

MAY 2018

VicRoads Association

Newsletter No 203



Membership of the Association is available to all who have been members of VicRoads or forerunner organisations or the spouse of deceased members and bestows on them all the rights of the Rules of Association. Current cost of membership is a once only fee of \$30 plus a joining fee of \$5. Enquiries about membership or receipt of the Newsletter by e-mail should be directed to the Secretary at 60 Denmark Street Kew 3101 or by phone or e-mail as shown in the footer below. An application for membership of the Association can be found at the end of the Newsletter.

Dear Members,

I have had many encouraging messages about writing my family history and memoirs and I want to thank you for this encouragement. I have found it enlightening. Thinking of my past has been revealing to me. It has made me question why things are so and how happenstance, place, people, coincidence and ignorance all contributed to my destiny.

For example, it made me really ponder about attending high school and this is part of what I wrote.

'What did this education give me? It probably filled my head with facts and figures which mean little to me now. I doubt that I could solve a quadratic equation and I wouldn't know a past participle from a preposition. It did give me the pathway to make the break from my beloved parents and home and all the security I knew as a child and youth. I enjoyed school mainly because of the people I met and befriended there although most of these relationships disappeared as soon as I left. But Colac High School was a cross-section of society and I think I learnt a lot about other people and what made them tick.

I now see formal schooling as a process of indoctrination. What we are taught—other than perhaps in science—is current opinion or thoughts laid down by the prejudices and morals of previous generations. The curricula are influenced by aspects such as political ideologies, the law, class groupings, income, ethnicity and even literature from earlier times. Education now is very much influenced by what are called the culture wars—where the curriculum is determined by older men and women having the conservative values of their education and culture. But as our culture changes so too will our education evolve but it will always lag behind current mores and values.

Teachers also play an unwitting part in this. The curricula they teach and their experiences from their own upbringing—as is mine and everyone else's—has been founded on a regime of thought established by earlier generations. A child receiving education in a poorer country, in a different political climate, in a different religious setting, or in a different ethnic culture will undergo a different education experience resulting in different outcomes.

Educational outcomes depend more on your family than on the school you attend and for this I have to thank my parents for their support and encouragement. It is mainly what you are born into and not necessarily how hard you work. Hard work alone is not enough, nor is talent. In fact I think the most important trait for learning is persistence and learning from mistakes.

Of course I did not realise this at the time I attended high school and I would never have been confident or independent enough to have left the system to find out for myself. I suppose I am trying to say that school encourages conformism and I became a good conformist. I wore the uniform and generally respected the Monday morning chant of obeying my parents, teachers and the law. To top all this off I even saluted the flag but I didn't really know why. None of this is meant as a criticism as we all share this experience. I don't know of a system of education that is not a system of indoctrination. But I think it is important to think about it and remember that education is moulding us to fit with our particular society—and that we shouldn't fear to find ways of educating ourselves based on our own convictions and judgements.'

Which leads me to introduce the notion of 'change'. You will see in this newsletter that a lot of change is in the air especially in the structural organization of VicRoads. By the end of this year, VicRoads will be a significantly different organization to its predecessors and to the original VicRoads.

While some may lament these new arrangements, I believe that changes must happen in a continuum, because our world is changing at such a rapid rate. If all the major road projects such as the North East Link, the removal of level crossings, the West Gate Tunnel project, as well as major road upgrades, retrofitting technology and road maintenance were to be the responsibility of one authority, then that authority would have to be so enormous as to be unwieldy. And I have not included road safety and registration and licensing as part of that authority.

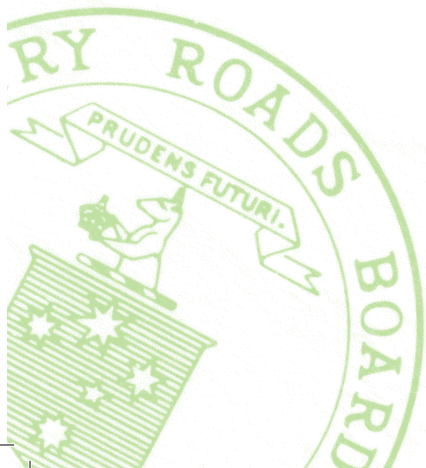
As you will see later on, Melbourne is growing at the rate of a Ballarat plus a Colac every year and we will soon hit the 5 million mark and surpass Sydney soon. So the demand for transport is growing at a rate never anticipated before.

David Jellie
Editor

President and Editor: David Jellie Tel. 9077 1136, Mob. 0418 105 276, email pdjellie@hotmail.com
Secretary: Jim Webber Tel. 9817 4182, Mob. 0412 064 527, e-mail jimwebber@optusnet.com.au

Dates for your diary

DATE	TIME	EVENT	
June	Monday 4	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Monday 18	9.45am	Visit to Melbourne Metro Rail Project
July	Monday 30	2.00 pm	Visit to VicRoads R & L, Traffic Centr, Intelligent Eng.
August	Monday 13	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
September	12 and 13	TBA	Visit to Bendigo Regional office and attractions
October	Monday 8	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Thursday 11	6.00 pm	Drinks and dinner at Waverley RSL
	Monday 29	TBA	Visit yet to be decided
November	Monday 26	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
December	Monday 3	12 noon	Christmas luncheon
2019			
February	Monday 11	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown
	Friday 22	TBA	Golf Day at Green Acres Golf Club



What's coming up

Occasional Lunches – Shoppingtown Hotel – Monday 4th June 2018 and Monday 13th August 2018

Bookings are not essential, but it would help with arrangements if you can let Kelvin York know on 9438 1028 if you can attend. We hope to see you there.

Visit to Melbourne Metro Rail Project – Monday 18 June

Please note this change to our program. We originally proposed to visit the Office of Projects on this date but they are still in the process of establishment and so we have deferred that meeting – probably until next year. However the Melbourne Metro Rail Project has kindly agreed to us bring forward the appointment we had originally scheduled to visit them in October.

We propose to meet in the foyer of the Authority at 121 Exhibition Street at 9.45 am. Please contact Jim Webber before 11th June if you propose to come – so that he can arrange security passes to enter the office.

Works are underway at the locations of the new stations and the tunnel entrances at Kensington, North Melbourne, Parkville, the Melbourne CBD, the Domain precinct and South Yarra.

Excavation work in City Square

The proposed presentation on this visit will concentrate on the construction of the tunnels. To keep Swanston Street open while the Metro Tunnel is built, access shafts up to 11 storeys deep are being dug adjacent to Swanston Street at City Square and behind Young and Jackson Hotel where the station entrances will be. These shafts will be used to transport machinery, equipment and workers underground to excavate and line the station caverns below the surface of Swanston Street.

This construction approach reduces disruption at surface level and is used on tunnel projects overseas, particularly in constrained city environments. Building the CBD stations this way means trams will continue to travel along Swanston Street during construction and above ground disruption is greatly reduced.

The State Library and Town Hall stations will be built as 'trinocular' caverns. Three overlapping tunnels will be mined by road headers to create a wide open space that allows the concourse and platforms to be integrated on a single level. The result is a spacious station cavern with vaulted ceilings, rather than two separate tunnels separated by a cross passage. The total platform width at the CBD stations will be around 19 metres – some of the widest underground metro platforms in the world.

This construction technique is uniquely suited to the CBD's highly variable geological conditions.

The new North Melbourne, Parkville and Anzac stations and the entrances to the tunnels will be built using a construction technique known as cut and cover. This type of construction involves using excavation equipment to dig a large trench or rectangular hole in the ground, which is then covered by a concrete deck. Once the deck is in place, surface activity can resume as construction works continue below.

Concrete panels are then used to form the various levels and internal structures, similar to the construction of the underground basements of high rise buildings.

The Metro Tunnel will travel under the Yarra River, which has a depth of up to four metres at this location. The top of the twin tunnels will be around seven metres below the riverbed, east of the Princes Bridge.

To minimise impacts at the Yarra River and surrounding areas, tunnelling with Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs) will be used for this section of the project. TBMs perform two main tasks:

- Excavating rock and soil with a rotating cutter head at the front of the machine before it is transported via a conveyor belt or pipes running through and behind the TBM.
- Progressively lining the tunnels with pre-cast concrete segments from within the TBM to support the ground and minimise groundwater seepage into the tunnel.

The Metro Tunnel can work more than 40 metres underground and will operate on a 24/7 basis.

Visit to VicRoads R & L, Traffic Centre and Intelligent Engineering Technology – Monday 30 July.

We will be visiting three areas at VicRoads in Kew as follows:

- 2pm - 3pm Intelligent Engineering Technology - John Gaffney, Manager Network Optimisation & Con Stasinis Director, Network Design Services (in Theatre)
- 3pm - 3:30pm Traffic Management Centre Keith Weegberg Manager Real Time Operations, Journey Services (in TMC)
- 3:30 - 4pm Registration & Licensing David Shelton, Executive Director, Registration & Licensing (in Theatre)

It will also be possible to have lunch at the cafeteria beforehand at your own cost. For those of you who would like this I suggest we meet in the foyer at 1.00 pm and go up as a group. We will send an email message to members as a reminder.



Photo: Excavation work in City Square, Melbourne CBD

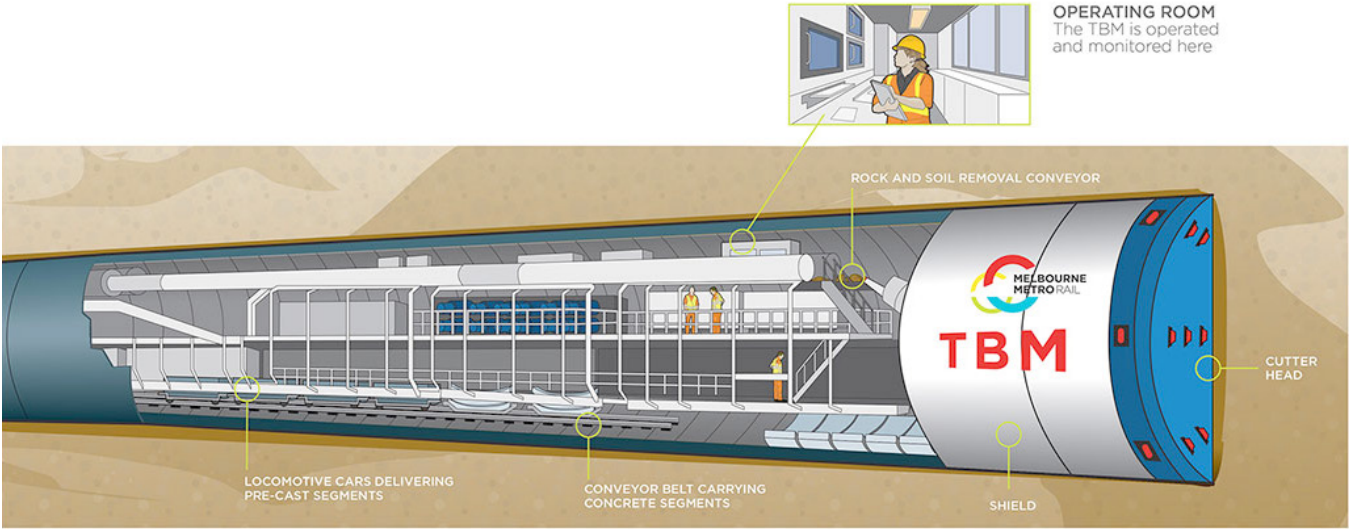


Photo: Diagram of Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs)

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Annual General Meeting – 19 March

Some of the highlights from the Annual Report include:

- This was the 39th Annual Report
- Our membership continues to grow. In 2016 we had 278 members and at the end of 2017 we had 291
- Over 20 per cent of our members attended at least one of our events
- We had six excursions to VicRoads projects or other infrastructure projects, six luncheons at Doncaster and two dinners at Glen Waverley
- Roy Gilmour is our new golf champion
- 50 people attended the Christmas lunch at Head Office
- Six newsletters were issued
- Doug Thompson was re-elected as our auditor
- Our fees remain unaltered for the coming year

Edgar Bartrop did not stand for re-election this year and I would like to extend our appreciation to him for his loyal service to the Association. Thank you Edgar on behalf of all of us.

John Wright was elected to the committee unopposed. I would like to welcome John. He has promised to continue to contribute to the newsletter his wonderful stories that so many enjoy.

I also expressed our appreciation to VicRoads for their generosity and support – especially in the production and delivery of our newsletters.

Visit to the North East Link Project – 26th March 2018

33 members and friends attended this excursion. We were welcomed by Kim Jordan, Manager of Community and Business Engagement For North East Link Authority. She introduced the panel of speakers who were:

- Katie Watt: Director Land, Planning & Environment
- Bill Sibahi: Engineer and NELA senior project manager
- Michael Wickerson: Engineer and NELA project manager
- Noel Treacy: NELA Manager Planning
- Frances Wickerson: Communication and stakeholder team
- Tony Frodsham: Traffic & transport specialist

Option A of the four shown in the diagrams below has been selected as the preferred option.



Key points of their presentation were:

- Design work is underway for North East Link – the single biggest transport infrastructure investment in Victoria’s history.
- North East Link will finally build the missing link in Melbourne’s freeway network while increasing the capacity of the Eastern Freeway.
- It will slash travel times, remove trucks from local roads and link key growth areas in the north and south-east.

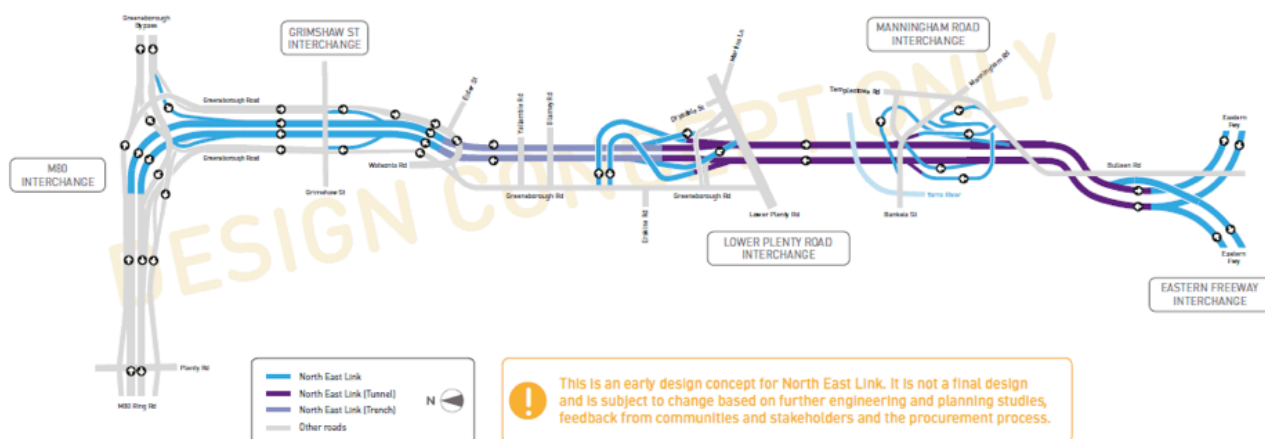
North East Link will deliver three major projects in one:

- North East Link: Completing the ring road between the Eastern Freeway and the M80 Ring Road, connecting the growing northern and south-eastern suburbs
- Eastern Freeway upgrades: Overhauling the Eastern Freeway with new lanes and new technology for up to 40% faster trips
- Doncaster Busway: Launching a new Doncaster Busway with dedicated express bus lanes along the Eastern Freeway from Doncaster towards the city

Preliminary design has commenced on North East Link and the project group working on the specialist studies required for planning approvals.

The speakers emphasised that details are not finalised but to give readers an appreciation of the project I have downloaded the following details for the website.

The North East Link will provide an express connection between the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway thus eliminating 18 sets of traffic lights. Interchanges will be located at the M80 Ring Road, Grimshaw Street, Lower Plenty Road, Manningham Road and the Eastern Freeway. This is shown schematically below.



An artist's impression of the M80 interchange is shown below.



Following the presentation there was a lively discussion about the project. The issues raised included:

1. Delivery mechanisms
2. The problems of pedestrians and cyclists having to share paths
3. Concerns that strategic issues (trucks in particular) may be over-ridden by local considerations
4. Economic return of project, where are tolls applied, is the future East- West connection being taken into account?
5. What is meant by 'new' noise attenuation measures?
6. What traffic model is being used?
7. Are the interchange locations locked in?
8. Safety issues on the proposed additional lanes on the Eastern Freeway.
9. What proportion of NEL traffic will head west along the Eastern Freeway?
10. Have east bound ramps at Burke Rd been considered?
11. Will the Mullum Mullum tunnels be a constraint on Eastern Freeway traffic?
12. What provisions have been given to pedestrians?
13. Has the extension of the North Balwyn tram to Shoppingtown been considered?



North East Link is just one of a range of big transport projects in Melbourne’s north east. Altogether there are nine level crossing removal projects as well as projects for improving train and bus services and upgrading local roads. These are shown on the map below.



5th Annual Golf Day, Green Acres Golf Club – 16 March

Roy Gilmour (38 points) won the Association trophy. Howard Hughes (33) was second and Jim Webber (31) third. We have had a different winner every year. Previous winners were Ken Vickery 2014, Jim Webber 2015, John Ford 2016 and Rob Gilpin 2017. The winning Green Acres member (12 golf balls) was Chris Kelly (40), followed by Lance Rimes (34) and Vic West (32).



Photo: Jim Webber (left) presenting the cup to Roy Gilmour

NEWS FROM VICROADS

Statement by the Acting Chief Executive of VicRoads, Kerry Thompson

The Acting Chief Executive of VicRoads, Kerry Thompson sent the following note out to staff on 26 April 2018.

'There are some important changes occurring at VicRoads and within the broader Victorian transport sector that I am sharing with you today.

The first is that a new division within VicRoads will be developed – Regional Roads Victoria (RRV). Headquartered in Ballarat and led by a Chief Regional Roads Officer who will report to the VicRoads Chief Executive, RRV will be established from September 1. The establishment of RRV will mean that staff in our five country regions and the Safe System Road Infrastructure Program (SSRIP) program will operate within RRV.

RRV will bring the 2017 Country Roads Strategy to life and prioritise the delivery of an unprecedented investment in road maintenance and safety upgrade and improvements. RRV will work to plan, maintain and advocate for the regional road network in both the short and long term with a clear focus on safety, maintenance, freight, tourism and economic prosperity.

The second important change is that in an effort to bring increased consistency and coordination into the transport sector here in Victoria, the delivery of all major road projects will be moved from VicRoads to the Office of the Coordinator General (OCG). OCG and VicRoads are working towards this occurring on July 1.

The new authority will be set-up in a similar way to the other authorities within OCG.

As part of the Major Projects Division (MPD) transition to OCG, the MPD projects, their respective staff and contracts will move over to OCG. This includes MPD focused staff within Public Engagement.

Other areas that provide significant services and support to Major Projects may also be impacted. We will work to identify other impacted roles in VicRoads in consultation with key stakeholders and staff.

For staff that move with the projects, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is committed to making the transition as smooth as possible, with as little disruption to your working arrangements as possible. Both we and the OCG want the projects you are currently working on to succeed as much as you do, which means letting you get on with the work.

This move will feel significant for many of us. Major projects have been an integral part of VicRoads and its predecessor organisations for over 100 years. We have a proud history of building roads and this is a big shift. Many of our Major Projects people have been VicRoads employees for many years, some for decades. While there is likely to be some sadness (both for those who transfer and for the rest of us), the opportunities and benefits of our Major Projects Division being part of OCG are significant both for our

projects and our people. For staff staying at VicRoads, there will be an adjustment for us to make in the way we work, how we interact with major projects and how we support their delivery.

Both these changes will help VicRoads clarify and focus on where we add value to the Victorian public, and provides us with the opportunity to clearly articulate the mandate for our organisation in the future:

1. Operating and maintaining a high performing metro, suburban and country road network with a view to the future; a larger population and advanced technology, with a focus on better use of our network and managing disruption.
2. To significantly increase our commitment and service to Country Victoria, drawing upon our deep knowledge of assets, and close community and stakeholder relationships.
3. To build the relationship we have with Victorians through our registration and licensing division.

With the establishment of RRV and the transfer of all Major Projects to OCG, ELT will also be undertaking significant work with our teams in journey services, two metro regions and investment and design services about how we maximise our value in the metro and suburban areas.

Our next steps are to work with our people to make these changes happen in a way that supports the intended benefits of these changes; that supports our people impacted by the change, and also to position ourselves to really deliver around our core and critical roles. We will be working with leaders and teams to assist us in understanding how we best do this, and position and leverage the considerable expertise and talent we have.

We will keep you informed of the process moving forward and we will be looking to hold an all VicRoads staff briefing via Go To Meeting. We will provide these details to you as soon as they become available.'



Press Statement issued by the State Government

On the same day, the State Government issued the following press statement (minus the political content).

The biggest road maintenance blitz Victoria has ever seen will fix hundreds of regional roads, giving drivers safer, faster and more reliable journeys.

The Victorian Budget 2018/19 allocates \$941 million to get on with the job of fixing Victoria's regional road network, saving lives and establishing a dedicated country roads body.

Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) will be a new division of VicRoads, based in Ballarat, with staff in regional centres across the state – giving regional Victorians the roads they can rely on.



Led by a Chief Regional Roads Officer, RRV will oversee a \$333 million boost to road maintenance, with more than 1,000 kilometres of roads to be repaired, resurfaced or rebuilt across the state.

In addition to the record maintenance spend, a \$100 million Fixing Country Roads fund will be established to provide grants to rural and regional councils to fix their local roads.

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing to invest in road safety, with a further \$229 million to save lives on Victoria's most high-risk roads through the Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan, with more new overtaking lanes, rumble strips and intersection upgrades.

The Budget also includes \$98 million for planning and pre-construction of new bypasses on the Western Highway at Beaufort and Ararat, as well as \$40 million to upgrade the Princes Highway West between Colac and the South Australian border.

Key sections of the Calder Highway, Hamilton Highway and the Kiewa Valley Highway will be upgraded to improve safety, travel times and freight productivity.

Ballarat's iconic Sturt Street will get a series of intersection upgrades between Pleasant Street and Dyson Drive to reduce congestion and make it safer to access schools, shops and sports grounds.

A new roundabout will be constructed on the Shepparton Alternate Route to improve safety and access for heavy vehicles, part of a \$20 million investment to cater for future growth.

Message to VicRoads Staff from Coordinator General Corey Hannett about the establishment of the new Roads Authority.

Hi everyone

Further to my email last week regarding the creation of Rail Projects Victoria, the State Government made further announcements over the weekend that will significantly add to the size and complexity of the project delivery work that falls under the Office of the Coordinator General (OCG).

In an effort to bring a more integrated approach to project delivery across the broader transport portfolio, the Government has announced that it will create a new Administrative Office under OCG - the Major Road Projects Authority.

As part of the creation of the Major Road Projects Authority, the delivery of major road projects currently being delivered by the Major Projects Division of VicRoads will be transferred to the new Authority. This will include the transfer of staff from the Major Projects Division and other support staff from VicRoads into the new Authority.

The two new packages of outer suburban roads unveiled yesterday by the Government as part of the State Budget will also be procured and delivered by the new Authority,

in addition to the western outer suburban package of roads already contracted.

This is a major change both for the VicRoads project staff who will transfer into the new Authority, and for the operation of the Office of the Coordinator General.

There are many benefits to consolidating the delivery of major transport projects under the Office of the Coordinator General, especially in a time of such unprecedented construction. The new approach will lead to:

- better coordination of planning and procurement;
- better management and utilisation of our internal resources;
- better and more coordinated engagement with our contractors;
- ability to better map and plan for current and future skills shortages affecting the industry, and;
- providing a consistent approach to disruption management and community engagement

VicRoads will continue to have a central role in the Victorian transport network through operating and maintaining a high performing metro, suburban and country road network, its critical registration and licensing functions, and assisting Transport for Victoria with road system planning.

OCG and all of the Authorities will need to continue to have a strong and cooperative relationship with VicRoads as a key partner in the delivery of our program of works.

It is important to note that the new Authority is separate to, and does not have any impact on, the North East Link Authority (planning, procurement and delivery of the North East Link) and the Western Distributor Authority (delivery of the West Gate Tunnel Project).

Over the next few months OCG will work closely with VicRoads and Transport for Victoria on a transition plan to make the change for staff as smooth as possible, and it is expected the Major Road Projects Authority will formally begin operations on 1 July.

With five Authorities soon to be operating under the OCG, and demand for specialist staff across all disciplines at an all time high, I will continue to work closely with my staff and the Authority CEOs to evaluate how we best make use of our resources to help us succeed in this very exciting but challenging environment.

VALE

It is my sad duty to announce the death of the following members.

Robin Underwood



Robin at the Exhibition Building office circa 1960

Robin died on 16 March 2018. I visited him a couple of times prior to his death with Peter Lowe, Ted Barton and Jim Webber. Although Robin was gravely ill he was still submitting articles to me on road safety and traffic management issues for publication in the newsletter and during these last few visits he was passionately discussing these topics. After his death, his daughters Cathy and Jenny asked if I would deliver a eulogy to Robin and, with their considerable assistance, this is what I wrote.

‘Throughout Robin’s life he demonstrated a respect for history and had a keen interest in looking to the future. Even in the last few months of his life, as difficult as they were, he was still discussing and speculating with his daughters, Cathy and Jenny, and the many visitors who came to see him, about the future of transport – the impact of driverless vehicles, the potential for drone technology combined with automation to fundamentally change our transport infrastructure and whether freeways might one day be transformed into green corridors of parkland. And much closer to home and most dear to Robin’s heart, he was planning for his wife Dorothy’s future, and caring for her. Robin was also keenly interested in and proud of his daughter’s successful careers. Robin was a quiet mentor to his daughters instilling many of his work values and qualities.

Over Robin’s career he published five books and over 100 technical papers on various aspects of road and traffic planning, design and operations, and road safety. But it is Robin’s personal account of his early upbringing that perhaps best reveals who he was.

Robin was born at Lismore, Victoria on 27 December 1929, the first of four children of parents Tom and May Underwood. His father was Australian born and worked as a general farm worker. Robin’s mother, from Swansea

in Wales, came to Australia with two friends as assisted migrants. They met and married while Tom was working on Naringal, a large sheep station at Wallinduc, about 30 km south-west of Ballarat.

In those early years of the 1930s Robin considered his family lucky – his father had paid work, which many did not. It was the great Depression. There was no electricity or gas, and no telephone. There was no water supply or sewerage. All the water for household use came from the outside tanks via a bucket. They grew their own vegetables and fruit, raised chickens and had a cow for milk. As luxuries go they had a Coolgardie safe for refrigeration and a crystal radio set. In Robin’s words “while we were very poor, we were healthy, and our needs were not great ... I think we were quite satisfied with our lot”. This optimistic attitude stayed with him throughout life.



In 1936, at the age of six, he started school at Cape Clear. Every Sunday evening he would go off with the Wallinduc postman in a one horse sulky, to board during the week and return home each Friday afternoon after school. School was a one-teacher school with about twelve students spread over eight grades, with all the students taught in the one room.

His family shifted to Buckley near Winchelsea and in Robin’s last year of primary school, at Buckley State School, his teacher Mr. Rohan suggested he sit for a junior scholarship for study at Geelong High School. His parents agreed, somewhat to the amazement of the locals. It had been expected that Robin would leave school at 14 to start work as a labourer on the land. As Robin’s youngest brother Graham once recalled: ‘I always marvel at our good fortune that you went on to High School. Had you not, almost certainly none of the rest of the family would have gone on to higher education, and our lives would have taken quite different trajectories!’

While being very studious, Robin was an avid Sherlock Holmes reader, played chess, and followed Geelong in the footy. He was also a cagey tennis player, particularly in the use of the volley and had the knack of running everyone around a tennis court without seemingly moving his feet. In 1950 at Buckley, Robin played against Neil Fraser – the long time Australian Davis Cup Captain.

There must have been something in the air at Buckley, because Robin travelled to high school in Geelong by bus and along the way they picked up two other students who were destined, along with Robin, to become engineers at the CRB – Leo Russell and Ron Angus. But for some people there was an even more exalted student and that was Ken Hands who became the captain of Carlton Football Club.

So how did Robin discover engineering? Robin knew of no one who was an engineer. However there were two influences. During his time as Geelong High School he began reading a series of magazines on the ‘Wonders of World Engineering’ in the school library and near the end



of that year at High school the question arose of 'what next?' Scholarships for study in electrical and mechanical engineering at the Gordon Institute of Technology in Geelong were advertised. Robin applied for and was successful in being awarded the Australian Cement Ltd scholarship for study in the course for the Diploma in Electrical Engineering with the prospect of employment once it was completed. Dorothy often wondered how much practical work was involved in his short-lived career in electrical engineering, as there was little to no application of it in the family home!

The turning point for Robin was in November 1950 when he started work as a cadet engineer at the Shire of Winchelsea. He undertook a part-time Diploma in Civil Engineering, and obtained a position as Chainman (shortly after up-graded to Overseer) with the Country Roads Board (CRB) on the construction of Avalon Airfield. A year later he was offered a position on the engineering staff of the CRB. Here he was introduced to the then newly developing field of traffic engineering under the guidance of H P George and to road traffic behaviour studies. This was to become a lifelong passion, extending almost 35 years. Robin made an enormous contribution to traffic engineering through his service with the Country Roads Board and its successors as well as in his later career at Monash University.

Robin was a highly credentialed traffic engineer. He held the degrees of Doctor of Engineering (1991), Master of Engineering and Bachelor of Civil Engineering, Diploma of Town and Regional Planning all from the University of Melbourne, and a Certificate of Highway Traffic from Yale University.

He first became directly involved in road capacity studies in the 1950s and maintained a close interest in the subject ever since. He represented Australia on the PIARC (World Road Association) Technical Committee on Urban Areas.

In recognition of his work in 1988 he was awarded the John Shaw Award by the Australian Road Federation for a meritorious contribution to roads, and in 1989 the Webb Prize awarded by the Institution of Civil Engineers (UK).

In his career at the Country Roads Board and later the Road Construction Authority he held many distinguished positions including the Traffic and Location Engineer and the Chief Planning Engineer. After the establishment of the RCA he was appointed Director of Technical Resources, a Director of the Board and later the Acting Chief Executive Officer. Robin was always amused at the notion of him starting his career as a chainman and ending it as a Chairman – a spelling difference of only one letter.

Robin resigned from the RCA in 1996 to take up the position of Associate Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, at Monash University. In this role he was a great mentor and teacher and his books became standard texts for roads and traffic engineering in Australia.

He also continued to be actively involved in professional society activities – mainly the Institution of Engineers, the Planning Institute of Australia and the Institute of Transportation Engineers. He taught distance education courses in municipal and environmental engineering at Deakin University. And he continued writing particularly on road safety. There were many letters to the Age and Herald Sun, and indeed he has a piece in the current VicRoad Association Newsletter.

Parallel to Robin's career, was a very private family man and devoted husband. Often Robin acknowledged that without the support and love of Dorothy he would never have been able to achieve what he did. Robin first met Dorothy in 1962. She was a nursing sister at the Freemasons Hospital in East Melbourne working alongside his sister Marjorie. They were married on 11 January 1964 in Colac and first lived in a CRB house in Wendouree (Ballarat) where they had their first daughter Cathy. In late 1965, Robin and Dorothy purchased their first home in Heathmont, where their daughter Jenny was born. At the time of her birth, Robin was in Edinburgh on a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship study tour. A few years later they purchased a block of land in East Ringwood and built their family home. Here both Dorothy and Robin were involved in many community activities such as the Op Shop, (Heathmont Inter-Church Help (HITCH)), the local Anglican Church, and he convened the Church Fair. There were also many dinners celebrated and Christmas gatherings with family and friends.

So it was fitting that in the last few months of Robin's life, Robin was able to remain at home with the support of his family and friends. He greatly appreciated the many people who came to visit.

Throughout his life he has had the good fortune to have remarkable timing, a head for figures, attentiveness to plan for the future, optimism and gratitude that will live on. In Robin's own words, he wrote of his life and career:

Some of the events that shaped my career were unforeseen, some were largely a matter of chance, some were outside my control, and some happened because I was in the right place at the right time. In this respect, and because circumstances can change quickly, it is important to keep an open and flexible mind, and to take opportunities as they present themselves along the way.

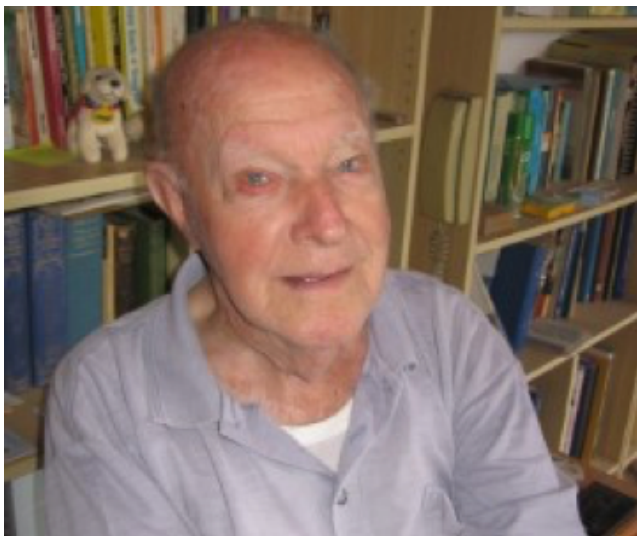
Robin was a modest man. I never heard him say anything that implied any superiority over anyone. He listened earnestly to all points of view and showed great respect to everyone he dealt with. He had a gentle demeanour and was a natural teacher and mentor to his staff. The engineering profession and the community has lost a servant of integrity but his considerable achievements are a legacy of a life well lived.'

John Gibney

I was informed by John's son – also John Gibney – that his father died in March. He said:

'My Dad had a fall in mid-February and after a few days in Box Hill Hospital, he was moved to a rehabilitation facility of the hospital, a few kilometres away. He was progressing well with rehabilitation, only to suffer an episode of excessive fluid in his lungs and thus was sent over to the Box Hill Emergency Department and into hospital to recover. This happened another couple of times ... but it ended-up with him being in palliative care for a few days ... resulting in him dying in the early morning of Wednesday, 14-March 2018. He was comfortable and was feeling no pain nor significant breathing problems when he 'went'. He was aged not quite 97 years.

He didn't want people to make a big deal ... and he didn't want any public/funeral notices in the paper, no eulogies or anything ... no flowers or any such things to come my way ... but I thought you might just include a little something about his passing in the 'VicRoads Association' newsletter, because he was certainly interested to read about all his friends in the newsletter ... and I can remember how well-known he was all over Victoria during his time in the CRB (1948-1981) and his interview entries in a few of the CRB/VicRoads history publications.'



A recent photo of John

Prior to the Second World War John was a school teacher and at the end of the war in 1945 he went back to the Education Department and he was sent to the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme in Brunswick. In 1947 he saw a position advertised within the CRB and he applied. It was a time of rebuilding the CRB. There was a small number on staff and the office was in the Exhibition Building. He had a bit of difficulty getting a permanent position as he described in 'Reminiscences of Life in the CRB' as follows:

'I was interviewed by Bob Bell, who was the Staff Officer at the time, and Griffiths who was the Accountant. They said, 'With your background, we would like you to have you

in the Accounts Branch'. I said, 'I am not much good at adding up figures and as an accountant I think one dollar either way is near enough'. They said, 'Perhaps we won't put you in the Accounts section. Would you like to go into the Traffic Section?' I went into the Traffic Section with Bill Steele. I liked that area of work and I stayed in that one position until I retired in May 1981.


Not long after I was appointed, Bob Bell called me into his office and he said, 'Look Jack you can't go on to permanent staff until you do six month's probation'. I asked, 'Why is that Bob?' and he said, 'When you resigned from the Education Department and transferred over here, you got married at that time and there was a week's break in your service from the time you left the Department until you joined the Board'. I said, 'That's ridiculous, Bob, I could have put my resignation forward a week' and he said, 'You have to have continuity'. I said, 'That's stupid, I'm not going to do six month's probation' and he said, 'That's the way it is'. I said, 'Well I'll go and see the Chairman'.

This might sound unbelievable to the current generation but I just marched down the corridor and knocked on Don Darwin's door. He said, 'Come in' and I went in and sat at his desk. He said, 'What can I do for you?' I said 'I want to talk to you about my permanent appointment. Bob Bell says I have to do six month's probation and I think it is bloody ridiculous, because I have a week's break in service'. He said, 'I think it is bloody ridiculous too' so he picked up the phone and summoned Bob. He said, 'This is rot Bob. No six month's probation. Send him to the government Medical Officer and get him appointed on to the staff.'

John was a skilled public speaker. I recall that he started a group at lunch times to hone the skills of people at public speaking and I went along. Initially people could choose a topic of their choice and they had to speak for three minutes and later it evolved into the topics being allocated with just three minutes to prepare. But I remember none of this fazed John and he was able to speak on any topic without a hitch.

He told another story about Paddy O'Donnell and Norm Haylock who sweated over complex calculations analysing the load capacity of bridges under heavy loads.

'Both these engineers considered it advisable at times to actually observe a heavy load passing over some of the old timber bridges in order to measure deflection and confirm the accuracy of their calculations. I was under an old timber bridge at Morwell with Norm and Paddy waiting for a 40 ton boiler to be moved across. Norm had set up deflection gauges and Paddy explained that all is well with timber if you hear some creaking. The time to worry is when you hear nothing. The heavy truck started across the bridge and there were some disconcerting creaks and groans from the various beams. I wasn't feeling too safe underneath and when a cracking noise rang out like a rifle shot, I made a dash for safety downstream. Paddy was a small man and he went past me like a blur. Norm stayed underneath calmly reading the gauges. From that time, I always had the greatest respect for Norm's decisions on the ability of any bridge to carry a heavy load.'



John also wrote a very funny recollection of how Biro pens were approved for use in the CRB which I included in a newsletter two or three years ago – and there are many other stories told by him in 'Reminiscences of Life in the CRB'.

Incidentally John's son (John the Second) is currently in his 34th year in VicRoads. He did a 6-month stint in Bridge Design (1981) and Dandenong Division (in Nunawading, 1982) as part of his Civil Engineering degree. Upon graduating, he went into the Road Traffic Authority at Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn (1984), Lygon St, Carlton (1988-1993), Prospect Hill Rd (1993-2001) and Metro Southeast (2001-to date).

Roger Plumeridge

Those of you who worked in the laboratory areas will be saddened to hear that Roger passed away on 25th February, aged 71.

He commenced work as an Experimental Officer in the CRB Benalla Divisional laboratory in February 1965. He was promoted to take charge of the Geelong laboratory in November 1990. In 1997 he was appointed as Manager Transport Safety Services, Barwon Region and retired in 2000. After having done some consulting work for VicRoads, he re-joined the organisation in 2006 as Team Leader, Road Safety and Traffic Engineering, Barwon Region.

Roger is described by those who knew him as one of Nature's gentlemen.

TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

Influenza – Neither trivia or Whimsical

I want a promise from all of you that you will go and get an influenza injection.

Dr Brett Sutton, Victoria's Deputy Chief Health Officer, explains why it is important for everyone – not just those who are most vulnerable – to get a flu vaccination now. This is his advice.

'We know influenza is a highly contagious viral infection spread by contact with fluids from coughs and sneezes. Typically, Australia's annual flu season occurs between April and October.

For the best possible protection this year, my advice to all Australians is to be vaccinated any time from now onwards. This should ensure they are protected by the time the disease begins to spread more widely in the community.

The record number of flu notifications last year – there were more than 48,000 cases – is a timely reminder about the importance of vaccination. Tragically, there were also a number of deaths.

This year, we expect to make more than one million doses of vaccine available. Preparations are already under way to provide free immunisations for a number of key groups in the community.

Some of us are more vulnerable to complications and are eligible for free flu vaccine: the over-65s, pregnant women, children under five, people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, and anyone with a weakened immune system. Also, those with chronic conditions such as heart, lung or kidney disease, diabetes, chronic neurological conditions and smokers should all be immunised.

All these groups were among those who were affected by flu last year. And remember, we all have the potential to spread flu to these at-risk groups.

People aged 65 years and over will receive a specially formulated flu vaccine that potentially increases their protection, especially against one strain of influenza that is more common and severe in the elderly. For people under 65 and without significant existing medical conditions, getting vaccinated at any time is perfectly okay.

Our message this winter is simple: 'You never forget the flu – don't forget your flu shot.' Flu vaccinations save lives.

When more people are vaccinated, fewer people become ill or suffer life-threatening complications from influenza.

The flu is not like a cold. Symptoms last on average one to two weeks, but for some, it takes several weeks to recover. It kills more than 3500 Australians each year. Do what you can to avoid getting and sharing the flu: wash your hands

thoroughly, cough into your elbow and get a shot in the arm.

If you're really sick, stay away from work and other places where you'll spread the flu. And don't send ill children to school. They can sometimes be the 'super-spreaders' of diseases such as influenza.

Influenza vaccine will be available from general practitioners. Many of our pharmacies are also able to provide flu vaccines as well as advise about the disease.

Following the significant impact of the season last year on hospitals, Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt chaired a round table in late 2017 to canvass possible options for improving planning for upcoming years and enhance the public's awareness of and practice of protective measures against influenza.

An extensive communications campaign to alert the public about the coming flu season is one outcome of the roundtable, along with extensive planning within the health system.

If you've got the flu, visit your doctor, talk to a pharmacist or phone Nurse-On-Call on 1300 60 60 24 – 24 hours a day. Everyone needs to prepare for the coming flu season.'

Rail Link to Tullamarine Airport

I read the following article online on The Conversation recently and thought it was worth including it in our newsletter. Ian Woodcock, lecturer in the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University, wrote it. Ian has conducted independent academic research funded by the Australian Research Council, the Victorian State Government and various local governments and private sector organisations. He has consulted for the City of Melbourne, and is affiliated with various non-profit organisations advocating for better planning and transport.

RMIT University and Victoria State Government provide funding as strategic partners of The Conversation AU.

'Public discussion of rail links to airports has been narrowly focused on the idea of a single line and where to run it. In Melbourne, the politics of this debate has so far prevented a railway from being built, because it is not possible for one line to meet all of the landside access needs of the airport. The issue of rail access for a new western Sydney airport has also not been resolved.

If we want anything to happen at all, we must move beyond barracking for one or other route. We have to recognise the need for multiple lines to serve everyone's needs.

If we look further afield, of the world's top 20 airports, 16 have rail access, 14 have integrated metros (i.e. part of the commuter rail network) and four have dedicated express lines as well as integrated metro lines (London Heathrow, Tokyo Haneda, Shanghai Pudong and Bangkok Suvarnabhumi).

Other busy airports like Heathrow offer a much better choice of transport options than Melbourne does.

In terms of passenger demand, Shanghai Pudong and Bangkok Suvarnabhumi were comparable in 2012 with where Melbourne will be in 2019. London and Bangkok have populations of around 8 million, have other airports and have much greater numbers of passengers transferring within them than Melbourne Airport, but the most salient comparison is the means of landside access.

We'll look more closely at Heathrow, one of the more comparable airports to Melbourne, later in this article.

The history of planning for a Melbourne Airport rail link has been dogged by party-political differences focused on the idea of a single railway and the question of its route out to Tullamarine. Traditionally, the Coalition parties have favoured the express proposals, while the Labor Party has preferred alignments that benefit local commuters.

This difference and the impossibility of resolving it with a single line would be one of the reasons we have so far not gone to the bother of actually building anything. It has also distracted attention from more incremental ways to improve landside access to the airport beyond the SkyBus.

Its market is similar to the main targets of the express route proponents. The most recent express proposal is the AirTrain by the highly respected Rail Futures Institute (RFI). It's part of a bold plan to separate Victorian regional services from the metropolitan commuter network. This would eventually provide statewide fast rail services, including a 15-minute ride between the airport and Southern Cross Station in the city centre.


The benefits of and urgent need for RFI's AirTrain proposal are clear. But it still won't solve all of Melbourne Airport's landside access demands, nor will it have the city-shaping potential in the northwest region between Tullamarine and the CBD that's driving the ideas for an airport metro service.

Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull's embrace of these ideas is a welcome change from his side of politics, as is Premier Daniel Andrews' apparent support for RFI's proposal. These are amusing reversals of political positions on airport access, but the community should not be swayed by the potential for wedging.

We can learn from Heathrow.

To understand our predicament of airport access, comparisons with London's Heathrow are useful. Many Australians know this airport and its landside access demands are far more similar to those of Melbourne Airport than may be imagined.

The Piccadilly Tube line was extended to Heathrow in 1977. That was a decade before it was serving over 30 million passengers comparable to what Melbourne airport was serving in 2013.



In 1998, Heathrow added a 15-minute express rail line to Paddington Station, when its landside access needs were about 40 million. That's the demand Melbourne Airport is projected to hit in 2019. When London's Elizabeth line (formerly CrossRail) opens next year, it will connect Heathrow to a major east-west line similar to the Melbourne Metro.

In 2028, Melbourne Airport is projected to hit the same level of landside access demand as Heathrow experienced in 2017. Currently, 40% of passengers using Heathrow do so via public transport – 27% by rail, 13% via bus or coach. And 35% of airport staff use public transport, and this is rising. SkyBus would account for most of the 14% bus/coach share of access to Melbourne Airport.

Heathrow has 13 public bus lines, 27 coach services and three railway services - the stopping-all-stations commuter service on the Piccadilly line and two levels of express service at premium ticket prices on regional railways (which will be subsumed by CrossRail).

By comparison, even though it is one of the world's busiest, Melbourne Airport has a mere four public buses, some regional coaches and private express bus services. As a result, 86% of access is by car, including 17% by taxi or limo. SkyBus would take the lion's share of the 14% bus/coach access.

These comparisons show how much more can be done to improve public transport access to Melbourne Airport, in the short, medium and long term. Melbourne Airport needs express as well as commuter rail access, but it needs more than this.

A wider spread of frequent public buses would be easy to implement. Extending the 59 tram service by 7km from Airport West would also be relatively quick and easy. Light rail lines to the airport from La Trobe University and Deer Park would provide much-needed connections to the main commuter rail system in parts of the metropolitan area where public transport is far worse than average.

A genuine commuter metro to the airport would not try to be an express. It would have stations that connect the major and emerging employment centres, such as Airport West, Essendon Fields, Niddrie, Highpoint, Footscray Hospital and Victoria University, and heavy rail stations at Arden and North Melbourne, before connecting with Southern Cross and then Bourke Street, Parliament Station and on to those eastern suburbs where metro services have long been planned.

Such a line would help with the redevelopment of Commonwealth land in Maribyrnong. In fact, without it, redevelopment would not be viable.'

Laws of Life

We've all heard of Murphy's Law – Anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Well here are a few others.

Law of Mechanical Repair - After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch and you'll have to pee.

Law of Gravity - Any tool, nut, bolt, screw or anything else, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible place in the universe.

Law of Probability - The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.

Law of Random Numbers - If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal; someone always answers.

Variation Law - If you change lines (or traffic lanes), the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now.

Law of the Shower - When the body is fully immersed under the water, the telephone will ring.

Law of Close Encounters - The probability of meeting someone you know increases dramatically when you have been deliberately trying to avoid them.

Law of the Result - When you try to prove to someone that something won't work, it will!!!

Law of Biomechanics - The severity of any itch of the body is inversely proportional to the reach.

Law of the Theatre - At any event, the people whose seats are farthest from the aisle always arrive last.

They are the ones who will leave their seats several times to go for food, beer, or the toilet and who leave early before the end of the performance is over. The folks in the aisle seats come early, never move once, have long gangly legs or big bellies and stay to the bitter end of the performance.

The Law of coffee or tea - As soon as you sit down to a nice cuppa, the phone will ring or someone will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee/tea is cold.

Law of Physical Surfaces - The chances of an open-faced sandwich landing face down on a floor or you are directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet, rug or clothes

Law of Logical Argument - Anything is possible if you don't know what you are talking about.

The 50-50-90 Law - Whenever there's a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability that you'll get it wrong.

Law of Commercial Marketing Strategy - As soon as you find a product that you really like, they will stop making it OR the store will stop selling it!

Doctors Law - If you don't feel well, make an appointment to go to the doctor, by the time you get there, you'll feel better. But don't make an appointment and you'll stay sick.

Yesterday I had my annual Medicare wellness check. The nurse said that at my age I should have a bar in the shower. So I took her advice.

