

NEWSLETTER No 1/2003



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

JANUARY 2003

NEXT MEETING

OUR FIRST 2003 MEETING WILL BE A PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON STATE TRANSPORT PLANNING

On Thursday 6th February 2003 at the IEAust
premises, Bagot St, North Adelaide.

Starting at 17:30

Not only are the Feds doing a major shake up of transport planning (AusLink) but something similar is happening in our own state. After a quarter of a century of being interested in little more than roads, the transport function may well be about to embrace a broader land transport policy, hopefully including a rediscovery of rail. The government has set the wheels in motion and two of the involved people will tell us about the direction that the plan is taking at this meeting.

Derek Scrafton, former Director General of Transport, and now an occupant of a Professorial chair at the Transport Systems Centre at UniSA will introduce the topic, supported by Damien Walker (subject to confirmation) from the Transport Plan Team.

This presentation should be of considerable interest to members, since transport policy, in one form or another, will set the environment in which we hope to be gainfully employed. Derek is an experienced and entertaining raconteur, which virtually guarantees an interesting evening whatever the subject.

The usual finger foods and light drinks will be provided prior to the presentation, allowing time to catch up with compatriots and events since last year.

It is intended to hold meetings at monthly intervals during 2003, at least up until October. However due to an excess of Xmas cheer, an extremely rapid start to 2003, and some non work distractions the editor must beg forgiveness for not getting the details together in time for this

newsletter. Fear not, all will be revealed in the next newsletter in about a months time. In the mean time make a note of 6th Feb in your diary.

DARWIN RAILWAY

The rails met between Tennant Ck and Katherine on 13th December, marking a significant milestone. The two construction machines and trains can now inter-work, although they will basically remain working from their existing depots. The Katherine construction group will have a quiet time until about April, sitting out the northern wet season, while the Tennant creek group will be straight into it on the long section to Alice Springs after the holiday break. Most of the larger bridges are now nearing completion with the longest, over the Elizabeth River near Darwin now having all the structure in place.

As a matter of interest the editor in a moment of whimsy wondered where the construction would be if it was in more familiar surroundings. Assume for a moment that the line started in Melbourne, and headed through Adelaide. Construction started mid April 2002 and by year end had reached Tailem Bend. By the beginning of March it will be at Mile End, three months later at Stirling North, then by the beginning of September at Pimba and complete to Kultanaby by late October. That's really quite an achievement, even more impressive in the remote areas of the north. It is to be hoped that someone will document the story of the Darwin line construction, including the human side, before the details are lost.

AUSTRALIA IN THE BIG PICTURE

An interesting article in the December 2002 edition of Rail News Victoria placed Australian rail in a world context, with some quite interesting outcomes. Author David Wyers compiled the data from a number of reputable local and overseas sources.

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In route kms Oz is 6th after USA, Russia, China, India and Canada. In freight tonnes carried Oz is fourth (for which we must thank the Pilbara, Queensland and NSW) after China, USA, and Russia, while India is just below us in fifth place. In terms of freight tonne kms we drop to eighth after the above four plus Canada, Brazil and Ukraine. In fact the old USSR accounted for around half the world rail freight so it is no surprise to see some of the now independent states rating highly.

Passenger journeys are another matter - we are nineteenth after a swag of countries including some unlikely places such as Egypt, Mexico, and Argentina. Japan is the standout leader in this field with 22 billion passengers per year, well ahead of the next which is Russia at 5.7 bill. In terms of pax km we drop even further to 24th, highlighting the relative dominance of short haul urban services in this country. The leading nation is India, just ahead of Japan. This is no surprise when you consider that the lowest rail fare for long distance in India is often cheaper than a long distance phone call between the same two places.

Perhaps the most interesting outcome from this is that we have relatively high volumes, but short hauls. Could it by any chance be due to the inadequacy of the major long distance trunk routes in this country? Most of us who live on or near the eastern seaboard will probably feel some sympathy for such a view.

CORE 2004

This conference is planned for mid June 2004 and is to be in Darwin, only a matter of months after the railway is due to open. As is normal hardly has the dust settled from one conference than work begins on the next. Expect to get a 'Call for papers' any day now - given the different location and significance of the new rail connection, it might be a good time to consider what your proposed topic might be.

SNIPPET

Philip Laird has sent the following, perhaps to show that nothing really changes.

Letter dated **September 1975** from then NSW Minister for Transport Hon. Wal Fife MLA to Mr J Dingle (now a Member of the Sydney Chapter)

"Certainly attitudes towards railways have changed in recent years. While it has always been considered a reasonably cheap and efficient way of moving people and goods, it is only of late that its assets in helping to conserve valuable fuel resources and preventing unnecessary environmental deterioration have been realised. Perhaps we were a little tardy in appreciating the significance and extent of the contribution which rail transport can make to both the economy and the quality of life. The important thing however is, that now its potential has been recognised, every effort will be made to bring about the standard and quality of service which is needed. The regulating factor of course, as always, will be capital availability."

RTSA SA COMMITTEE

At the AGM Last November Rob Schweiger was elected Chairman while George Erdos has taken on the role of Treasurer as well as being Immediate Past Chairman. Ian Milroy has decided not to stand for the committee again due to the number of other commitments that he has. We would like to thank Ian for his contribution while part of the RTSA committee, and certainly expect to see his cheery face at our regular meetings. The 2003 committee members are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

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RTSA CHAPTER COMMITTEE

Rob Schweiger	8238 3412	Chairman
George Erdos	8218 2209	Treas./IPC
Roger Wyatt	8344 6939	Secretary
John Adams	8276 9658	
Duncan McLeod	8366 5212	
Malcolm Menadue	8270 2873	
Bill Edmonds	8356 0488	
John Dring	8294 0384	
Max Michell	8390 3300	

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Those of you who are members of I of E (i.e. are professional engineers) should be aware that attendance at RTSA meetings can be counted toward your CPD requirements. The most convenient way to record this will be in your professional diary or similar form. A short paper covering CPD in some detail is available from Malcolm Menadue or Max Michell.

NEWSLETTER DESPATCH

The majority of SA RTSA Chapter members receive their newsletter by e-mail. Every so often the e-mail will bounce (in effect the electronic equivalent of 'address unknown'). In these cases the member will automatically revert to hard copy mailing until a new e-mail address is advised. The main issue here is to let Malcolm Menadue know **IN ADVANCE** of any e-mail address change so that you don't fall on hard (copy) times. Please also advise if you would rather receive via e-mail instead of hardcopy post.

In all cases let Malcolm Menadue know at mmenadue@ozemail.com.au

Articles or editorial comment for Newsletter is always welcome.

Send copy to the Editor, Max Michell at samrom@bigpond.com or fax to 08 8390 3772