

ARF PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2005

Text of the Report delivered by ARF President, Ray Fisher, to the Annual General Meeting of the ARF in Sydney on 29 November.

This is the first President's Report to the membership of ARF since it has become the Australian Road Forum. Although this is our 53rd AGM, this meeting marks a new beginning for ARF.

The Creation of the Forum

Two years ago we set out to establish a national peak body for road transport in Australia. At that stage the industry was represented by a number of effective industry associations, but was unable to present a common voice. There were few opportunities for key players within the sector to network or discuss policy on a system-wide basis.

In March this year the Federal Minister for Roads launched the Australian Road Forum and acknowledged it as the new national peak body for road transport stakeholders.

Membership

This milestone has coincided with a significant increase in membership. At last year's AGM I reported that our membership had increased from 11 members to 24. This year I can report that it has grown from 24 to 40 at the time of writing this report.

The membership also represents a very diverse cross section of the industry. ARF's membership now embraces every significant sector of road transport.

Policy Development and Industry Representation

Consistent with ARF's new role, we were able to make a significantly enhanced policy contribution during the year.

Like to find out MORE about ARF?

- Visit our website – www.roads.org.au or
- Call the Executive Director, Ian Webb, on (03) 9821 5255.



ARF developed a defined set of policy priorities which make it clear that we stand for important principles which our members have in common. High on this list is the need for long term, transparent road planning and funding which is not obscured by politics. In terms of specific initiatives the recent Forum meeting identified skills shortages and the need for increased attention to maintenance as immediate policy priorities. ARF will pursue these further over the next year and our Vice President is in fact meeting with the Federal Minister for Transport tomorrow in relation to them.

During the year ARF participated in stakeholder discussions with DOTARS in relation to AusLink, and our Chief Executive met with the Secretary of DOTARS on several occasions to discuss industry issues. Meetings were also held with State Ministers. Our Chief Executive met with the Shadow Minister for Transport in Canberra earlier in the month. Last week, along with three other significant industry associations, ARF consulted with the NSW Premier's Department in relation to their current review of motorways management in NSW.

These policy discussions are in line with ARF's new role. At the same time

ARF does not seek to take the place of other industry associations which represent the interests of their members. ARF's role is to represent the ultimate interests which our members, including our industry association and government agency members, have in common.

Activities

A key purpose of the ARF is to provide quality networking activities and opportunities for exchange of information on topics relevant to the industry.

ARF expanded its industry lunches and workshops during the last year. Events were held in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. We are holding our first event in Perth next week.

838 industry members attended ARF events during 2004/5. They were drawn





from 138 different companies and industry associations - 48 more than last year. Our speakers included Federal and State Ministers, the heads of state and federal road authorities and leading industry policy makers and academics.

ARF held a very successful national summit in Brisbane in March. The highlight was the annual dinner at which the John Shaw medal was presented to joint winners Dick Wharton and John Oliver. We also recognized 50 years of continuous membership of ARF by Shell Australia. This is a remarkable achievement.

Our sponsor for the annual dinner was Queensland Main Roads. They have not only generously supported a significant number of ARF activities, but their General Manager, Strategic Policy and Development, Neil Doyle, continues to give tremendous support to ARF as Vice President.

The most significant new event during the year was the first meeting of the Forum in Sydney on 29 September. 63 companies, agencies and industry associations gathered for the first time for a one day state of the nation report. The speakers included our industry's most significant policy makers. In view of the great contribution which MIG has made to the formation of the new ARF, it was very appropriate that the first meeting of the Forum was sponsored by Macquarie.

The Forum meeting fulfilled our commitment to establish an across the board umbrella body for our industry. The next meeting of the Forum will be in Melbourne on 8 March next year.

International Activity

ARF continued to play an active role internationally. As ARF President I had the honour to continue to serve on the World Executive Board of the

International Road Federation. In June our Vice President Neil Doyle led a delegation of 20 ARF participants to the World Meeting of ARF in Bangkok. ARRB Group mounted an industry exhibit at the meeting and sponsored a reception for conference delegates.

Acknowledgements

I have already mentioned Neil Doyle. A number of other people should also be acknowledged.

Board Members gave generously of their time and industry knowledge. Ken Daley of Transurban stepped down as Vice President when he was posted to New York. John Dynan also steps down as Treasurer at today's meeting, having previously served as President. John has given great support to the ARF administration often on a daily basis. I would like to thank both Ken and John for the important part they have played in ARF's transition.

We are also grateful to our other industry colleagues on the Board, Michael Bresnahan, David Stuart-Watt and David Young. It is good to know that ARF will continue to have their contribution next year.

We thank the members who provided sponsorship to ARF events during 2004/5. These companies were ARRB Group, Boral, MIG, Queensland Main Roads, the Road Traffic Authority of NSW, Transport SA and Transurban. Abigroup are generously sponsoring today's lunch with Michael Taylor.

I would also like to acknowledge the chief executives of DOTARS and each of the state road authorities for the great support which they have given to ARF.

A number of important people have helped ARF behind the scenes. Rachael Rooney does a marvelous job in organizing our events. Our previous John Shaw medalists assist ARF in important and active ways. ARF receives generous help from Roads magazine who produce our reports to industry in each issue.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the significant contribution made by Ian Webb to the successful restructuring of the ARF and the dramatic increase in membership over the past year or so. The ARF is fortunate to have Ian Webb as its CEO at this time.



The Year Ahead

We have now effectively laid the foundations for an industry body of national significance. These include building a membership base commensurate with such a body, administrative resources to deliver the services which our members require, underpinned by appropriate budgetary support.

During the next 12 months we shall strengthen these foundations. However greater emphasis can now be given to delivering the policy and communication benefits which are the ultimate reasons for ARF's existence. We shall consolidate our Forum meetings as regular policy gatherings for industry's decision makers. We shall further develop our policy profile at industry level, building on the important work which has already begun this year.

These priorities are reflected in expanded key performance indicators for ARF. They are also evident in the growth of the Board and the establishment of a discrete Policy and Strategy Subcommittee of the Board.

This year seven members have nominated for service on the Board in addition to the President and we have had to amend the structure of the Board to accommodate their enthusiasm. Notwithstanding all of the positive developments which I have recorded in this report, there is none more pleasing than the endorsement which industry members themselves have given to ARF during the year. This makes it clear that industry shares our commitment to work together through a national body of this kind.

Ray Fisher

President

29 November 2005

MAIN ROADS TACKLES ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE DEMANDS UPFRONT

Queensland's Department of Main Roads is responding quickly to the State Government's unique infrastructure plan released in April.

The Department of Main Roads - and its portfolio partner, Queensland Transport - have started several of the \$35 billion in transport projects in the \$55 billion, 20-year plan for south east Queensland.

However the Department is also targeting regional areas throughout Queensland and has allocated its \$1.25 billion 2005/06 roadworks budget almost 50:50 between Queensland's south-east and regional Queensland.

Main Roads has many important projects progressing quickly through planning stages and has community engagement programs underway throughout the state.

The Department has new career opportunities as the infrastructure plan progresses and has begun a large staff recruiting drive nationally and internationally.

Gateway Upgrade Project, Brisbane

Three joint venture partnerships have been invited to tender for Queensland's largest infrastructure project and the largest road and bridge project in Queensland's history.

The three: Leighton Abigroup Joint Venture; Thiess Baulderstone Hornibrook Joint Venture; and Coastlink Consortium including Bouygues, Travaux Publics and McMahon



The Pacific Highway at Tugun.

Contractors, were chosen from five who registered interest in the project.

It is a \$1.6 billion project that is estimated to create 5000 to 6000 jobs over four to five years of design and construction. It will duplicate the Gateway Bridge and upgrade 20

kilometres of the Gateway Motorway along Brisbane's inner eastern fringe, near Brisbane's international airport.

It is funded by the state government, supported by tolls, and built by the private sector.

Linked to this project is the Airport Link proposed tunnel, for which the state government is providing \$16 million of the \$21 million towards the detailed feasibility study.

Airport Link is planned to run from the northern end of Brisbane City Council's North-South Bypass Tunnel to Gympie Road, Sandgate Road and the East West Arterial Road which runs through the northern suburbs to the Brisbane Airport.

Tugun Bypass, Gold Coast

This is a \$360 million project that is on track to begin construction in mid-2006.

The project aims to eliminate one of the most congested strips of the original Pacific Highway, along the Queensland coastal strip at Tugun.



The Gateway Bridge.

It is close to Queensland's most southern airport, Coolangatta and the proposed new bypass would provide easier access to this airport.

Duplication of the Houghton Highway to Redcliffe

In April the State Government announced it would spend \$149 million to duplicate the 2.7 kilometre Houghton Highway traffic bridge across to the Redcliffe Peninsula.

Surveys of the coastline and geotechnical studies of the seabed are underway for the new three-lane bridge.

Construction starts in 2007 and it is scheduled for completion by Christmas 2009, creating about 200 jobs.

Western corridor region - Centenary Highway, Springfield, Ipswich

Work is underway to extend the Centenary Highway from Springfield through to Ripley, then to Yamanto at Ipswich for \$270 million by 2009.

Main Roads will use the \$320 million announced by the Prime Minister for the Wacol to Darra section of the Ipswich Motorway to bring that section to six lanes, but will continue to press for further federal funding under Auslink.

Sunshine Coast region

The announcement to fast track the duplication of the Maroochy Bridge by 12 months enabled a re-combination of several important road projects for the Sunshine Coast.

The new three-lane Maroochy River bridge will be built first, allowing traffic from the existing bridge to move over. The existing bridge will then be widened.

People can use the bridge by late-2007, instead of 2008/09.

The \$110 million four-lane upgrade of the Sunshine Motorway will be



Bruce Highway.

completed at the same time as the bridge duplication.

Around \$35 million will be spent on a new interchange at Pacific Paradise, including a new connection road back to the David Low Way near the Sunshine Coast airport.

Choices for the upgrade of Bruce Highway around Gympie in the stretch from Cooroy in the south, to Curra in the north were released in October.

The Minister recently announced an extension of time for the first phase of the community consultation to allow the Gympie community to have their say.

Gold Coast region

Here, major roads projects include:

- the \$360 million Tugun Bypass project which is projected to ease congestion along the southern edge of the Gold Coast.
- Additional lanes on the Pacific Motorway from Nerang to Robina, including a new interchange at Mudgeeraba at the northern fringe of the Gold Coast.

- the \$38 million four-lane upgrade of Nerang-Broadbeach Road.

Key regional projects

Areas like Hervey Bay, Bundaberg, Townsville and Cairns are growing quickly and regional projects are on track to tackle traffic congestion.

- Townsville Ring Road
- Opened stage one - the Douglas Arterial Road - in April 2005. The completed project will be the future national highway link through Townsville and Thuringowa.
- Bundaberg Ring Road
- There is \$42 million for a 14.4 km ring road to better direct traffic around the fast growing areas of Bundaberg by mid-2009.
- Mackay region projects
- Mackay Hospital Bridge - \$24m over four years to replace the city's Hospital Bridge.
- \$50m over four years to upgrade the old, two-lane Forgan Bridge
- Charleville, Central and Western Queensland
- \$40 million to replace 5 timber bridges and rehabilitate 71 km of the Dawson Highway, and \$26 million for the Yepoon Western Bypass.
- North Queensland
- \$3.5 million to widen and seal 11.5 km of the Flinders Highway between Julia Creek and Cloncurry
- Improve freight access between the Gulf of Carpentaria and Townsville's port with the final sealing of 25km of Hervey's Range Developmental Road.



Artist's impression of bridge duplication.