

NEWSLETTER No 4/2003



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

MAY 2003

NEXT MEETING

A JOINT MEETING HOSTED BY PWI

PACIFIC NATIONAL – A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE

Thursday 5th JUNE 2003 at the RIVIERA MOTEL
and FUNCTION CENTRE, 31-34 NORTH TCE,
ADELAIDE

Starting at 17:30

John Fullerton, General Manager Operation Support for Pacific National will be giving our joint PWI and RTSA June meeting an insight into the acquisition and development of Pacific National. PN is an amalgam of the former National Rail, FreightCorp, Patrick Rail and Toll Rail jointly owned by the Patrick and Toll freight corporations. PN is the first privatisation in this country which has involved purely indigenous buyers, and equally is the only one so far not to involve a known rail operator (Patrick and Toll were essentially rail brokers arranging hook and pull contracts for the operation of their trains). There were high expectations for the new company and now after a year of operation John will give us some idea what the view from the inside is like. John will describe the current situation in Pacific National and what is planned and predicted for the future.

In John's view the biggest thing has been the cultural change of the staff who worked for Pacific National's predecessors – most have gone from working for companies which had government shareholders which for the most part were disinterested in day-to-day operations to the new owners who not only are vitally interested but who are also playing a major part in the operation of the company. This has rejuvenated the enthusiasm which was there in the early days of National Rail but was probably never there for FreightCorp.

John will also discuss the gains in asset utilisation since the company was formed. This is particularly evident in the Inter-modal Division. In John's opinion we have for the first time a rail operator that is prepared to make "commercial" acquisitions for new equipment/ business rather than just replacing old worn out rollingstock.

John has worked for Commonwealth Railways (remember them?), Australian National including a stint in Tasmania with Neil Otway, National Rail and now Pacific National. John is the sole survivor to have been recruited to a managerial position in the formative years of National Rail still to work for the successor to that organisation.

PWI is the host for this joint meeting which will be held at the RIVIERA MOTEL and FUNCTION CENTRE at 31-34 North Terrace, Adelaide (toward the West Terrace end) starting at 17.30. As a courtesy to PWI, and to facilitate catering, prospective attendees are asked to advise Stephen Townsend on 8326 4601 during business hours or on e-mail TownsendSJ@onesteel.com on or before Tuesday 3rd June (two days prior to meeting).

FUTURE MEETINGS

A number of interesting topics are in the pipeline, with the most immediate (subject to final confirmation) being

Thur 3rd July: Ron Stewien talking on railways in South Australia

Thur 7th August: A presentation on the signal and control system of TransAdelaide.

WOT, NO EDITORIAL

The editor is, at the time of writing, lounging on a balcony with a view of 60 km of coastline keeping and eye on the sun, water, yachts, container ships, fishing boats and all the other things that go with beautiful one day etc. In the circumstances inspiration for an editorial has been rather pushed to the background. The editor will be reprogrammed in the near future and will be back in full flight next month.

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DARWIN PROGRESS

In just over a year 949 km out of 1420 km of the Darwin railway have been laid with the remainder due for completion by the end of October next. All ballast has been crushed, all clearing finished and virtually all embankment created. All bridges have been finished while only around 10 train loads of rail remained to be delivered as at the end of April. 1.66 million sleepers out of a total of 2 million have been manufactured. Employment numbers and machinery on site are starting to wind down as various stage of construction come to a conclusion. Train services are expected to begin early in 2004.

RTSA CHAPTER COMMITTEE

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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