

# NEWSLETTER No 8/2004



Railway Technical Society of Australasia  
SA Chapter  
Engineering House, Bagot Street  
NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006

AUGUST 2004

**THURSDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER AT THE  
IE AUST PREMISES, BAGOT ST, NORTH  
ADELAIDE at 17:30.  
A JOINT MEETING WITH PWI**

**CONCRETE SLEEPERING  
TRANSADELAIDE TRACK**

**PRESENTED BY KEITH CHARLTON AND  
DANIEL MARTUCCI OF TRANSADELAIDE**

TransAdelaide has achieved something that the Victorians (at least at Government level) have completely missed – they have had the foresight to start upgrading their broad gauge tracks with gauge convertible concrete sleepers. The Outer Harbor line was done in two stages a couple of years ago with significant improvement in ride quality and no doubt a quite measurable reduction in ongoing maintenance costs.

Keith Charlton and Daniel Martucci will give a presentation on TransAdelaide's resleepering - past, present and future. During the 1980's traditional timber sleepering gave way to steel and in the 90's concrete sleepers were introduced. The thinking behind these changes will be discussed and the lessons learned.

Daniel Martucci will explain the logistical challenges of the concrete resleepering in the urban environment and in particular provide an insight into the management of contaminated ballast.

It would be nice to invite the Victorians over to this presentation, but even without them there will be much interesting information and insights into TransAdelaide's current track improvement strategy and the implicit opportunity to ultimately gauge convert the system.

This meeting is one of considerable to all who are interested in railways – not just the civil people – and promises to provide not just a most informative presentation but some lively follow up discussion.

The usual finger repast will be provided from 17.30 prior to the meeting proper at around 18.00. We look forward to a most interesting evening.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

We are now heading for spring, and no doubt the 'garden police' will be out in force trying to get the garden into shape. In order that our members are not driven completely mad by this annual torture we are offering yet more interesting early evening meetings with very interesting topics through to the AGM / dinner at the end of November. Subject to the usual caveats the program for the rest of 2004 is

7<sup>th</sup> October at Bagot St.: a presentation by Dean Phillips on TransAdelaide's experience in outsourcing railcar maintenance

4<sup>th</sup> November at Bagot St.: Subject to sufficient progress having been made we will hear about the new Port River rail bridge.

30<sup>th</sup> November at a Very Pleasant Location: the annual dinner with AGM attached.

## LAST MEETING

Malcolm Owen of ARTC, and a dual presenter at CORE 2004 presented a very interesting evening on CORE 2004 *REVISITED*.

Points made included

- This is the rail industries leading technical event
- Total of 54 technical papers
- Total of 7 papers from SA based people
- All papers well prepared and presented

The SA papers were paraphrased as –

- Wayside monitoring is the present and future crystal ball for rail.....
  - The wayside RailBam really does work.....
  - Geospatial technology and computer simulation can provide optimal railway route alignments.....
  - Curved track is more expensive to operate over than straight track.....!
  - There are only Five Steps to success for ARTC....
  - Rail can be a bigger player in the transport industry through supply chain integration.....
- and.....
- Win the maintenance war in an Alliance.....!

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The papers that were covered by Malcolm included:

- Predictive Condition Monitoring of Railway Rolling Stock  
*Keith Bladon, David Rennison, Grigory Izbinsky, Roger Tracy, Trevor Bladon*
- RailBAM-An Advanced Bearing Acoustic Monitor: Initial Operational Performance Results  
*Carolyn Southern, David Rennison, Uwe Kopke*
- A Holistic Approach to Route Selection Based on Whole Life Costs  
*Max Michell, Kevin Gu*
- Benefits from Curve Easing – A Straight Track Study  
*Philip Laird, Max Michell*
- ARTC's Railway Infrastructure Maintenance Strategy  
*Malcolm Owens*
- Integrate Rail – Why Would you Want to do That?  
*Mark Carter, Martin Baggott*
- Railway Infrastructure Maintenance Alliances-Delivering the Outcomes  
*Malcolm Owens*

Even for attendees of CORE 2004 this was a most entertaining evening. The original papers can be acquired from RTSA as hard copy or a CD and are well worth adding to your library. You will also have an additional 47 papers to read after looking in detail at the SA presentations.

A very worthwhile evening.

## WHAT IS YOUR VIEW

A reader recently responded with the observation that the two column layout is hard to read on a typical computer screen. Ironically I was reading a past copy of the Newsletter at the time, so appreciated his view.

It would be reasonably easy to run the electronic version of the Newsletter in single column format and retain the double column format for the hardcopy recipients. However before rushing off to making any changes I would be interested in readers views (and ultimately the Committees views as well) – email me at [samrom@bigpond.com](mailto:samrom@bigpond.com) in the next week or so.

## THE OBSERVERS SEAT

After some considerable time when the rail industry seemed to have dropped off the agenda, there now seems to be a new sense of optimism around. The 'big issues' that have come through in the last few months – ARTC about to take up management of track in NSW, AusLink (and the Federal budget) coming through with long awaited funding for rail and resolution of the Freight Australia sale (and apparent removal of the obstructionist attitude that organisation carried). Meanwhile some of the less apparent issues are gaining pace such as the Victorian Regional Fast train projects, bringing all Victorian country passenger trains back under unified management, continued growth in the loco and rolling stock leasing business started from small beginnings a few years ago and bedding in the Darwin railway and particularly the consistent growth in the freight on that line. The Ghan to Darwin has not run at less than 39 vehicles for over three months indicating another rather interesting dimension to current good news.

Plans are being developed with a quite breathtaking speed, but a very clear vision, for the spending of AusLink and budget funds on the triple goals of reduced transit, increased capacity and lower maintenance costs. In Victoria VicTrack have been able to get long held ideas out of the cupboard and are pushing on to develop 'master plans' for key bits of the network they have some sway over. QR and PNL are gearing up to start running trains in each other's domain, while other niche operators seem to be sailing quite well.

Orders are being placed for new locomotives and wagons, maybe not in the numbers that sometimes happened in the past but something that has been largely absent during the first years of privatisation. New passenger high speed railcars are coming into service for Victoria, West Australia and NSW while new suburban trains are arriving or expected in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane, complemented by various new trams in Melbourne and Adelaide. All in all it a good time for rail.

But underneath all the good news lies the necessity to invest wisely in order that the funding sources, particularly AusLink, are impressed with real gains for the dollars they outlay. There is no doubt the intention is there to achieve just that, but there is still a considerable cultural gap between the ideal and practice in many parts of the industry.

Concepts are sometimes just too complex and difficult, plans are overburdened with frills, costings are still

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driven by some absurd concepts of profligacy, and the business acumen behind investment proposals can be rather lacking. It behoves everyone involved to keep in mind the objectives of the quite substantial investment in rail, the need to get results in those objectives and to the desirability of getting the best possible result for the dollars on offer. If that can be achieved then we may all still be around to have another go as this initial flush of funding is replaced by a new tranche of dollars. Work for that to happen.

## **RTSA INDUSTRY AWARD**

The RTSA makes a number of regular awards amongst which is the biennial Industry Award. Most of the 2004 award presentations were made at the CORE gala dinner in Darwin. However, it was not possible for NRG Flinders, who were awarded at honourable mention in the Industry Award category, to have a representative at the Conference to receive the award and, as a result, the particular certificate was presented to David Tasker, GM of the Railway Division of John Holland who was the contractor for the specific project. Happily, Glen Rae of NRG Flinders was able to attend the SA Chapter general meeting that was held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August to receive the award officially from John Dring, Chairman of the Awards Committee.



John Dring presents Glen Rae of NRG Flinders with the honourable mention plaque (Steve Torok Photo Corp)

The project for which the award was made was the Leigh Creek to Port Augusta Rail Line Tie Renewal Project and it is described in the following citation: *Honourable mention is made of this project, undertaken by contract awarded to John Holland Rail Division and*

*comprising the replacement of some 38,000 timber sleepers over a route length of 250 km in a remote area of South Australia. Innovative engineering solutions, employment of local labour and the careful use of appropriate items of mechanical plant all contributed towards the successful completion of the project both on time and within budget.*

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT - SAFETY NET OR CIVIC PRIDE?**

This conference is being organised by People for Public Transport (PPT) and may be of interest for members Professor Stephen Hamnett, Professor of Regional and Urban Planning at the University of South Australia's School of Natural and Built Environments, will be keynote speaker at the *Public Transport - Safety Net or Civic Pride?* conference to be held at the Balyana Conference Centre, Strathcona Avenue Clapham, on Saturday 23 October.

Other speakers will include Dr Ian Radbone, from the UoSA's Transport Systems Centre, Paul Littlejohns, Office of Public Transport, Angela Hazebroek, Director of Urban and Regional Planning Solutions and Terina Edwards, Project Officer of Out 'N About.

Paul Littlejohns will be talking about giving passengers what they want, Angela Hazebroek about regional passenger transport and Terina Edwards about the role of public transport in isolated communities and in forming and maintaining social networks.

As with PPT's previous conferences at this venue, participants will be invited to travel to the Conference on the 8.55 a.m. Belair train from Adelaide, and return to Adelaide by train.

For further information write to People for Public Transport at 120 Wakefield Street Adelaide 5000, consult the website <http://www.ppt.asn.au>; email [secretary@ppt.asn.au](mailto:secretary@ppt.asn.au) or ring 8362 7007.

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## NOTICE TO MEMBERS RECEIVING RTSA NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

Members receiving this Newsletter by email should note that all Newsletters will be sent in a PDF format prepared using Adobe Acrobat Version 6. To ensure that the Newsletter is decoded correctly it is recommended that members update their copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader to Version 6.

Version 6 of Adobe Acrobat Reader may be downloaded free of charge from the internet at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

Alternatively, Adobe Acrobat Reader 6 is generally included on the CD ROM attached to most computer magazines.

## KEY RTSA CHAPTER COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Rob Schweiger	8238 3412	Chairman
George Erdos	8218 2209	Treasurer
Roger Wyatt	8344 6939	Secretary
Malcolm Menadue	8270 2873	N/L despatch
Max Michell	8390 3300	N/L Editor

Articles or editorial comment for Newsletter are very welcome. We have over 100 members locally some of whom will have stories, events or developments of interest that could be reported in Newsletter.

Part of the function of RTSA is to keep members in touch with what is going on in the industry and with each other and to that end we are only too happy to publish items of interest.

Send copy to the Editor, Max Michell at [samrom@bigpond.com](mailto:samrom@bigpond.com) or fax to 08 8390 3772

Electronic despatch of Newsletter is undertaken by Malcolm Menadue – contact Malcolm on [mmanadue@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mmanadue@ozemail.com.au) if you have any problems receiving Newsletter electronically or in hard copy. Note that electronic subscribers will get their Newsletters and flyers as soon as the editorial stuff is done, while the hard copy mail will of course be some days slower.

For all other matters relating to RTSA SA Chapter contact Roger Wyatt (the Hon Secretary) at e-mail [januseng@chariot.net.au](mailto:januseng@chariot.net.au) or on phone 8344 6939