

February 2019



## Vicroads Association Newsletter No.207



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.

Dear Members,

I have been very remiss in not wishing you a happy Christmas and successful New Year. My problem is that I compile the newsletters about two months before their publication—and the last one was even earlier than that because of our Japan trip. For example I have started this one on 10 December 2018 but you won't see it until some time in February 2019. So it is now appropriate for me to extend a belated season's greetings to you all. I hope that your celebrations with family and friends was as enjoyable as mine.

The most special gift I received this Christmas was the safe arrival of my second grand daughter, Matilda. It is a wondrous thing to hold a delicate little girl in one hand and let her tiny fingers grip the smallest of my fingers. I find myself looking at her photo about every hour and bite my tongue, a habit I have had all my life, when I think of the softness of her hair and the precision of the shape of her ears. I think of my own children when they were born and how we used to look at them as they slept. And I think too of my own parents tucking our children into bed at home on the farm, promising them that there will be eggs under the chooks in the morning so that they could hardly wait for the sun to come up.

My greatest hope is that I leave a secure world for her. She has loving parents and is blessed by being born into a wider family who will treasure her. She is also fortunate to be born in a country like Australia. She will have opportunities of a good education in a secure environment — better than 90 per cent of the people born into the world on her birthday.

But I do worry about her future. I am appalled at the denial of many of the world's leaders—including our own—about climate change. It is irrefutable that the patterns of climate are changing. Remember when we were in primary school we learnt about the river system in Victoria. We learnt by heart

the rivers that flowed into the Murray River. They were the Goulburn, Campaspe, Loddon, Ovens, Kiewa, and Mitta Mitta. We were taught that these were large rivers but I have had occasion in the last few months to drive across some of them and I was surprised how small they were. Some of them have been dammed thus affecting their natural flows.

I think of the mighty Snowy River which played such a significant role in my professional life at the CRB, and I lament its condition now. Sure it has been dammed more significantly than the others but it is now virtually dry in some stretches in summer. When we lived on its banks 40 years ago, we saw canoeists coming down the river from a point up near McKillops Bridge. This is now a rare occurrence and often canoeists have to drag their craft across sand bars in some reaches.

In 2000, the Victorian, New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments agreed to increase the flow to 21% of the average flows originally passing the Jindabyne wall within 10 years of corporatisation of the Snowy Mountains Authority, with an interim target of 15% of original flows within seven years of corporatisation and a long term target of 28% by 2012. In 2002 the first environmental flows were released into the Snowy from the Mowamba River below Jindabyne Dam. However, three years later (February 2006), these environmental flows were discontinued.

For my Matilda to flourish, this generation and the next—but mostly this one—have to look after our beautiful Earth more responsibly. We need to make decisions now for our grandchildren because I think we have mucked up big time because of the short-term interests of politicians.

**David Jellie**  
President and Editor

## Dates for your diary

Our program for 2019 is as follows. We will provide further details of visits in later newsletters and remind members of upcoming events via email notices. If you are not on our email list, and you have email, please let us know your address. If you do not have email and you would like to come along, please contact the Secretary.

2019			
February	Monday 11	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Friday 22	12 noon	Golf Day at Green Acres Golf Club
March	Thursday 7	6 pm	Drinks and dinner at Waverley RSL
	Monday 18	11.30 am	AGM VicRoads Cafeteria followed by buffet lunch at noon
	Monday 25	TBA	Visit to Office of Projects Victoria
April	Monday 8	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
May	Monday 6	TBA	Visit to airport Rail Link
June	Monday 3	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Monday 17	TBA	Visit to Melbourne Suburban Rail Loop
July	Monday 29	TBA	Visit to West Gate Tunnel Project
August	Monday 12	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
September	11 and 12		Visit to Ballarat Regional Office
October	Monday 7	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Thursday 10	6 pm	Drinks and dinner at Waverley RSL
	Monday 28	TBA	Visit to North East Link Project
November	Monday 25	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
December	Tuesday 3	12 noon	Christmas luncheon
2020			
February	Monday 10	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel

## What's coming up

### **Occasional Lunch — Shoppingtown Hotel — Monday 11 February 2019**

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.

### **Golf Day at Green Acres Golf Club — Friday 22 February 2019**

Our annual golf day will be at Green Acres Golf Club starting at noon.

Please contact Jim Webber on 9817 4182 or 0412 064 527 or jimwebber@optusnet.com.au if you want to come along. Partners and friends are very welcome.

### **Drinks and Dinner at Waverley RSL — Thursday 7th March**

This is an opportunity for old friends and colleagues and their partners to get together in very pleasant circumstances to enjoy dinner together- at a very reasonable price. It is a good opportunity to get your old work groups together for a bit of fun. If you can make it, please contact Ken Vickery on 0409 561 618 or kenvickery@tpg.com.au so that we can arrange the catering. We always have a good attendance at these - so if you haven't been before come and join us. It is a great night.

### **Annual General Meeting — Monday 18th March at 11.30 am**

The AGM will be held in the Cafeteria at Head Office between 11.30 a.m. and 12 noon on 18th March. It will be followed by a buffet lunch in the Cafeteria on the first floor.

At the AGM the General Committee for the next twelve months will be elected—six office bearers; President, Vice President, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Asst Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Asst Treasurer, and six ordinary members. Nominations are to be submitted in writing by the proposer, include the consent of the nominee, and lodged with the Secretary by Tuesday 12th March. A nomination form is on the last page.

The business of the meeting will be to confirm the minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting, receive the Annual Report, receive the Financial Statement, consider any Notice of Motion, elect Committee members, appoint an Auditor, confirm or amend the joining fee and annual subscription, and any general business. Any Notice of Motion proposed is

to be received in writing by the Hon. Secretary no later than Tuesday 12th March. A form for this purpose is provided on the back page of this newsletter.

We are always keen to find new committee members so if you are interested—or know of someone else who may be interested—please don't hesitate to fill out a nomination form.

Please also note that the address of the Hon. Secretary is c/- Ms Natalia Morgan, 2nd Floor, VicRoads, 60 Denmark Street, Kew 3101.

### **Visit to the Office of Projects — Monday 25th March, 2019**

Victoria is investing an average of \$10.1 billion a year in infrastructure over the next four years on a wide range of projects across the state. Office of Projects Victoria (OPV) was established in September 2016 as an Administrative Office within the Department of Treasury and Finance. It oversees the successful delivery of major infrastructure projects in Victoria by providing advice on the technical scope and cost of Victoria's infrastructure program. OPV also supports project delivery teams to develop the skills and capability necessary to successfully implement projects including engineering; technical standards and assurance; and skills and performance.

OPV aims to improve workforce planning in Victoria by mapping the current and future delivery workforce needs against the state's major projects pipeline; develop skills and capability through training, professional development, mentoring, secondments and career development; and expand the skills base to match the needs of the project delivery pipeline to enhance career opportunities for project delivery professionals.

OPV provides the Victorian Government with guidance and assurance on project engineering, technical scope and project cost. This complements the Department of Treasury and Finance's role in providing critical feedback on financial and contractual risk. Through its project monitoring and assurance role OPV will reform and enhance existing monitoring and reporting tools, and provide early advice to the Government about emerging issues in Victoria's infrastructure program.

Details regarding the time and location of this visit have not been finalized but we will send out a notice via e-mail once they have been finalized. If you are not on e-mail but want to come along please contact the Secretary and we will inform you separately.



# Vale

## Albert Winnett

Albert died back in February 2018 but I have only recently been informed. He was 91 years old. Albert's family had a unique connection to bridges. Albert's father, William Alva Winnett, was a bridge contractor in Holbrook N.S.W. He had five sons and two daughters. His five boys worked their entire careers in designing or building bridges.

Albert and Alva James (Jim) became engineers and Jim worked in Bridge Design Division of the CRB for 30 years while Albert worked in bridge construction. The other brothers, Stanley (a twin of Jim), William and Walter worked as bridge builders in N.S.W and Victoria. In fact Jim's father built some bridges and culverts for the Country Roads Board near Seymour. As it turned out these were designed by Jim. Most of the Winnett bridges were built in southern N.S.W. with the northernmost in Sydney.

The story of the Al's life goes back to a family with the surname de Winnett in 16th century France. Massive upheavals in Eastern Europe saw the Huguenot Winnetts fleeing to Ireland in 1846. Later some of the family emigrated to Australia, and in 1926 Albert William Winnett was born in Temora, New South Wales. His father was a road and bridge builder, as was his father. During school holidays Albert usually spent time on the job with his father and then followed this up with civil engineering studies in Melbourne.

He had a long career as a civil engineer included contract road building with his father and two brothers; many years with the Snowy Scheme, living at Cabramurra; more years as Deputy City Engineer at Mackay, Queensland, then back to Melbourne to work again with his first employers, Vic Roads, formerly the Country Roads Board, before retirement.

Sadly Albert's later years have been lived in the shadows of Alzheimer's disease.

Albert leaves behind a wife, a son and two daughters, and ten grandchildren. The family tree continues to grow steadily and strongly, and all those on it, and near it, will hold the memory of this Al very dearly.

I will include more about Al in the next newsletter.

## Brian Fleming

Brian Fleming passed away at home on 4 August 2018, aged 84. Brian was not a member of the Association, but he would have been known to a number of our older members. His career was spent largely as an engineer in the specifications area of Plans and Survey Division working with Gordon Hiscock. For quite a long period he was Secretary of the Standard Specifications for Roadworks Committee under the chairmanships of Andrew Noble and Alan Pryor.

Brian was a car enthusiast he and was the founding Secretary of the Melbourne University Car Club and a loyal member until his death. He was one of life's characters.

## Tony Hollow

Like Brian, Tony was not a member of the Association but he was well known to many in the organisation, especially those who worked on the West Gate Freeway Project.

Very few people know that Tony was chosen at the age of 14 to go to the 1960 Rome Olympics as a coxswain for the Australian rowing pairs. However at the 11th hour the rowing officials decided to enter the pair as a coxless pair and all his hopes were dashed. You can imagine his disappointment.

Tony was a great friend of one of our members—Bob Carr — and I am indebted to Bob for assisting me in writing this tribute. Bob and Tony met in the early 60s when he was working on his first job with an engineering firm in St Kilda. They played golf regularly at Wattle Park and enjoyed visiting the 19th hole afterwards.

Bob's wife Prue and Tony's wife Elle started school together. Bob said that he introduced Tony to Ellen and Prue said that she introduced Ellen to Tony. Whichever way it was, it worked. Ellen was Prue's bridesmaid and Tony was Bob's groomsman at their weddings. Tony and Ellen married in 1969. He was conscripted and did National Service in the Engineers Unit and then finished his engineering degree while Ellen worked as a teacher providing sufficient income for them both. They then settled in Beaumaris.

In the early 80s Tony and Bob worked together as engineers at VicRoads on the West Gate Freeway Extension in South Melbourne. They were both involved in our social club which included publishing the "West Gate Whisper". Bob was the correspondent for cooking and Tony was the correspondent for wine - under the title of Hollow's Log. His main source of wine was the bottle shop at the Black Rock IGA. He recommended various wines and took orders. At one time he praised some wine so much that the store redirected the semi-trailer directly from the supplier to the Project with the wine everyone had ordered.

When he left the West Gate Project he became a director and partner in the engineering firm, Fisher Stewart and had a very successful career in consulting engineering. He and Ellen bought farms on the Mornington Peninsula and we were able to enjoy their lifestyle along with their friends and family. He and Elle loved horses and together they spent some time as successful racehorse owners.

Tony was a good golfer playing off single figures and representing his Club in the Masters Pennant. He was Captain of the Club for two years from 2009 and redesigned the 9th hole of the South Course which became known affectionately as Hollow's Horror. He scored three 3 holes in one over his golfing career.

Bob recalled that he was the only person he know who could tell an old and bad joke and still get a laugh.



## What's been happening

### Visit to the West Gate Tunnel Project, Monday 29th October 2018

Thirty one members attended this presentation which was given Peter Sammut, the Chief Executive of the project. Peter brought us up to date on progress. The West Gate Freeway widening has commenced and preliminary works are underway for the construction of the elevated road. The tunneling machines will be launched mid-2019 and the project is on schedule to open by the end of 2022.

A few interesting facts about the project include:

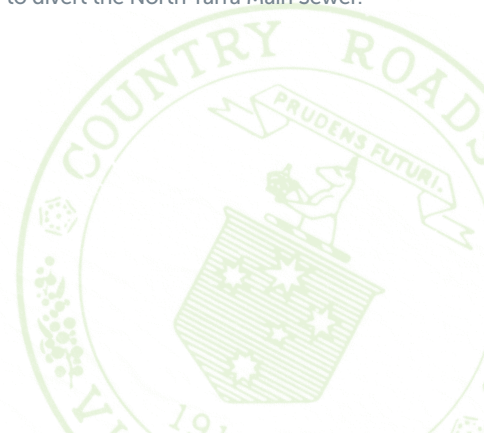
- Major construction is underway across seven sites.
- Over 3,000 people are currently working on the project.
- Victoria University Polytechnic will train hundreds of workers in the skills they need to take up jobs on the West Gate Tunnel under a new TAFE partnership.
- Victoria's largest precast concrete manufacturing facility will be built in Benalla to supply major Victorian

infrastructure projects, create 400 jobs and provide a massive boost to the local economy.

- Some of the largest tunnel boring machines (TBMs) in the world are on track to arrive in Melbourne on time in early 2019 to build the West Gate Tunnel and Metro Tunnel.
- Students in Melbourne's west will be given the chance to break into the construction industry with scholarships funded through the West Gate Tunnel Project.
- The West Gate Tunnel is giving indigenous trainees a head-start in the construction industry with a new pre-apprenticeship program supporting more Indigenous Australians to enter the industry.
- Work has started to build one of the longest rail sidings in Victoria to service the new precast concrete facility being built in Benalla.



Widening work on the West Gate Freeway and a mini Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) which will be used to divert the North Yarra Main Sewer.







## Christmas Lunch—Monday 3 December 2018

We had an excellent attendance of 62 people and it was pleasing that so many new members turned up—including Paul Tucker (and Noela), Brian Negus, Andrew Ricketson (and Nola), Ian Thiele, James Trajcevski, David Capon, Jill Earnshaw, John Fitz, Bruce Hamilton, Greg Kemp and David Veith. Ted Goddard came down from Warrnambool and

Paul and Noela Tucker came from Wangaratta, so in golfing parlance, they won the awards for the longest drive. Below are photos of some of the better looking attendees.



Jim Trajcevski and Howard Hughes



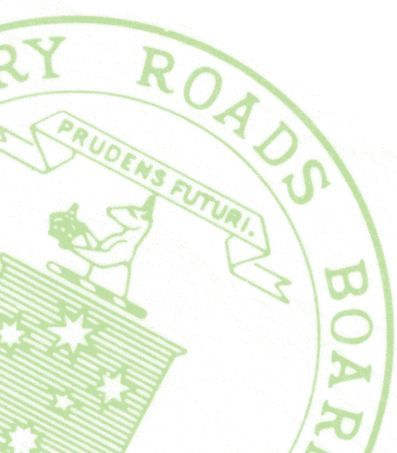
Jill Earnshaw, Patsy Kennedy and Iris Whittaker

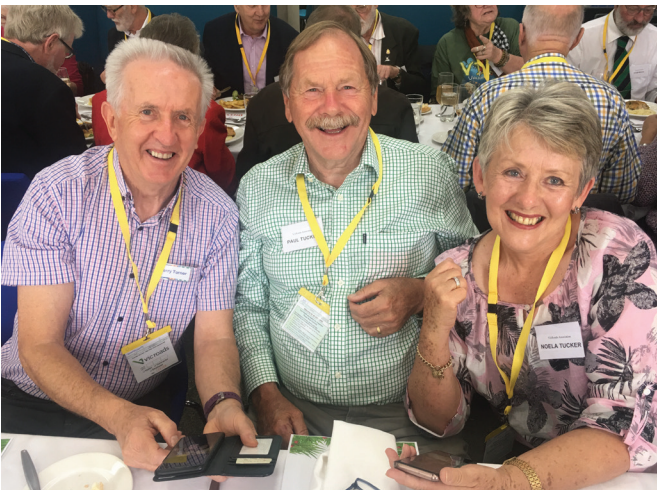


Ozzie Kayak and John Rebbechi



Kelvin York and Jim Holden





Gerry Turner and Paul and Noela Tucker



Joan Gilmer, Bob Barron and David Veith



## News from our members

I received the following note from Helen Allan. Helen is not a member but she contacted me a while ago because she was writing a local history about the Kiewa Valley Highway. I suggested they she should contact Tom Russell and Stan Hodgson. This is what she wrote.

"Good Morning David, I have been emailed a copy of the last Retirees Newsletter and I was moved to email you. You will recall earlier in the year I contacted you in relation to people who had worked on the Kiewa Valley Highway in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Through contact with you I contacted Tom Russell and on the 23rd May, Lyle and I visited Tom at his home. We spent a lovely couple of hours with him while he told us his memories of his early work from the Benalla office and in particular working on the Kiewa Valley Highway. He was in great spirits, his memory was very sharp and he looked great so it was a great shock to hear of his passing in August.

My first meeting with Tom was in Benalla, when he was Chairman, and I have always had fond memories of him because he worked on the Kiewa Valley Highway and around my home town. A wonderful tribute to him.

Regards  
Helen Allan

### John Wright's Odyssey (Continued)

I have had quite a few comments from people who have worked in PNG saying how much they are enjoying John's description of life there. It evokes many memories—so let us continue the story although many of you will find this installment creepy.

#### Just the three of us

Not long after we got our car Sylvia started work as a sales assistant in a stationery store in the Central area a short walk downhill from my office. She also obtained her Papua Drivers Licence after some adventures with the Police tester in the Peugeot. We initially placed James in a child-minding centre near the stilt village of Hanuabada, but quickly withdrew him because the centre was not supervising another little who was throwing sand at his face. He was much happier when we found a nicer place for him near Boroko, where the bubs were better supervised and were placed into cosy flywire enclosed cots for their afternoon naps.

At lunchtimes, Sylvia and I would often meet in the Hibiscus Restaurant, where we would relax and enjoy our favourite snack lunch of roast chicken on toast covered in black Leicestershire mushrooms. Sometimes we'd drive down to Ela Beach and sit together in the shade of the coconut palms, looking out over the calm waters of Walter Bay at the white caps of the breakers from the Coral Sea crashing onto the distant outer reef. It was very peaceful. After work, we would pick up James and go paddling there. I was terrified

of stepping on a stone fish or a spiky sea urchin and was paranoid about where I was putting my feet.

In the evenings, it would still be warm. James would be asleep in his cot and we would sit in our kitchen/lounge, watching the fat, almost transparent geckoes darting about on the windows catching mosquitoes and moths. Because there was no TV and the wireless wasn't worth listening to, we became keen readers, borrowing books from the Ela Beach public library or buying second hand books from a little shop in Boroko. I must have read all of John Creasey's Inspector West detective novels while we were there. We would also go to Bingo evenings at the Ela Beach hall. I became a keen assembler of WW2 Airfix models and both of us took up oil painting by the numbers.

#### The new oven

Not long after we arrived, the Firm acknowledged the inadequacy of our cooking arrangements and installed a new electric oven and cooktop. Sylvia was delighted, and after purchasing meat and vegetables, she prepared a casserole and placed it in the new oven. While it cooked we drove out to Boroko to browse the Chinese trade stores.

Arriving back after dark, we turned on the light as we entered and were momentarily puzzled by a large, dark shape on the wall above the new oven. As we got closer we could see that the fan-shaped mass, which reached right up to the ceiling, was moving. And then we realised that it was formed by thousands of cockroaches trying to escape from the heat of the oven. We could only assume that the creatures had taken up residence in the oven's insulation while it was stored in the warehouse and had multiplied greatly by the time we received it. Despite the immediate application of all the spray insecticide we could lay our hands on, many survived and would return to haunt us for months afterwards.

I became obsessed with exterminating them. At night, after we turned out the lights, they would appear in their legions, seemingly emerging out of thin air. We could hear them scuttling around on our bedside tables. Sometimes I would wait for half an hour before turning on the lights and ambush them. But they were multiplying faster than we could kill them.

#### Tania's arrival

On Saturday 12 June Sylvia started having regular contractions and I drove her to the hospital. Ever independent, she told me not to stay with her, but instead to take James to an evening Car Club barbecue that we had all intended to go to, not far out of town. A reporter/photographer for the South Pacific Post took a wonderful photograph of young James necking an (empty) bottle of South Pacific Lager beside the car. After it made the pages of that newspaper's next edition I half expected a visit from the child welfare people.





I returned home, fed James and grilled the hauseboi as to the whereabouts of James' nappy pins (which he hastily located), put him to bed and filled out the 1965 National Census papers. The hospital rang the next morning to say that Sylvia had given birth to a healthy daughter at 2.15 am. I grabbed James and took him out to Boroko to see his new sister. Sylvia looked exhausted and was very cross. She said the hospital had broken her waters shortly after she was admitted — instead of waiting until just before the birth. This meant that the birth, which came about 12 hours later, was dry and more painful. Despite having alerted her doctor to the impending birth, he had turned up well after it was all over - eating an apple and breathing booze over her.

Tania was a tiny thing with red hair, weighing barely 5½ pounds and not much bigger than the palm of my hand. When we brought her home, we had no crib for her, and for a short while she slept in an open suitcase on the floor at the end of the bed. Sylvia had to abandon attempts to breast feed her.

Eventually, the extensions to the flat were completed and the old kitchen/lounge became the children's bedroom. We got a bed for James, and Tania was able to sleep in the Frazer cot originally bought for James. There was a small mystery as to how Tania would be so comprehensively wet, all over, each morning when we got up to tend to her. We discovered, by catching him in the act, that James would wake, stand up in his bed, lower his nappy and pee right across the bedroom onto Tania in her cot.

Feeding Tania as a tiny toddler was a challenge because she was rarely enthusiastic about eating. Our dog, Abbie would sit nearby watching her like a hawk and knowing that she would leave most of what little food she would eat in the bowl on her low chair. If we turned our backs for a second Abbie would pre-empt matters by leaping up and gulping down Tania's dinner in one swift movement and then returning to her previous position as if nothing had happened.

### **The extension**

Later in 1965, after Tania was born, our flat was significantly upgraded when the Firm added a spacious lounge room and a modern kitchen to the front of the building. This meant that the original kitchen/lounge area could become a second bedroom for James and Tania, who up until that time were sharing our bedroom with us. The extension would sit on tall, concrete piers nearly 15 feet off the ground at its front. An idea of the steepness of the site can be obtained by the fact that our bedroom at the very rear of the building was about 7 feet in cut.

One day during the construction works, young James waited until his mother was distracted before setting off at a fast clip into the works area. Not all of the flooring was in place. Sylvia turned around just in time to see him disappearing into the floor and the builder's foreman grabbing James' arm with lightning speed just before he vanished completely.

### **Snakes at our flat**

We had a few encounters with snakes at our flat. The first was on a Saturday morning when we were returning from shopping and walking up the steps to our flat. I was walking behind Sylvia and saw a small Taipan quickly cross the path between her feet. The next episode was more alarming. I was at work and Sylvia was visiting our next-door neighbour Wendy with James, who was aged about 18 months. As he was wont to do he suddenly broke free of his mother, dashed out of the door and started running back to our flat, about 20 feet away with Sylvia in hot pursuit. To her horror she saw a small Taipan on the path and it was rearing up to strike James. Fortunately, our dog Blackie was with him and distracted the snake long enough for Sylvia to hit it with a broom and send it flying into the bushes.


On the third occasion, Sylvia heard a commotion outside the bathroom and opened the back door in time to see our cat locked in mortal combat with a small python that had been curled up on top of the water heater.

### **Snakes at work**

I was at work one morning when the office hauseboi, Kepa walked in with big eyes and whispered "Masta, come quick—BIG snake!" We tippy toed after him to the office tea room window, where he pointed at a small area of lawn near the foot of the steps. There, clearly enjoying the sun's warmth was the largest Taipan any of us had ever seen. We were staring, transfixed at its deadly beauty when the most amazing thing happened. Suddenly, the snake simply wasn't there. So swiftly did it move, none of us saw its departure. It must have sensed our presence at the window.

At lunchtime, Rick and I walked very warily past the place where the snake had been and drove home to tell our wives of what we had seen. As we were late returning to the office we were running down the long flight of concrete steps with me in front and Ric, a big, solid rugby player, just behind. To my horror, I saw the Taipan on the bottom step just in front of me. I grabbed the steel handrails on both sides of the steps to arrest my forward motion and my feet were already backpedalling. Ric, who hadn't seen the snake, cannoned into me but did not break my death grip on the railings, although he came close to dislocating my shoulders. His weight forced my upper body down until my face was barely a foot above the snake. Desperately trying to move back as Ric disengaged himself, I was waiting for the swift and terrible bite when I heard hysterical laughter from Bob, Ted and Kepa, who emerged from the bushes at our left. The %\*\_ )@# \$!^ %s had killed the snake while we were away and stretched it across the steps for our benefit.

Not long before we left Port Moresby, the manager Bob left to join another consultant. Later, he was joined by Ted. A young married couple, Sid and Marie from Brisbane arrived and moved into the office flat. Sid was to replace Ric, who was leaving to join Bob in the other firm. Both Sid and Marie were terrified of snakes. Not long after they had settled in, they discovered a major shortcoming of their bedroom.



During heavy wet season downpours, the guttering outside their bedroom would overflow due to an accumulation of leaves from the overhanging trees. The water would then run down the outside wall and across the ceiling above their bed, and drip on them.

Sid decided to rectify the situation and climbed up a ladder to the roof of the flat, which was probably 30 feet above the ground. The view would have been magnificent, but Sid was fully occupied in grabbing handfuls of leaves out of the gutter and pitching them over the side. Suddenly, Sid realised that he was holding a very large, angry green snake instead of leaves and twigs, and that he was unable to hurl it away because it had wrapped itself around his right arm and was trying to bite him. Using his left hand around its neck to hold its head away he screamed out for his wife, who was about 8 months pregnant and told her to bring up a knife to kill the snake. She was unable to find a suitably sharp one and instead emerged onto the roof holding a pruning saw, with which she able to sever the snake's head.

### **Snakes on the road**

On our first trip to Sogeri Alan Marsh was driving us in his Land Rover to show us the beginning of the Kokoda Track. Sylvia was sitting in the front with Alan, nursing James, and I was behind Alan looking out of the open window with my elbow in the breeze. A sudden movement below me on the road caught my eye. It was a huge taipan snake striking upwards at the side of the car as it passed - almost reaching

my exposed elbow. I pulled it back in reflexive horror and kept it inside thereafter.

In 1966, Sylvia was driving James and Tania down to the coastal town of Rigo to meet me at an overnight stop during a two-day car trial. On the way, she saw an enormous Papuan Black snake on the road, which she said stretched from one side to the other. She said there was no way she was going to run over it because she was worried that it might enter the car via the gaping holes in the rear floor. So, she stopped and waited for it to move out of the way.

Sylvia was completely paranoid about snakes. She had probably inherited it from her father, whose 10-year-old grandnephew was allegedly killed by one at Wangaratta. This was a popular belief around Wangaratta and was even the subject of a 1980s story in the Herald Sun about his gravestone. However, in 2015, I discovered from Trove that a Wangaratta newspaper of the day reported that the child had in fact died from typhus. Jim Vonarx would not rest until he had killed any snake he found on the rural properties he owned. One night in Port Moresby Sylvia woke me up in the wee small hours to tell me that "There's a big, fat green snake under our bed!" It was pitch dark, so I said: "How do you know it's green?" She was not amused, and I had to get up and turn on the light and have a long, hard look under the bed before she was satisfied.

# News from Vicroads

## Maroondah Highway, Croydon intersection upgrade

Maroondah Highway is a major road, providing the quickest connection between Ringwood and Lilydale. Heading further east, it is a gateway to the Yarra Valley and beyond. It is also a major road into the city and connects with Eastlink. Approximately 33,000 vehicles use the road each day, with six per cent of those being heavy vehicles.

The intersection of Dorset Rd, Bellara Drive and Maroondah Hwy has consistently made the top 10 in RACV's Redspot Survey for troublesome intersections, with wait times of up to 4 cycles of traffic signals.

The \$8 million upgrade currently underway will improve traffic flow through the intersection, allowing vehicles to travel through in one signal cycle.

Phase 1 and 2 works are nearing completion with only minor works to be completed early in 2019. Some of the works that have been completed include:

- Lengthening the Maroondah Highway left turn lane into Dorset Road
- Widening Dorset Road, adding an extra lane from the intersection
- Drainage works and service relocation works on Bellara Drive
- Reconstruction of the Dorset Road service lane entrance
- New right turn lane from Dorset Road in to Maroondah Highway.
- Vegetation removal, relocation of power poles, underground services and major drainage works on Maroondah Highway and Dorset Road.

Works will begin on Phase 3 of the intersection upgrade in January with the major reconstruction of the northbound lanes of Dorset Road. Traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction along Dorset Road while these works are being completed. This work has been planned for the quieter January period on the roads so as to minimise disruption to the travelling public.

Traffic management will be on site to assist motorists and speeds will be reduced to 40km/h through the construction area.



A bird's eye view of the project.



# Trivia and didactic whimsies

## Remembrance Day 2018

A friend in England sent me this sermon which was delivered on this day. Although it refers to Britain I think the sentiments are truly international.

"At the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month, exactly one hundred years ago today, at this precise moment, the guns fell silent. And in that silence the hope was born that this so-called 'war to end all wars' would never happen again, that the hubris, pride and arrogance that caused it would never resurface and that the 20 million lives lost would not be for nothing.

"This act of remembrance which we gather for every year has of course a special poignancy today—it is something we must do, wear our poppies, gather in silence—and for many of us the reasons are personal, as we commemorate members of our own families who are among those countless dead. And so the guns fell silent—only they didn't, and they haven't and they aren't.

"That same cynicism of cigar-smoking, brandy swilling generals that sent thousands of men over the top like cannon fodder to instant and painful death without any thought of who they were, their families and where they came from is still alive and well today.

"My sister in the ministry, Rev. Angela, wrote in the Hinckley Times this week that in remembrance today we not only remember their sacrifice but all the times we got it wrong. We must remember our own mistakes if we are to move forward.

"Those mistakes are still being made, that pride and hubris still exists, internationally, nationally and personally. Our country, which prides itself on its sense of honour and justice, has in many ways shamed their memory.

"Much of our economy is enhanced by the arms industry which makes over 7 billion pounds every year from the sale of weapons to countries often of dubious integrity. Trillions of pounds are spent on the creation of a weapons system that could destroy the whole planet in a week. How can we lament the effects of war if we are profiting from the sale of the means of promoting it? How can we pray for peace when we are producing the very means of destroying it?

"This is the greatest hypocrisy. We have also created a so-called 'hostile environment' to actively prevent those who are feeling the effects of war today, the butchering of their families, the destruction of their homes, fleeing for their very lives, from finding safety and asylum here, because we feel they are just 'migrants' and a drain on our economy.

"I ask you, how many of you standing here in front of me today have actually met a refugee face to face and listened to their story? How can we make judgments about them when we have never met them? How can we turn them away when they have escaped the very thing we are commemorating today?

"The words read to us by the Rev. Dimitri were chosen specially for today from the very earliest days of the Christian Church: "where do these wars and battles between you begin?" asks the apostle James.

"Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting within you? You want something and you can't have it so you are prepared to kill to get it". We have developed what we might call a 'culture of entitlement' which tells us that we can and must have anything we want whenever we want it, even if it is at the expense of others. Every angry word, every selfish thought or action has shamed the memory of these men who sought no more than to serve, a thought becoming increasingly alien to our thinking.

"Every complaint, every outrage or outburst, every time we blind ourselves to the sufferings of others with an over concern for our own profit and welfare, we dishonour those who gave so much so that we could be free from all of this. We can only honour their dying by our living, and we do so by rooting out every drop of self-interest within us so that we can open our hearts and minds to others and live peacefully and justly with them."

## Hearing aids

A man said to his neighbour, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art."

"Really," answered the neighbour. "What kind is it?"

"Twelve thirty."

## A New Norwegian Coastal Road

I was in Norway recently, albeit very briefly and only in Oslo, but I came away very impressed with their urban planning and design. For a country having a population just over five million people, Norway certainly punches well above its weight. And now Norway is currently constructing an 1100km long coastal highway along its western seaboard through extremely challenging landscape. Bridges, floating tunnels and undersea tunnels are being used to traverse this beautiful yet difficult terrain.

Stage 1 of the project includes 27km long twin undersea tunnels (each with two traffic lanes) reaching depths of up to 390m below sea level. The tunnel will also have an elaborate mid-route undersea interchange connecting to one of its many islands.

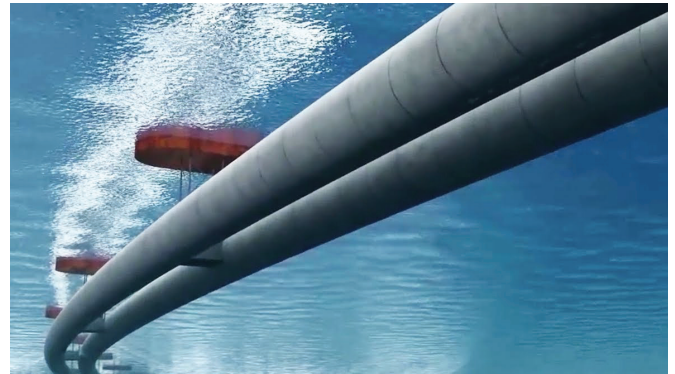
The existing E39 highway that connects the north and the south is interrupted by seven ferry crossings. It takes 21 hours to make the 1,100-km journey from Kristiansand to Trondheim along the coast. Developing this huge area is also a problem, as ferries depend on the weather and are too slow for 21st century transport needs.

The project will cost \$47 billion and requires amazing solutions for crossing the fjords. Take, for example, the



\$2bn Boknafjorden tunnel mentioned above. It will be the longest, deepest tunnel in the world. A little bit further, the Sulafjorden Bridge will cover a 4-kilometre wide stretch of water. Its central pier will connect to the seabed 400 metres below water level. But the most challenging crossing is that over the Sognefjord—3,700 metres width, and 1,300 metres depth—it's the biggest fjord in Norway. There are several solutions that will have to cater to the needs of road traffic and sea traffic, while also keeping an affordable budget - floating submerged tunnels, huge bridges, or a combination of the two.

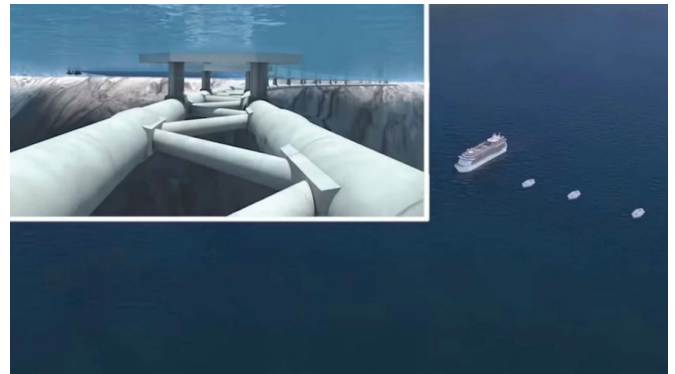
Below are some of the images from the Norwegian Public Roads Authority.



A floating tunnel.



An interchange connecting to some of the islands.



Underwater tunnels.



A floating bridge.



One of the bridges





## Brexit

We read about Brexit in our papers and every night on the news we see Theresa May under attack by politicians of all parties. We think it does not affect us but it does. It beggars common sense how Britain's politicians allowed such an ill-informed and deceptive referendum to occur—creating a split in British Society for generations to come.

I saw the following speech on the internet. Ironically it was the first speech given in the House of Commons after the introduction of Theresa May's bill—and tellingly, it was given to a near-deserted House of Commons on 4 December 2018.

It was delivered by David Lammy, a Labour Party politician who has been the Member of Parliament for Tottenham since 2000. He studied at the School of Law, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, obtaining an upper second class degree. Lammy went on to study at Harvard University when he won a place to study for an LL.M. at Harvard Law School. He was called to the bar of England and Wales in 1994 at Lincoln's Inn and practised as a barrister.



David Lammy

“The European Union was once just a remarkable dream—a hope that our countries which fought and murdered each other on an industrial scale twice in one century could come together, a refusal to return to extreme nationalism and a determination to prevent more bloody conflicts in which tens of millions are killed. The audacious idea of European integration was motivated by fear, but it was made possible by

shared ideals—democracy, human rights, equality and freedom—and a refusal to submit to the tyranny of fascism ever again.

After the Second World War, Winston Churchill said in 1946:

“If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance there would be no limit to the happiness, prosperity and glory”.

Today, however, some Conservative colleagues talk about total independence from Europe as though it were a virtue. Let me remind them that Churchill understood the European dream is to build a whole that is bigger than the sum of its parts. He understood that it is about pooling sovereignty, working together and sharing control.

Let us now be honest with the country. Total independence is a fantasy.

It is the same idea that motivates an angry teenager to run away from their family. Total independence means throwing a tantrum and ending up in the cold. Total independence is selfishness, individualism, arrogance, superiority, a refusal to work together and the breakdown of the common good.

Total independence will lead to total isolation. Let us be honest: Britain did not become great in total isolation.

Britain thrived by becoming the biggest treaty-signing power in the world, signing more than 14,000 treaties in the modern age. Britain thrived by sharing, not stockpiling our sovereignty.

NATO membership compels us to deploy soldiers when our fellow members are attacked. The Paris climate accords demonstrate how we tackle global threats together, not alone. There is also our membership of the WTO, which commits the UK to supra-national regulation and arbitration. Sovereignty is not an asset to be hoarded, but a resource, which has value only when it is spent.

The hard Brexiteers in the House say that they want to take back the control that we lost because of the European Union. In reality, they are still mourning Suez, Britain's last fling of the colonial dice. Back then, Anthony Eden failed to recognise that Britain was no longer capable of launching a solo imperial adventure. Let us not fall for the same hubris today.

When those on the other side of the debate say that they want empire 2.0, let us ask what it means. What was imperialism? What was colonialism?


At its worst, the British empire was exploitation and subjugation—moral superiority that led to putting humans in shackles and the oppression of black and brown people because this country thought it knew best. Those countries once coloured pink on the globe were not won in negotiations, but taken by force. Today, we need to build a new image of Britain, which brings this country together after years of division. We have to use our imagination. Empire 2.0 is not it.

After the global embarrassment of Suez, Britain became the sick man of Europe. The European Economic Community was set up in 1958, but Britain did not join until 1973. In those years, GDP per head rose by 95% in France, Italy and West Germany, while Britain grew by only half that rate. Our industry and economy had fallen behind. Europe gave post-imperial Britain a chance to regain some wealth and dignity. In the 40 years since, our economy grew faster than those of France, Germany and Italy.

We restored our position on the global stage, but it was not only our prosperity that increased. Our allies in the US respected us for our seat at the top table in Europe, and the rest of the world saw us become a confident nation again: a grown-up country, prepared to give and take for the greater good.

The Brexiteer promise to take back control in 2016 was nothing more than a deluded fantasy. It was a lie that divided friends and families, pandered to racism and xenophobia and caused an extra 638 hate crimes per month. What does it say about the United Kingdom when the UN sends rapporteurs to warn us of increased racism in our country? What does it say about Britain when our politicians play on the fear of migrants, races and religions to win votes? What did it say





when Nigel Farage stood in front of a Nazi-inspired poster of refugees with the caption, "Breaking point"?

The founder of the Labour party, Keir Hardie, spoke of socialism's "promise of freedom", its "larger hope for humanity" and of "binding the races of the earth into one all-embracing brotherhood".

I honestly ask my good friends in the party who are still wavering: can you really vote for this politics of division and hate? Can you really vote to slash workers' rights and protections? Can you vote to give tax avoiders a sanctuary? Can you vote to hand over more power to the clumsy hand of the market?

What I am about to say is not fashionable, but our country's story of renewal through Europe is one of immigration. We grew as a nation because of free movement. European migrants are not "citizens of nowhere" or "queue jumpers" as the Prime Minister would have us believe. Young, energetic, diverse and willing to pay taxes, EU citizens have given so much. They have done the jobs that our own would not do. Around 3.8 million now live in Britain. Over their lifetimes, they will pay in £78,000 more than they take out.

The contribution of European migrants has not been just financial. Our culture, our art, our music and our food has been permanently improved. The Prime Minister's deal has emerged as a Frankenstein's monster—an ugly beast that no one voted for or wanted. To appease hardliners, the transition period can be extended to 2022 at most. That has eradicated our leverage—it is simply not enough time to negotiate a free trade deal. We are now on course for another cliff edge. The deal does not take back control; it gives it away. It surrenders our voting rights on the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament for nothing in return. I cannot vote for any form of Brexit because every form of Brexit is worse for my constituents.

Brexit is a historic mistake. It forgets the lessons of Britain's past. It forgets the value of immigrants. It forgets that we cannot build a new empire by force. It forgets that in the modern world our nation will flourish not through isolation, but through connection, co-operation and a new vision for the common good. Brexit forgets why this continent came together after two bloody wars.

This country is crying out for a second chance. Seven hundred thousand people marched on the streets of London. Millions more campaigned online and wrote to their MPs. They are asking for one thing: an opportunity to right the wrong of 2016 and another shot at the imperfect but audacious European dream.

As John of Gaunt says in Shakespeare's "Richard II":

"That England, that wont to conquer others,  
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself."

## Some awful puns to finish with

The meaning of opaque is unclear.

I wasn't going to get a brain transplant but then I changed my mind.

Have you ever tried to eat a clock? It's very time consuming. A man tried to assault me with milk, cream and butter. How dairy!

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I can't put it down.

So what if I don't know the meaning of the word 'apocalypse'? It's not the end of the world.

The other day I held the door open for a clown. I thought it was a nice jester.

I used to have a fear of hurdles, but I got over it.

**David Jellie, Editor**  
pdjellie@hotmail.com





**Annual General Meeting**  
**Monday 18th March 2019, 11.30 am**

Vicroads Association  
 Reg No A00222505

**Notice of Motion**

Mail to the Hon Secretary, VicRoads Retirees Association Inc, 60 Denmark Street, Kew, Vic 3101 for receipt by Tuesday 12th March 2019.

Notice of Motion to be presented at the Annual Meeting, 18th March 2019:

.....  
 .....

(Please print)

**Annual General Meeting**  
**Monday 18th March 2019, 11.30 am**

**Nomination for Committee**

Mail to the Hon. Secretary, 60 Denmark Street, Kew, Vic 3101, for receipt by Tuesday 12th March 2019.

Nomination for General Committee March 2019 to March 2021:

Office/Position: .....

Nominee (print name): .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Proposer (print name): ..... Date: .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

**Annual General Meeting Buffet Lunch**  
**19th March 2019, 12 noon to 1.00 pm at Head Office Cafeteria.**

Mail to the Hon. Secretary, 60 Denmark Street, Kew, Vic 3101, for receipt by Tuesday 12th March 2019.

I will be attending accompanied by: .....

(Please print)

Member's name: .....

(Please print)

