

# FORUM PARTICIPANTS TOLD ARF IS FORGING AHEAD



AUSTRALIAN ROAD FORUM

ARF is set to sharpen its focus on advocacy and profile building in the wake of a members' survey.

The results of the independent survey, conducted in February, were referred to by ARF President, Ray Fisher, in his lunchtime address at ARF's March Forum in Sydney.

Sponsored by Sinclair Knight Merz, the event at the WatersEdge restaurant at Walsh Bay attracted well over 100 industry leaders and representatives from 55 organisations.

Mr Fisher told participants the recent membership survey indicated ARF members were broadly happy with the services and focus of the organisation, but would like to see it build its profile and play a stronger advocacy role.

The survey found:

- 80 per cent of respondents believed ARF was doing a great job in keeping them in touch with activities, and more than 60 per cent gave strong support to the Annual Conference and Forum meetings;
- members strongly supported the continued creation of opportunities to network with Government decision-makers and potential clients, as well being kept informed of industry activities and news;



Members of a Forum discussion panel... (from left) Jens-Uwe Holz, CEO of Satellic Traffic Management in Germany; Mark Crosdale from the TWU; Chris Koniditsiotis, CEO of Transport Certification Australia; and Derek Skinner from Queensland Main Roads.

- nearly 60 per cent of respondents wanted the ARF to play a stronger role in terms of policy advocacy and

public profile, and 83 per cent wanted the organisation to continue to focus its scope and membership on industry players of national significance.

The findings of the national survey were discussed at the ARF Board's meeting in Melbourne in March, and will be used to help determine and develop future services and activities.

## Mixed outlook

Participants at the March Forum were given a mixed assessment of road construction investment activity.

BIS Shrapnel Senior Economist Adrian Hart said while road construction activity had been strong in 2005/06 - largely on the back of private subdivisions and toll roads - private sector-funded construction was now moving into a downturn.

On the positive side, public sector spending in 2005/06 was back to its late 1990s peak and was projected to increase over the next two years.



Well over 100 participants from 55 organisations attended ARF's March Forum in Sydney.

Individual state outlooks varied widely, with NSW the weakest and Queensland and WA the strongest.

The picture for individual States was expanded on by the panel of road authority representatives, who gave their usual rundown of activity within their various jurisdictions. The panel participants were Commissioner of Main Roads Western Australia, Menno Henneveld; Chief Executive of SA's Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, Jim Hallion; QMR Acting General Manager (Major Projects), Derek Skinner; GM of Traffic and Transport Integration with VicRoads, Ted Vincent; and DOTARS Director, Simon Atkinson.

### Challenges ahead for road authorities

Wearing his hat as Chairman of Austroads, Mr Henneveld also provided an illuminating overview of the role and responsibilities of that particular organisation.

Mr Henneveld outlined the various challenges facing road authorities around the country, including road safety, traffic congestion, the freight task and the impact of changing demographics. He said Austroads members were working together on a strategic response to those challenges across areas like asset management, workforce capability, freight management, network optimisation, road safety, technology, and registration and licencing.

Richard van Velzen, from Aon Risk Services, gave Forum participants a comprehensive assessment of the particular risks and opportunities in alliance contracting, focussing on the development of specialised insurance products to address the unique characteristics of alliance contracts.

### Satellite-based tolling

The March Forum's international guest speaker was Jens-Uwe Holz, the CEO of Satellic Traffic Management in Germany and CEO of Gedas Germany GmbH - the international IT division of Volkswagen AG.

Mr Holz gave a fascinating presentation on the successful adoption of satellite-based tolling technology in Germany and its applicability to Australia.

The Toll Collect system in Germany covers some 13,000 kilometres of motorway and A roads and has proven itself to be a reliable, efficient, flexible and scalable solution that has billed the highest amount of kilometres driven of any tolling system over there, returning an average of 250 million Euros to the German treasury each month.

The suitability of a satellite-based tolling system for Australia was discussed during a lively panel discussion immediately following Mr Holz' presentation.

ARF's next Forum is to be held in Brisbane in November.

## ARF TO PARTICIPATE IN WORLD ROAD CONGRESS

ARF is looking for members to join the Australian delegation to the World Road Congress in Paris from 17 to 21 September this year.

ARF will have its own representation within the wider Australian delegation being co-ordinated by Austroads.

"This is a significant international event and it is anticipated that as many as 100 delegates will attend from Australia and New Zealand," says ARF Chief Executive, Ian Webb.

"A number of separate events are being organised for Australian

delegates and ARF is lending its full support to Austroads in its co-ordination role."

*For general information on the Congress, including registration details, visit [www.piarc.org/en](http://www.piarc.org/en), or contact Austroads on [austroads@austroads.com.au](mailto:austroads@austroads.com.au)*

*Any attending ARF member who would like to be identified as part of the ARF contingent within the Australian delegation should contact Ian Webb on ph. (03) 9821 5255 or [ianwebb@roads.org.au](mailto:ianwebb@roads.org.au)*

## EASTLINK SHINES FROM ON HIGH

ARF Board members were given a bird's eye view of progress on Melbourne's \$2.5 billion EastLink tollway project in March.

As part of an ARF planning workshop hosted by Southern and Eastern Integrated Transport Authority (SEITA), Board members took the opportunity to review the project from the air.

ARF CEO Ian Webb says the Board members were particularly impressed by the attitude and ethos of all parties involved in the project.

"EastLink is quite clearly an exemplary project in terms of the level of co-operation between the stakeholders, reflected in the excellent progress to date," he says.



A work in progress...the EastLink - Monash Freeway interchange.

# ARF MEMBER PROFILE

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# SINCLAIR KNIGHT MERZ



AUSTRALIAN ROAD FORUM

### Delivering Better Roads

Over the past 20 to 30 years, Australia's increasing population and wealth has resulted in increasing vehicle ownership which, together with greater urban congestion and road use, is outstripping new road capacity.

The unprecedented demand for door to door movement has given rise to the need to manage traffic in an affordable way to achieve environmentally and socially responsible outcomes.

At the same time governments and road agencies worldwide are facing real declines in road budgets when compared to the increase in road use as a result of a greater need to fund social infrastructure. Governments are now turning to different methods of delivery from the traditional road engineering procurement based on historical funding programs.

Leading project delivery organisation, Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM), is a key player in tackling issues associated with this challenging and evolving environment.

Since its establishment in 1964, the firm has been involved in the planning and delivery of roads, either in a traditional design, tender and construct role, as an Independent Verifier, Alliance Partner or participant in a Build, Own and Operate team.

Recent examples include the Westlink M7 project in Sydney, the award winning Craigieburn Bypass in Victoria and the Albury Wodonga Hume Freeway Project on the NSW-Victorian border.

The firm is also involved in conducting environmental studies associated with upgrades to the Pacific Highway along the NSW North Coast, along with the F3 to Sydney Orbital Study.

According to Tim Boyle, SKM's General Manager, Infrastructure, the new delivery methods open up tremendous opportunities for innovation.

"The current skill shortage is forcing governments to rethink the way in which they approach projects," Mr Boyle said.

"Delivery methods such as D&C, DBO, BOOT, and Alliancing all have their place in tackling the problem," he said.

"Importantly, price is no longer the key determinant for a successful outcome.

"Creative engineering design that takes into account the aspirations of all stakeholders, coupled with innovative financing, is resulting in much better projects, delivered much quicker than previously thought possible.

"The sustainable development of roads is also at the forefront of our minds when making decisions about particular routes.



Tim Boyle, General Manager, Infrastructure, SKM.

"The ownership and operation of roads and highways has also taken on a new business dimension, providing a vehicle for good investment, while meeting acceptable traffic, environmental and social standards.

"Everyone can be a winner," Mr Boyle added.

In the area of Alliancing, SKM has teamed up with Abigroup Contractors as one of two groups selected by the RTA to deliver new Hume Highway works in NSW.

The Hume Highway works are expected to be split into two projects, with one conducted by each of the successful Alliance teams.

# SINCLAIR KNIGHT MERZ

## Partners for Change

Should the project proceed under the Alliance arrangement, members of the RTA will join with personnel from SKM as engineering designers and Abigroup as construction contractor to form a new site team to deliver one section of the project together.

“Alliances are a relatively new delivery method, but they offer benefits for all stakeholders – including the public, who receive a high quality piece of infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective manner,” Mr Boyle said.

Another successful Alliance in which SKM has played a role is the \$217 million Boggo Road Busway project in Brisbane for the Queensland Department of Main Roads and Translink.

The Boggo Road Busway is being built under an Alliance with Thiess, SKM and Queensland Transport. SKM has been responsible for the planning and design components of the project, with Thiess constructing the busway.

The role played by the Independent Verifier on some of the more significant motorway projects has been largely unheralded.

SKM has undertaken this important task for a number of projects, such as the multi billion dollar Melbourne City Link and the Westlink M7 motorways, along with Melbourne’s Eastlink, the Gateway Upgrade Project in Brisbane and Transitways in Sydney.

The role of the Independent Verifier and Independent Certifier is to act on behalf of project owners and financiers to validate that contractual requirements are completed at each stage throughout the life of a project.

“Being a successful Independent Verifier requires astute judgement and, therefore, it is work that requires the hand of experienced senior practitioners,” Mr Boyle said.

Independent Verifier and Independent Certifier roles can be called upon for very large BOOT (Build-Own-Operate-Transfer) schemes, where one of the principal groups will manage the finished project for a specified period of time after completion.

The role is also used increasingly by the public sector on large projects as a more efficient and effective alternative to the traditional surveillance by an appointed Superintendent.

“We’re excited about the way in which the Australian roads market is evolving, and playing our role in successful outcomes for all stakeholders,” Mr Boyle said.



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**Like to find out MORE about ARF and its members?**

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