

CONGESTION OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE, SUMMIT TOLD

The 2008 National Roads Summit held in Sydney in June focussed attention on some of the most pressing issues facing the roads industry and the community at large.

Welcoming participants to the Summit, Roads Australia President Ray Fisher said the conference theme of managing roads as a business required industry players not simply to benchmark performance, but to understand the role each played within a total system.

"Never was this more important," he said.

"There is increasing public debate around the key issues of accessibility, industry capacity, sustainability and infrastructure delivery. These take us well beyond simple advocacy in terms of building more roads.

"They are, in fact, symptomatic of a tidal shift in our national priorities. Within only the last six months, ministers have begun saying that the nation's greatest challenge is not the need to enhance the national estate by building new infrastructure. Simply building new infrastructure was yesterday's story. Australia is not about to be saved any time soon by building another Snowy River Scheme.

"Our greatest challenge as a nation – not just in roads – is congestion.

"Managing it may be the nation's single greatest expense for much of this century and it will fundamentally influence the nation's productivity and living standards."

Roads as a business

The Summit's Opening Address was delivered by NSW Roads Minister, Eric Roozendaal, who outlined his Government's budget commitments on road spending.

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A full house...the 2008 National Roads Summit brought together all the major players in Australia's road industry.

Keynote international speaker, Nazir Alli, CEO of the South African National Roads Agency, delivered a compelling address that expanded on the Summit theme.

In advocating the necessity to run roads as business, Mr Alli said the challenge for road authorities was to balance business outcomes with social outcomes and responsibilities, taking into account political parameters and the impact of emerging issues like sustainability.

One of the most important measures of success for road authorities was the creation of public value, he said.

Some of the issues and ideas raised by Mr Alli were taken up in subsequent Day One sessions that focussed specifically on the challenges of managing urban road congestion and addressing

sustainability. Both these sessions provoked much discussion and questions from participants.

Managing congestion

Dr James Luk, Chief Scientist, Transport Operations with ARRB Group, provided perspective on the issue with an overview of the tools currently at hand to manage congestion.

Dr Luk's presentation was followed by two presentations that focussed on the policy considerations at play – and the 'mechanics' – of London's congestion charge.

Philip Davies, Technical Director, Maunsell, provided an interesting perspective on the implementation of the scheme, including the management of public expectations. As the former Director of Traffic Operations with

ARF EVOLVES INTO ROADS AUSTRALIA

ARF members have voted overwhelmingly to change the organisation's name to Roads Australia.

The motion was moved and passed at an Extraordinary General Meeting, held in conjunction with the National Roads Summit in Sydney in June.

The new name better reflects the organisation's status as peak national body for road transport stakeholders.

"We have evolved from an effective networking body into an organisation that offers positive input on issues of critical industry and community interest," says Roads Australia Chief Executive, Ian Webb.

The new identity will be formally launched in the near future.

London Transport, Mr Davies was on-the-ground during the implementation phase of the charge.

Dr Cameron Munro, Transport Planner with Sinclair Knight Merz, gave a broader perspective on the evolution of the charge and its future implications for congestion management in the UK.

A sustainable future

The sustainability session included an address by Shell Bitumen's Global Technology President, Hugo Vits, who underlined the importance of business confronting and adopting to the challenges of climate change and broader sustainability issues.

Mr Vits gave examples of how Shell was harnessing technology to combat the impacts of climate change. One such example was decreasing the temperature in the production of asphalt to achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr Vits also posed some challenging questions about our technological capacity to reduce society's carbon footprint through such things as the exploration of bitumen alternatives, trapping the wasted mechanical energy of road users, and using the road itself to somehow capture pollutants or production by-products.

But he said there was no silver bullet solution, and underlined the importance of engaging with all stakeholders, from individuals to governments, to achieve a global effect.

Jo Moss, Senior Principal with Sinclair Knight Merz, delivered a presentation on how sustainability issues applied specifically to roads.

She canvassed a range of opportunities to embed sustainability into projects, with the aim of delivering road outcomes of enduring value.

She challenged the industry to think beyond project objectives and criteria that revolved around aspects that were predictable and measurable, and to consider outcomes and experiences in the broader terms of sustainability.

She stressed that embedding sustainability required thinking about it at every single stage of the project.

John Pitt, Managing Director of Pitt and Sherry, concluded the session with a presentation on the importance of leadership in achieving sustainable transport outcomes.

ARRB AND QUEENSLAND MAIN ROADS REPORT ON SUCCESS OF AGREEMENT

Roads Australia members Queensland Department of Main Roads and the ARRB Group used the occasion of the National Roads Summit to recognise the success of an historic agreement between the two organisations on research expertise and knowledge sharing.

The agreement was officially signed one year ago at the 2007 National Roads Summit.

The purpose of the agreement is to improve the specialist capability and capacity of the Queensland Department of Main Roads, Australia's busiest road authority, and ARRB Group, Australia's leading national transport research, consulting and technology provider, through a sustained collaborative program of challenging projects that deliver superior technology and road and transport solutions for the people of Queensland.

"The agreement was the first of its kind in Australia and is providing Main Roads access to the wealth of experience that ARRB experts have to offer," said ARRB Managing Director, Gerard Waldron.

Mr Pitt called for a new vision for a competitive Australian transport sector in the context of the transport task, energy security, climate change and sustainable development.

He believed substantive reform needed to be delivered at both the freight and personal mobility ends of the spectrum, with a greater focus on the connection between integrated land use and transport planning.

Mr Pitt said transport politics was very much a contest of entrenched interests, whereas what was needed was a contest of ideas. This required a fresh, cut-through leadership approach, he said.

Other sessions

Other sessions at the two-day National Roads Summit looked at project delivery, including market developments in PPPs and insurance, and the agenda for the Federal Government's new Infrastructure Australia (IA) body.

The IA session, chaired by Marko Misko of Clayton Utz, featured a presen-



A successful collaboration.... ARRB Managing Director, Gerard Waldron (left) with the Director-General of the Queensland Department of Main Roads, Alan Tesch.

Director-General of Main Roads, Alan Tesch, said he was delighted with the results achieved so far in providing appropriate road and transport solutions for the people of Queensland.

"Many of our projects have benefited from the expertise ARRB has provided in areas such as road safety; concrete, pavement and road surfacing technology; traffic engineering; asset management; and transport economics," Mr Tesch said.

tation by Carolyn McNally, Executive Director – Infrastructure Investment with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, who outlined the agenda for the new body.

State road authority heads and GMs also provided updates on their respective project planning and delivery agendas. Presenters included NSW RTA CEO, Les Wielinga; WA Commissioner of Main Roads, Menno Henneveld; Queensland Main Roads GM, Organisational Positioning and Stakeholder Management, Neil Doyle; Deputy Chief Executive of the SA Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, Rod Hook; and VicRoads Executive Director Major Projects, Bruce Gidley.

Gold sponsors of the 2008 ARF National Roads Summit were Shell Bitumen, Pitt & Sherry and ARRB Group, supported by silver sponsor Downer EDI Works and bronze sponsor Tenix. The John Shaw Medal Dinner was sponsored by John Holland.

RA MEMBERS MOVE INSIDE THE POLICY TENT

Roads Australia (RA) launched a major policy initiative at this year's National Roads Summit, inviting members to play an active role in national policy formulation on congestion, sustainability and capacity/resource levelling.

Three policy groups – or Chapters – have been established to work with all stakeholders on the development of policy in these key areas.

Each of the Chapters will run parallel with portfolio responsibilities assigned to state roads ministers under the new National Transport Plan. Each relevant road authority has agreed to participate in the RA policy chapters, and the National Transport Commission has also agreed to collaborate.

Roads Australia President, Ray Fisher, says the establishment of the Chapters represents an opportunity for the organisation to be integrally involved in the policy development process of governments, as opposed to being an industry advocate looking in from the outside.

“Our members not only represent the largest private sector players in the road industry, but state road authorities and their industry research partners.

“This initiative aims to draw together the wide experience and knowledge of all these players, providing objective, practical input to the policy solutions that will shape our nation's transport future.”

The policy Chapters will focus on:

- congestion – looking at the broad range of mechanisms to better manage urban congestion;
- capacity – addressing the industry skills shortage and how to better coordinate the planning, funding and delivery of major road infrastructure projects by governments and the private sector; and
- sustainability – examining how the industry as a whole can respond to emerging environmental challenges and resulting community expectations.

The Policy Chapters, each to be led by a Roads Australia Board member, will meet regularly in person or via video conferencing. They will develop issues papers for dissemination to policy makers and seek engagement in the policy process. They will also form networks with common areas of interest, including lunches and breakfasts with relevant policy makers and experts.

Interested RA member representatives have already come together at a policy workshop held in Sydney in July. The purpose of the workshop was to establish a vision for each policy area and to initiate a work program.

Any members interested in participating in the new Policy Chapters should contact our Policy Director, David Jarwood, email davidjarwood@roads.org.au or 0413 288 403.

SKILLS CRISIS MUST BE SOLVED, SAYS HOLMES A COURT

Guest speaker at this year's John Shaw Dinner, John Holland Group Chairman, Mrs Janet Holmes a Court, highlighted the skills crisis impacting on the Australian construction industry.

Mrs Holmes a Court described the critical labour shortage as the construction sector's greatest challenge.

“The promise of unprecedented opportunity for our industry is threatened by our ability to provide enough skilled resources to tackle the major infrastructure backlog that we face in our country,” she said.

“Our challenge is to work creatively as an industry, and with government, to uncover both existing and untapped resources in an increasingly tight labour market.”

Mrs Holmes a Court welcomed recent initiatives like the Federal Government's Skilling Australia and the focus on aligning training delivery with industry priorities.

“Our sector has been identified as one that would benefit greatly from additional training places at diploma and above levels,” she said.

“We must capitalise on this by strengthening ties with industry skills councils to connect employers to those new training places. Identifying our skill needs and matching those with nationally accredited training will be the key.”



Janet Holmes a Court....finding and keeping skills is our industry's greatest challenge.

COLIN JORDAN HONOURED WITH 2008 JOHN SHAW MEDAL

RACV Managing Director and CEO, Colin Jordan, is the recipient of the 2008 John Shaw Medal for services to Australian road transport.

Mr Jordan was presented with the prestigious Award at a glittering presentation dinner held as part of the National Roads Summit in Sydney in June.

Sponsored by John Holland, the Dinner was a sell-out event with some 220 attendees.

Announcing the Award, Roads Australia President, Ray Fisher, described Mr Jordan as someone who had demonstrated exceptional national and international leadership in road transport of lasting benefit to Australia.

“As Chief Executive of VicRoads from 1992 to 2001, Colin Jordan’s creativity and initiative was instrumental in visionary projects which fundamentally changed Victoria’s road infrastructure,” Mr Fisher said.

“These included the Western Ring Road, the Eastern Freeway Extension, grade separations of the Monash Freeway, and duplication of the Hume Highway to the border, to name a few.

“His leadership of the RACV has resulted in a host of initiatives that have reinvigorated motoring services to Victorians. These include the \$280m development of major new Club facilities in Melbourne and Healesville, improved road service entitlements to members, and enhancement of member benefits in a wide range of services.”

Mr Fisher also recognised Mr Jordan’s contribution to international road policy as current President of the World Road Association (PIARC), an organisation that comprises 111 member governments together with various regional authorities and individual members. In 2002, Mr Jordan achieved the distinction of being the first Australian ever elected to the Presidency of PIARC.

Accepting his Award, Mr Jordan said it was an honour to be named alongside previous recipients who had made such



2008 John Shaw Medal winner Colin Jordan (far right), with (from left) RA President, Ray Fisher; John Holland Group Chairman, Mrs Janet Holmes a Court; and Mrs Merrilyn Jordan.

significant contributions to the road industry and the wider community.

Mr Jordan said that in recent decades, Australia had led the world in terms of institutional change and development, and infrastructure delivery.

But the traditional model of road administrations around the world was changing from one that was focussed on the ‘hard’ engineering of roads to one that embraced the broader challenges of road transport use.

“Today, terms like mobility and access are the key drivers for the businesses we serve,” Mr Jordan said.

The challenge for the Australian road transport industry was to maintain its skills within this new framework. Given the recent history of change and innovation in Australia, Mr Jordan said he was very confident of the Australian roads sector adopting to the challenges of the future.



Hall of fame....Past and present John Shaw Medal winners (from left) Peter Balfe, Colin Jordan, Tom Wilmot and Neil Doyle.



Colin Jordan (centre) with (from left) RA President, Ray Fisher; Queensland Main Roads Director-General, Alan Tesch; Commissioner of Main Roads WA, Menno Henneveld; and CEO of the South African National Roads Agency, Nazir Alli.