Melbourne where the *Professional Development Assessment Program* was introduced to the railway industry. The second symposium will be conducted in Sydney during February 2008. The focus of these symposia will be to characterise the various training and development programs currently offered within the Australian railway industry and thus to identify mechanisms for improvement. These symposia, apart from being a knowledge-sharing experience, will also facilitate discussion to improve current training and development programs and identify opportunities to introduce new initiatives.

Through its Western Australian chapter, RTSA is gearing up for CORE2008 to be held in September this year in Perth. The RTSA Executive has approved CORE2010 to be held in New Zealand.

Mr. Peter Martinovich, Deputy Project Director, New MetroRail Project, Public Transport Authority of Western Australia was awarded the prestigious 2007 RTSA Individual Award at the AusRAIL gala dinner on 6 December 2007 for his outstanding contribution to the railway industry. On behalf of RTSA Executive, I would congratulate Peter on this well-deserved award.

I would also like to take the opportunity to wish all RTSA members and their families a safe and happy Christmas and New Year holidays.

**Ravi Ravitharan**  
*RTSA Executive Chairman*

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ENGINEERS  
AUSTRALIA

**RTSA**

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## Point of View

Max Michell

The RTSA sponsored seminar in Wagga Wagga on future frameworks for regional rail seems like an eternity ago, although in fact it was only 10 months back. At that time, the concept of a shortline, as widely practiced in Canada and USA, seemed a good idea but well removed from the local structure here in Australia.

Our regulatory and other 'one size fits all' arrangements do not lend themselves to such lateral thinking. Despite this it has been obvious that the keynote speaker, Ed Zsombor, from Saskatchewan did make something of a mark, if only because the short line and regional line issue has kept simmering away just beneath the surface.

Now, somewhat unexpectedly, a situation has been created that may lend itself to adoption of a structural change for Australia's local regional rail lines.

Asciano, that 'half' of Toll created to meet (some) of the ACCC conditions when Toll swallowed Patrick, and having in its earlier guise profitably handed back the track in Tasmania and Victoria to the respective governments, has now virtually abandoned the majority of the traffic that operates over those two networks.

In an announcement early in December Asciano indicated to investors it would either sell or close its inter-modal business in Victoria and Tasmania as well as its grain

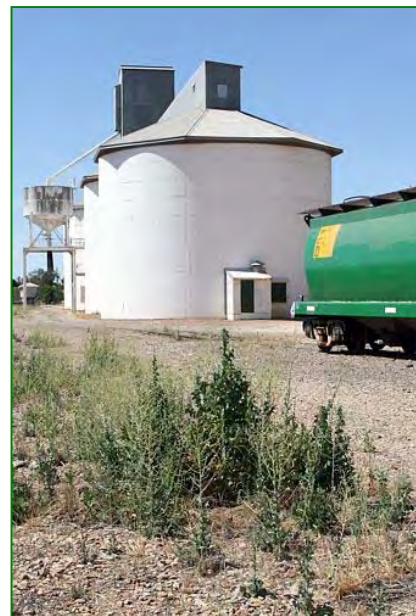
business in Victoria and part of NSW. Asciano in its earlier incarnation as the infrastructure side of Toll Holdings had already handed back the track in Tasmania and Victoria to the respective governments and is now seeking to virtually abandon the majority of the traffic that operates over those two networks.

On the other hand it is talking up its planned entry to the Queensland coal business. The shareholders reacted well to this announcement (are we surprised?) but the customers and some politicians did not - although the current business obsession with shareholders would suggest that Asciano got it right in current terms.

The real test will be to see the manner in which Asciano disposes of what will be presumably surplus assets (locomotives and wagons in particular) and if they are able to breakaway from their past almost predatory behaviour in regard to similar disposals.

Locomotive disposal at the time Toll and Patrick acquired National Rail and FreightCorp, was a Clayton's affair; the physical disposal riddled with caveats, effectively keeping these assets out of much of the market.

Large numbers of 'surplus' wagons have been laid aside over several years, but even as recently as a few months ago some were being cut up for scrap rather than being sold into the competitive market. While many of these wagons were indeed redundant, a considerable number would have found useful



ongoing lives with smaller operators had they have been sold rather than scrapped. Although Toll, and now Asciano, speak the good words on occasions, it is what they consistently do that they should be judged by - and on that basis there can be no optimism regarding regional lines, traffics or rolling stock in the fall out from Asciano's withdrawal.

The other issue that comes out of this is just what were Toll and Patrick up to when they did their due diligence before acquiring ATN and Freight Australia - only a few years ago. The ATN acquisition is now all but abandoned - first the track in a deal with the state and federal government, and now the vast majority of the traffic. ATN also had a mainland grain contract with AWB that

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came with the deal, yet just a few years later looks on the surface to have been a rather rash move.

Toll also bought Freight Australia and much the same has happened - the track was handed back to the state in deplorable condition but at a good 'profit' to the leaseholder, much of the motive power and grain fleet have been 'exported' to NSW to prop up their grain activity there while the northern grain fleet is converted for coal haulage (underlining the degree to which the Hunter Valley coal chain has been let down by PN with its 'too few too late' fleet expansion policy).

Is it possible that Toll were overly enthusiastic in some of their rail acquisitions? Have they skipped through their due diligence with gay abandon and are now paying the price? Or is there something else afoot?

The only people who can really answer such questions are hardly likely to say anything anyway, but given their proclivity for money it would seem unlikely they went into these acquisitions with their eyes shut. In which case it can only be assumed that the ATN and Freight Australia acquisitions were 'strategic' - a pre-emptive strike to keep others out of the (rail) market, and to acquire some motive power and rolling stock along the way?

While they may have had no real expectation that they would ever bring these rail networks into their mainstream profit making enterprises, they have effectively stopped anyone else from having a chance to do so. In some parts of the world this would be regarded as predatory; here it is seemingly just passed off as normal business behaviour.

Whatever the outcome of Asciano's withdrawal it is likely that history will judge the headlong rush into privatisation as a badly judged, ideologically driven, mistake that will have resulted in significant destruction of what was until recently a potentially viable public asset. We can only hope that Asciano do not do as they have consistently done in the past, but in this case do something to encourage and support (with appropriate action) a regional model that may well be the only hope for the regional lines and traffic on much of the south east rail network of this country.

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## Government Relations Committee

The federal election win by the Labor Party presents new opportunities for rail and the RTSA. We have written off to the new Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Mr Anthony Albanese congratulating him on his new role.

We pointed out to the Minister that Engineers Australia was one of the first organizations, going back prior to 2004, calling for a national infrastructure body to assess capacity constraints and aging of infrastructure. As a technical society of Engineers Australia the RTSA naturally supports such a body.

The Labor Party in Opposition adopted as its policy this body and called it Infrastructure Australia. The RTSA understands Infrastructure Australia will be set up within 100 days for the election - and will have a deadline of 12 months to produce its first Infrastructure Priority List - to set a clear agenda for government investment in infrastructure.

The RTSA is particularly keen to see a renewed focus on rail in the transport segments of intermodal freight, urban public transport and regional rail. These segments have varying degrees of market failures that do not account for greenhouse gases emissions and congestion or fairly distribute costs of highway use.

In particular, the paradigm shift in climate change and inclusion of carbon trading, a cap and pricing scheme for carbon emissions, will bring the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the market economy and bring to the fore the environmental credentials of rail.

Policy measures on environment, congestion, infrastructure capacity, technology innovation and skills provide an opportunity for rail to outperform other modes of transport. Along with other emerging pressures in peak oil, total life-cycle cost of road corridors and the financial pressures on regional councils for road maintenance, the RTSA believes rail can play a more prominent role in relieving these pressures whilst meeting Australia's transport challenges.

Indeed it is possibly a generational change in which young people can look forward to a new long-term career in metro technologies, intermodal rail freight and port logistics.

The RTSA has a strong understanding of the engineering technologies and competencies of rail in the various markets, and its economic benefits. It has offered to assist where possible (and as part of Engineers Australia and industry lobby groups) on technical aspects and professional development capability, and the role of rail, in AusLink or Infrastructure Australia planning.

*Andrew Honan*  
*Chairman, Government Relations Committee*



## Asciano charts a new direction for PN

Asciano, the parent company of Australia's largest private rail freight company, Pacific National (PN), has told investors that it intends to restructure much of PN's rural rail business. Asciano says that these assets are under performing and that the ongoing drought conditions mean that the outlook for its rural business is poor and such volatility does not fit Asciano's business strategy

The main business units to be impacted will be the Victorian and New South Wales grain rail networks, intermodal services in Victoria operated by Patrick PortLink and most services operating in Tasmania.

Asciano Managing Director Mark Rowsthorn said, "The business is incurring a \$3 million-a-month loss. Such losses are unsustainable for any company. We will be sympathetic to the people and the circumstances involved but it's a decision that we can't avoid."

Pacific National currently employs \$210 million of rail assets in the affected rural sectors. The company's action plan will see a downsizing of NSW grain operations to bare minimum; the sale or complete closure of its Victorian grain business; and the sale or complete closure of its TAS PN Intermodal business. It will also sell or close its Victorian rural container business operated by Patrick PortLink, but it is unclear whether this will also impact upon other PPL services in South Australia and NSW.

While the future of all regional services in Victoria is very much in doubt, the Tasmanian Government says it believes that PN has contractual obligations to continue operating services as part of the infrastructure buy-back arrangements agreed to recently between PN and the Tasmanian and Federal Governments

At the same time as it was announcing these regional service reductions, Asciano said that through PN it will be investing \$529 million in creating a presence in the Queensland coal haulage market. It aims to secure in excess of 30 million tonnes per annum by 2011 - approximately 12% market share on forward figures.

Legal and commercial terms are currently being finalised between Asciano and multiple coal companies operating in Queensland and orders have been placed for diesel and electric locomotive with the first trains expected to commence operating during the second half of 2009.

Asciano will pursue other supply chain opportunities created by the ongoing resources boom in Australia including the rapidly expanding resource exploration in South Australia, iron ore projects in the Mid West and Pilbara regions in WA and a number of large-scale bulk product contacts up for renewal in WA.

## • NZ rail buyback speculation intensifies but.....

Following two record months for container throughput, Port of Tauranga (POT) has agreed with Toll Rail to increase capacity on the Tauranga/MetroPort rail link.

The decision is despite rumours the Government is looking to re-nationalise rail by buying Toll NZ.

POT said container volumes exceeded 50,000 in November. Toll and the port company have agreed to add 60 new rail wagons to the MetroPort Auckland service. The new wagons will be delivered in time for next year's peak cargo season.

Four trains a day travel between MetroPort Auckland and the port, with six trains on a Monday. At present, each train carries 94 twenty-foot equivalent containers (TEUs) and the extra wagons will see this increase to 109 TEUs per train. Weekly capacity will increase from 2700 TEUs currently to more than 3200 TEUs for next season.

Toll chief executive David Jackson said Toll had had a 16 per cent increase in the MetroPort Auckland business this year and had recently upgraded the service from three to four return trains per day. At peak times deliveries were taking longer than customers wanted, he said. Mr Jackson expects MetroPort's growth to continue.

"Despite speculation about ownership and the relationship between the Government and ourselves, it is business as usual for us and will continue that way."

There is speculation the Government is considering buying train operator Toll NZ. Large rail customers and the state owned enterprise Ontrack - have been urging Finance Minister Michael Cullen to buy the company which is fully owned by Toll Holdings of Australia.

Toll and the Government have been involved in protracted and difficult talks about the access fee it should pay to use the tracks since 2003.

(Source: [www.Stuff.co.nz](http://www.Stuff.co.nz))

## • QR takes \$30 million stake in Moorebank Intermodal Facility

QR will partner with Stockland and Chris Corrigan's Kaplan Funds Management (KFM) to create a new intermodal facility at Stockland's Department of Defence National Storage and Distribution Centre at Moorebank, south of Sydney, as part of its plans to build a national freight business.

QR has taken a 10% interest in the joint venture, with Stockland holding a 60% interest and two entities managed by logistics experts KFM each having taken a 15% interest. Stockland in December assumed control of the 83-hectare site at Moorebank.

QR's head of freight Steve Cantwell said QR was delighted to gain a foothold in this exciting new venture. "This partnership with Stockland and KFM will enable QR to play a key role, from the ground up, in building a brand-new intermodal rail terminal catering for increasing containerised freight servicing the port, intrastate and interstate rail line haul markets.

"QR is looking forward to working with these two parties to unlock the potential of the Moorebank site, given its strategic location and the congestion impacting rail logistics sites elsewhere in Sydney. The Moorebank site is strategically located near major motorways and in close proximity to the main North South rail line. The new terminal will allow QR to access additional terminal capacity in NSW to service increasing customer demand for containerised freight.

"QR's long-term intermodal strategy recognises the need for new inland terminal capacity and new rail connections to truly capitalise on this expected growth. This is a sound investment in that future capacity and QR's continued national expansion. Customers are clearly looking for QR and industry to develop new facilities and growth opportunities for rail-based transport and warehousing.

"This move builds on QR's recent launch of a new full container service from Cairns to Perth, which gives customers a third and highly-competitive carrier across the Nullarbor, one of Australia's most important transport corridors. We will continue to explore new opportunities for terminals nationally and will examine opportunities on their merits."

## International

### High-Speed Life For Old Station

London's St Pancras station began a glamorous and exciting new chapter in its long history on 14 November when it took over from Waterloo as the terminus for high-speed Eurostar services to and from Paris, Brussels and other major European cities

On 4 September, prior to its official opening, a special VIP Eurostar made a record run between Paris and St Pancras International in 2hr 4min, at times touching nearly 320 km/h. The normal St Pancras-Paris schedule will be 2 hrs 15 minutes, 20 minutes faster than previous best schedule

The transformation of St Pancras station and the start of international services in November is a key stage in a project that began 10 years ago. It has involved the completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (now known as High Speed 1) and continues as developers work to make major improvements to the inner-city environs of St Pancras and King's Cross nearby.

The buildings of St Pancras station are architectural gems and the owners, London & Continental Railways, have striven to maintain and also celebrate their character during the restoration and modernisation process that has cost £800 million.

Expansion at the station has allowed for 15 platforms: six for international Eurostar services; three for high-speed domestic services to the southern county of Kent (scheduled for 2009); four for trains to the east Midlands and Yorkshire; and two (below ground) for cross-London services. Forecasters expect it to become one of the world's busiest stations, with 60 million people using it annually.

(Source: By Liz Clark, London Press Service)

### Freightliner UK orders new locos

In the UK, Freightliner Group Ltd has placed an order for 30 freight locomotives of a new design which it says will provide greater hauling capacity and a significant improvement in fuel economy than is currently seen on the UK network. Project Genesis, which is being developed in partnership with General Electric (GE), will bring new technology to the UK rail freight market, enabling Freightliner to move longer and heavier trains whilst reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per tonne moved.

This will be the first time GE has entered the UK locomotive market, which has been dominated by EMD products for the last decade. The new JS37ACi model will have an array of new features, including AC traction technology and dynamic brake, which helps to generate and additional 10% fuel efficiency when compared to previous designs. The first of the new locomotives is expected to enter service in mid-2009.

**Note:** There has been no further news regarding Freightliner's Australian aspirations, but it is believed that the company is still actively assessing its options.

### Richards Bay hit by supply problems

Australia's biggest overseas coal export rival was choked by a shortage of supply in early December because of rail disruptions. Reuters reported (Thursday, December 6) that exports from South Africa's Richards Bay Coal Terminal (RBCT) had been hampered by a coal spill and derailments.

A spokesman for the country's rail utility Transnet told Reuters that there had been no rail traffic along the line for much of the previous day.

RBCT has capacity for 91m tonnes of coal each year, making it the third biggest coal port in terms of declared capacity behind the Australian ports of Hay Point and Newcastle. The port has been hit by recent power outages and has long battle supply problems caused by derailments.

(Source: Lloyds List DCN Newsire)

## RTSA ENGINEERING AWARDS

### 2007 RTSA INDIVIDUAL AWARD



The **2007 RTSA Individual Award** was presented by the Executive Chairman of the Society, Mr. Ravi Ravitharan, to Mr. Peter Martinovich at the AusRAIL Plus 2007 gala dinner held in the Sydney on Thursday evening 6 December 2007.

Mr. Martinovich is the Deputy Project Director, New MetroRail Project, Public Transport Authority of Western Australia and he has enjoyed an outstanding railway career with over 43 years of experience beginning in 1964.

He has been instrumental in promoting the use, technical development and expansion of railways in Western Australia. In recent years he has played a key senior advisory role in the expansion of Perth's urban rail network, including to the Northern suburbs in 1990. Most recently, he has been one of the driving forces in the planning and construction of Perth's new MetroRail Project.

### 2008 RTSA ANNUAL AWARDS

The Railway Technical Society of Australasia is calling for nominations in three categories being;

- The Individual Award;
- The Biennial Industry Award;
- The Young Railway Engineer's Award

These are prestigious awards and the industry is urged to lend its support in identifying suitable nominees by the closing date.

Further details about these awards, together with nomination information, previous winners and guidelines, can be found on the RTSA website at [www.rtsa.com.au/awards](http://www.rtsa.com.au/awards)

Nominations close on **Friday 29 February 2008**



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# RTSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

**In the lead up to AusRAIL 2007, the RTSA Executive Committee met in Sydney on 3 December 2007. The following is a summary of the principal issues discussed at meeting**

## **Succession Planning**

Chapter Chairs have been requested to identify persons to serve on Chapter Committees & Executive sub-committees and to prepare a succession plan for key roles within Chapters, including Chapter Chair, Chapter Secretary and Chapter Treasurer.

## **New Zealand Chapter**

Formation of the NZ Chapter has been agreed by both EA and IPENZ.

The RTSA Executive has endorsed the formation of the NZ Chapter. To facilitate the formation of the Chapter, the RTSA will become a joint technical society of Engineers Australia and IPENZ.

## **Sub-Committee Terms of Reference**

Formal Terms of Reference for most sub-committees approved by the Executive. The Technical sub-committee will become the Technical and Investigations sub-committee.

## **CORE 2008**

A Progress Report was presented by the Chairman of the CORE 2008 Organising Committee. As planned, the Conference organization is progressing well.

## **CORE 2010**

The RTSA Executive has agreed to hold the CORE 2010 Conference in New Zealand. The newly formed RTSA NZ Chapter will take responsibility for the organization of this Conference.

## **EA/RTSA Professional Development Program**

Successful symposium held in Melbourne in September. Further symposium planned in Sydney in February 2008.

Other states to consider opportunities for EA to disseminate information

## **RTSA Marketing**

The existing Marketing Plan is to be reviewed and up-dated to reflect the current environment within the railway industry.

## **RTSA Website**

The RTSA website is to be redesigned soon with modern interfaces and additional up-to-date information.

## **RTSA 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

To mark the RTSA 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a booklet detailing the 10-year history, and the associated changes within the railway industry has been commissioned.

Other initiatives will be considered. Please contact the RTSA Executive Chairman or the Executive Secretary with your suggestions,

## **Climate Change Adaptation Skills for Professionals Program**

The RTSA Executive has agreed that it will support the Australian Homeland Security Research Centre grant application to the Australian Greenhouse Office for the "Climate Change Adaptation Skills for Professionals Program". If anyone is interested in supporting the RTSA in this initiative please contact the RTSA Executive Secretary.

## **RTSA General Initiatives**

The RTSA presently is looking for worthwhile projects that will assist the railway industry and professionals within the industry. Please contact the RTSA Executive Chairman or Executive Secretary with your suggestions.



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## Victoria and Tasmania

We have continued to have an active program and I thank all those involved in the organizing of speakers and events.

The Victorian Government recently called for input into a review of the current and future technology options for level crossings. The RTSA made a submission which is now available at our website at the link <http://www.rtsa.com.au/publications/submissions/rtsa-level-crossing-technologies-submission.pdf>

Thanks to those members' input into the very comprehensive status and future developments for level crossing technology and while only being half the equation (driver behaviour being the other half), the improvement and affordability of the technology is a significant factor in the reduction of accidents.

We had the most successful dinner with more registrants than ever before. My special thanks to both Doug Hayhoe and Gerry de Bont, who organized and motivated many to be there. VLine CEO, Rob Barnett showed us why he leads such a growing and dynamic organisation.

Our program has been good and will continue at full pace for the rest of the year.

The highlights since mid 2007 have been:

- Investing in Rail Infrastructure, Harry Roberts.
- Combined event with Young Engineers, Careers in Railway Engineering, Martin Baggott
- Annual Dinner with CEO Vline, Rob Barnett
- The future for Regional Rail in Victoria, John Barry
- Progress of Level Crossing Project for Regional Victoria, Geoff Walker, VicTrack and AGM
- Professional Development Seminar, September.
- Public Transport Safety in Victoria, an Update, October
- ARTC Southern Alliance Works, Andrew Cole ARTC
- Christmas Function and Presentation by GHD

I am also proud to announce that our membership has increased over the past 6 months and an active program and our activities are the main way in which we can continue to generate enthusiasm.

The Committee has formulated a draft program for next year, which will be available shortly as soon as we have confirmed the availability of the speakers.

Of the many notable inclusions on the program next year I mention specifically a repeat of the Young Engineers Group combined meeting and a combined meeting with the IRSE in June 2008.

John Scott has done a marvelous job of coordinating all of the agendas, correspondence and organization for these matters and I thank him for helping the Committee. I also thank Wayne Milful who took over as Treasurer last year from Gerry de Bont.

*Martin Baggott, Chapter Chair*

## New South Wales

The change of venue to Central Station for monthly presentations has seen numbers increase over the last 6-8 months. We are pleased to attract typically 30-40 attendees. We have been able to secure this venue for next year and we are grateful for RailCorp in providing this facility.

We have a number of presentations next year that will capitalise on the infrastructure and rolling stock programs currently underway in Sydney. These meetings offer an opportunity for engineers and practitioners to become aware and develop an understanding of technologies necessary for future efficient rail services.

Whether it is the refurbishment of the XPT trains (one of the most successfully introduced trains in the 1980's), the introduction of the new OSCARs or the new generation PPP trains, those with an interest in rolling stock should find this aspect of the program appealing.

We also hope to provide some awareness of the challenges of interfacing 1500v DC earthing and bonding with general AC supply. Although it will not be possible to describe in detail all the methodologies in design, it is hoped to provide a basic awareness of the approaches involved. Electrical systems are particularly hazardous because they are invisible. Earthing and bonding represents a key area within this discipline in achieving a safe and corrosion-free system.

The earthing & bonding and the traction supply upgrade presentation will provide the program a flavour of electrical technologies.

A briefing on the Metropolitan Rail Expansion project is an opportunity to update members and guests of this very significant urban project. This project will reshape the landscape of rail services from the northwest, through the CBD and into the south west of Sydney. It will have a major impact on the lives of many resident in these areas, who currently have limited public transport options.

The ATP presentation planned in August, will describe the first steps of an automatic train system based on the European ERTMS system. Although this is at a very early stage, this pilot represents an attempt to enhance safety performance (by reducing human factor error) and improve rail line capacity.

The AK car and the life extension of motive power presentations represent important technologies to improve efficiency of track and motive power.

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The NSW Chapter also hopes to co-ordinate three regional study tours with the PWI regional meetings. These are in early stages of development. Following on from the Wagga Wagga symposium on regional rail we were pleased to see that the ARA is now proposing a shortline model similar to the Canadian regional rail. It is apparent, with evidence from Victoria, Tasmania and now NSW that new approaches are required for regional rail.

Technology presentations are the basis for improvements in efficiency and productivity, for rail services. With around 15% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions from transport, rail will play a much more significant role in mode choice and reductions in carbon emissions. The opportunities for rail in NSW and the people associated with it are very bright indeed.

**Andrew Honan, NSW Chapter Chair**

## South Australia

The South Australian Chapter has completed another successful year, with 10 monthly meetings plus the annual dinner meeting. The consistent attendances at Chapter meetings have been particularly pleasing. Our meeting programme this year included:

- RTSA Eminent Speaker Ed Zsombor on the Canadian short line experience (joint meeting with Permanent Way Institution).
- Chris Hall, former General Manager of passenger services at Australian National on "Long Distance Passenger Rail – The Transition from Government to Private Operation".
- Roger Wyatt on "Adelaide Light Rail Project Tram Switch Upgrade" (joint with PWI).
- Mark Stallbaum from the ATSB on the Lismore (Vic.) level crossing accident in October 2006.
- Tim Ryan, General Manager Asset Management for Australian Rail Track Corporation, on ARTC's upgrading works along the Melbourne – Brisbane corridor and in the Hunter Valley (joint with and hosted by PWI).
- Andrew Howey of Bombardier, on developments in passenger rolling stock.
- Bert Easthope from Genesee and Wyoming, covering G&W's operations in South Australia (joint with PWI).
- ARTC's in cab activated points system (ICAPS), presented by RTSA member Malcolm Menadue (annual joint meeting hosted by the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers).
- Peter Jaehne from FreightLink on the Alice Springs – Darwin railway, six years on.

- Max Shuard from Max Shuard and Associates Pty Ltd describing the design and construction of Adelaide's new tram line extension.

The annual dinner meeting, on 27 November, featured as guest speaker Jim Hallion, CEO of the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, outlining his view of the future for rail in South Australia. The event was most successful, with a good attendance.

The committee has been actively planning for 2008, with the meeting programme largely finalised. We welcome Tim Calver as a new committee member. Full details of Chapter activities, and summaries of meeting presentations, are contained in the informative monthly newsletter, published on the RTSA website.

**Duncan McLeod, SA Chapter Chair**

## Queensland

### Chairman's Comments

The Queensland Chapter has held three presentations during the quarter.

### Recent Meetings

Meetings to note on since last report:-

#### 27 September

An interstate guest, Damon Honnery from the RailCRC and Monash University in Melbourne discussed the current growth in fuel consumption and the need to improve fuel efficiency in the rail industry based on additives and alternative fuels. (*Attendees 25*)

#### 24 October

David George, the incoming CEO of the RailCRC outlined the strategy and research being carried out by the CRC for Rail Innovation. He also discussed the overall direction for the new CRC and the main differences with the previous CRC.

#### 21 November

Also, in line with our presentation in Rockhampton last year, we aim to maintain our links with regional members. To this end, this year we moved to Townsville, where Marcus McAuliffe from Pacific National Queensland outlined their ambitious startup project and the current operation in Queensland. (*Attendees 16*)

### Upcoming Events

The Queensland Chapter has an exciting program of activities organised for 2008. This includes 25 kV Traction Power Systems as used in QLD and WA, the Ghan Level Crossing Accident and Management of the Kuranda Range as well as the highly successful combined AGM/trivia night in July.

As always, the RTSA Committee welcomes any suggestions for events.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the committee, all RTSA members and the attendees at seminars in making 2007 another successful year for the Queensland Chapter.

*Mark Wishart, Queensland Chapter Chair*

## Western Australia

The latter part of 2007 has been relatively low in activity with two technical meetings and one site visit conducted since July. Attendances at the meetings have been lower than previously experienced presumably caused by the high level of activity in the industry associated with the opening of the Southern Suburbs Railway and the North West mining boom.

In September the Chapter Chairman, John Syers provided a presentation titled "Tourist Railways – Can They Survive?" in which the structure and management of the railways was outlined and the difficulties associated with restoring one railway, damaged seriously by bushfires was discussed and some conclusions reached.

A site visit to the Nowergup railcar depot was conducted in October. This visit was hosted by the joint venture company Downer EDI Rail and Bombardier Transport Maintenance who Manage the depot. A full inspection of the maintenance and stowage facilities for this modern electric railcar depot, which supplements the Public Transport Authority depot at Claisebrook was provided to the group who attended.

The last technical meeting for the year in November was unfortunately cancelled due to the unavailability of the presenters.

The Committee have been busy settling a full program for 2008 and this should be promulgated in the WA chapter website prior to Christmas. At this stage it is envisaged for all meetings to be conducted on selected Thursdays commencing at 12 noon with a light luncheon followed by a technical presentation. All meetings will be held at the Engineers Australia auditorium in Murray Street, Perth. A total of nine meetings is proposed with one site visit and the potential of a presentation by a visiting eminent speaker following the CORE in September.

The WA Chapter membership now stands at 90 with a slight increase over the past 12 months. Further increases are anticipated as new applications to hand are processed.

Congratulations are extended to Mr Peter Martinovich for his awards at the Sydney AusRail Conference. Peter is the Deputy Director, New Metro Rail, Public Transport Authority based in Perth and has been heavily involved with delivering the design and management functions for the Perth urban railway extensions and new railways. He was presented with the individual awards from both the RTSA and the ARA in recognition of his contribution to the railway industry.

Much of the effort being expended in Western Australia is being dedicated to the planning for CORE to be held in Perth in September 2008.

*John Syers, WA Chapter Chair*

## RTSA SPECIAL TENTH ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION

To mark the tenth anniversary of the RTSA, to be commemorated at CORE 2008 in September at Perth, the Executive Committee has commissioned a history of the RTSA to be collated by Dr Philip Laird, with a review panel comprising John Dring, George Erdos and Robert Schweiger.

The goal is to produce a high quality 64-page B5 sized publication. In addition to lists of award recipients, office bearers and publications, topics will include:

- The establishment in the early 1980s of the National Committee on Railway Engineering (NCRE) within the Institution of Engineers, Australia and work of NCRE
- The formation of RTSA in 1998, plus the recent formation of the New Zealand chapter
- Awards, Standards, Education and Training including the 1999 RTSA, IE Aust, ARA, IRSE reports
- Government Relations, CORE's and STORE's
- The Forward Vision Task Force (2002) report 'Rail in the next decade: where to and how?'

Suggestion for other topics will be most welcome, as would any personal accounts of Study Tours under RTSA (or if particularly memorable under NCRE - including Europe). In addition, contributions of a few hundred words on any relevant topic would be welcome, as would photographs.

Please send them to [plaird@uow.edu.au](mailto:plaird@uow.edu.au), or by post to PO Box 20, Keiraville NSW 2500, or to discuss ideas, phone Philip on 02 4221 3421.

The aim, with the assistance of as many RTSA members as possible, is to produce a publication that will be of interest to all RTSA members and the rail industry as a whole.

# RTSA Diary 2008

## National & International

### 7th to 10th September CORE 2008, Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre

Potential delegates, exhibitors and sponsors are invited to register their interest in CORE 2008 by submitting details to the conference website at [www.CORE2008.org](http://www.CORE2008.org) or by registering with the conference organisers by emailing [info@eventedge.com.au](mailto:info@eventedge.com.au).

## NSW Chapter

6 February	XPT Refurbishment, Michael Cain, RailCorp
5 March	AK Test Cars, ARTC speaker - To be confirmed (TBC)
2 April	Earthing & Bonding, RailCorp speaker (TBC)
7 May	Metropolitan Rail expansion Program, Tim Parker TIDC

## South Australian Chapter

7 February	Port River Bridge & Associated Developments
6 March	ATSB's Level crossing incident reduction strategy
3 April	Proposed Seaford Extension of suburban Noarlunga line
1 May	Maintenance of the TransAdelaide railcar fleet

## Victorian Chapter

13 February	Site visit to rail maintenance centre
12 March	RTSA/ EA Professional Development Assessment Program, Glenda Graham,
April	Melbourne Tram System Improvement plans
May	Dinner Meeting with guest speaker, Savoy Park Plaza Hotel

## Queensland Chapter

27 February	25 kV Traction Power systems as used in Qld and WA - Jerry Jirasek
26 March	Ghan collision at Ban Ban Springs level crossing (NT) - Larry Matters
23 April	Management of Kuranda Range railway - Wayne Harrison

The above program is subject to last minute changes. For additional information on the RTSA and its activities, please visit the RTSA web site [www.rtsa.com.au](http://www.rtsa.com.au) or contact the secretariat on (02) 6270 6548.



Members of the RTSA WA Chapter during the recent site visit to the Nowergup railcar maintenance facility.

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## Postgraduate Courses in Railway Engineering

The RTSA is pleased to announce that, from 2008, postgraduate courses in all railway engineering disciplines will be available from Australian Universities.

These courses have been developed by the first Rail CRC, with the assistance and support of the RTSA and of the universities at which they are being presented. They add to the body of knowledge already being offered to the industry by Queensland University of Technology in conjunction with the Australian Railway Research Institute, in the course entitled 'New Railway Environment: a Multi-Disciplinary Business Concept'.

The last of the new courses to come on stream is the Railway Infrastructure course, which is to be offered by Queensland University of Technology, in Distance Education mode. QUT will now consider applications for enrolment in the degree, which commences in February, 2008.

The full Master of Engineering (Railway Infrastructure) degree comprises eight units (subjects), but a Graduate Certificate in Engineering (Railway Infrastructure) degree can also be achieved on successful completion of four specified units.

The address of the website giving information about the new degree and enrolment forms is at:

<http://www.bee.qut.edu.au/study/cpe/railwayinfrastructure.jsp>

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**A program of courses in Rolling Stock Engineering** is being presented by the University of Wollongong. New students may commence this course in February, 2008. The program is offered as distance delivery with one face to face workshop at the commencement of each subject. The entry requirement is a bachelor degree in engineering from a recognised tertiary institution, or equivalent.

Enquiries can be directed to Lorelle Pollard at the University of Wollongong [lorelle@uow.edu.au](mailto:lorelle@uow.edu.au) or phone (02) 4221 4247.

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Central Queensland University is offering **postgraduate courses in Signalling and Communications** also in Distance Education mode. The fifth intake for this course will be in February, 2008.

Students are required to complete six units to achieve a Graduate Diploma of Railway Signalling, or three units for a Graduate Certificate of Railway Signalling. Graduate Diplomates can achieve the degree of Master of Railway Signalling by completing a further three units.

A single non-award course on Railway Telecommunications will be introduced in March, 2008.

Full details of these courses are available at:

<http://www.seh-postgrad.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=4489>

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Central Queensland University is offering **postgraduate courses in Rail Operations Management**.

This course is structured over three years, with three units being presented each year, leading to the degree of Master of Rail Operations Management. Exit after one year leads to a Graduate Certificate of Rail Operations Management, and exit after two years leads to a Graduate Diploma of Rail Operations Management.

Full details of this course are available at:

<http://www.seh-postgrad.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=1934>

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Enquiries regarding the QUT/ARRI course '**New Railway Environment: a Multi-Disciplinary Business Concept**' may be made to Dr. Wardina Oghanna at [arri@powerup.com.au](mailto:arri@powerup.com.au) or Dr. Martin Murray at [m.murray@qut.edu.au](mailto:m.murray@qut.edu.au).

This course provides an overview of all aspects of railway technology, and is suitable for those wishing to gain an understanding of the industry as a whole, or for those wishing to learn something of the technologies outside their own specialities.