

September 2019



Vicroads Association

Newsletter No.210



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,

Undoubtedly, the biggest news in this newsletter is the closing down of VicRoads. As of 1 July 2019, VicRoads is no more – exactly 30 years after it started. When I first heard the news, I was gutted. After 106 years of service to Victoria all that effort, ingenuity, integrity, innovation and dedication becomes a backwater of history.

On Wednesday 26th June VicRoads opened up all its road related offices in the state and put on an afternoon tea for all current and ex-VicRoads staff who could attend. Many of you would have missed notice of this as we were only able to notify those people on our email list. A ceremony was arranged in the Head Office Theatre and this was livestreamed via Skype to all the other offices. The speakers were Robyn Seymour (Chief Executive), myself (representing retired staff) and Andrew Wall (representing current staff).

I won't go through my entire speech but among other things, I said.

'When the CRB was formed in 1913 there were about 30,000 cars and trucks in Victoria and it is interesting to note that most politicians then thought that the main task was to cater for horse drawn traffic rather than motorized traffic. The Board's mission was to identify, define and manage the state's main road system – and that is mainly the system we enjoy today.

It saddens me to see to see this continuous history fractured. When I started my career, my practical education and experience was learnt not only from engineering mentors, but also foremen, road masters and clerks of works. I worked in an environment where I was surrounded by mentors.

I might be a grumpy old man, but I am concerned to see the modern trend now of people working away on their screens in isolation with seemingly minimal personal interaction. I loved the talk in the office and learnt a lot from it.

The CRB was the first State Road Authority in Australia and it, and later the RCA and VicRoads established a reputation for excellence. In fact, our expertise in sprayed sealing, traffic engineering, and road safety strategy drew international attention.

It is sad to note that not many engineers in Australia receive the honours they deserve. This is because most of them work in teams rather than as individuals. But when you think of our 21st Century life style, including our health and safety, it is the engineers as a profession who have probably had the greatest influence.'

I went on to mention some of our pioneers and the contributions they made to the network that we enjoy today. I finished with Tom Russell and mentioned how heart-broken he would have been to see the demise of his beloved organisation. I went on to say:

'However, I should not talk of demise. In one way or another, the responsibilities and expertise of VicRoads will have to survive within the Department of Transport under its new structure.



I realize that change is necessary. Melbourne grows by the population of Bendigo every year and it is not possible to achieve our infrastructure needs using old institutions and delivery systems. I hope that VicRoads' expertise can be reinvigorated in the new structure. It is essential that the government have expert people within its ranks to ensure that government objectives are met.

For those of you moving into this new phase of roads management, please accept my best wishes on your new journey. Theoretically, it has one advantage for us. You all become ex VicRoads staff on the 1 July thus making you eligible to join the VicRoads Association. We would welcome you.

Good luck and best wishes.'

There are further details of the new arrangements later in this newsletter.

These changes will also impact on our Association and the committee has already started to consider these ramifications. For example, our name will probably need to change as VicRoads no longer exists. Jim Webber and I have sought a meeting with Robyn Seymour to discuss this but you can imagine that she is very busy at the moment with all the changed arrangements to be settled down and it might be some time before we are able to see her.

In the meantime, we propose to continue on in the normal way. I am quite optimistic that we will continue to receive the support we enjoy from the organization. Be assured that we will keep you informed of developments.

David Jellie
President and Editor



Dates for your diary

Our program for the remainder of 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

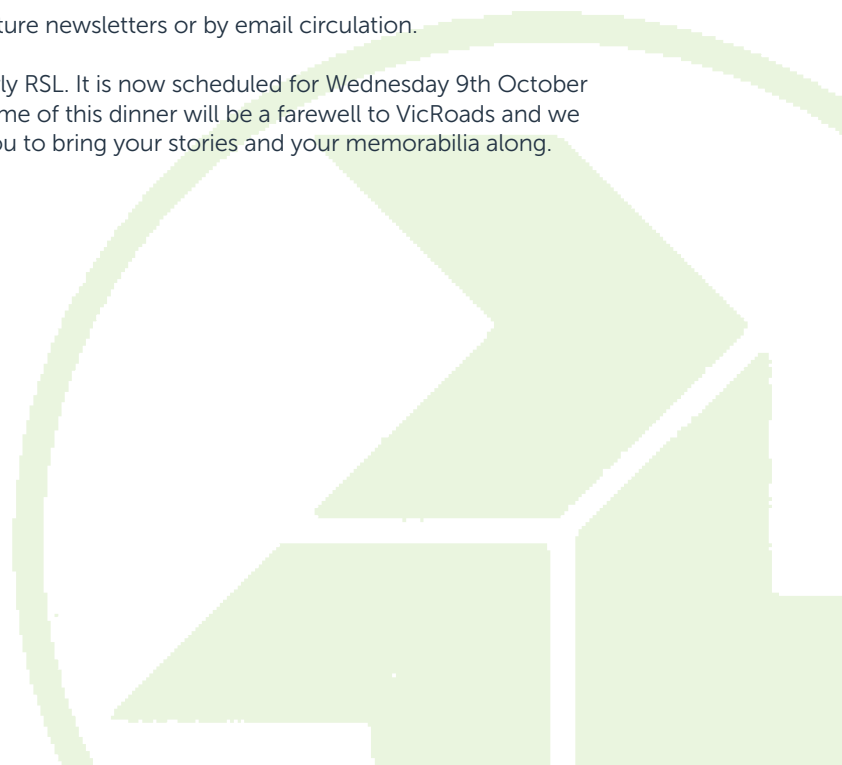
September	Monday 2	9.45 am	Melbourne Suburban Rail Loop
	11 and 12	9.45 am	Visit to Ballarat Regional Office
October	Monday 7	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
	Thursday 17	6 pm	Drinks and dinner at Waverley RSL
	Monday 28	9.45 am	Visit to North East Link Project
November	Monday 25	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
December	TBA	12 noon	Christmas luncheon

2020

February	Monday 10	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
April	Friday 3	12 noon	Christmas luncheon

We will provide further details of arrangements either in future newsletters or by email circulation.

Please note the change of date for the dinner at the Waverly RSL. It is now scheduled for Wednesday 9th October and not on 10th October as previously advertised. The theme of this dinner will be a farewell to VicRoads and we hope to get a lot of people there for the wake. We need you to bring your stories and your memorabilia along. Details will be provided in the next newsletter.



What's coming up

Occasional Lunches – Shoppingtown Hotel: Monday 7 October and Monday 25 November 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.

Melbourne Suburban Rail Loop: 2 September 2019 at 9.45 am

The proposed Suburban Rail Loop is a new underground rail network connecting Melbourne's middle suburbs. It will include new stations and connect major railway lines from the Frankston line to the Werribee line via Melbourne Airport.

The Suburban Rail Loop will connect Melbourne's middle suburbs to priority growth precincts, and link all Victorians to major health, education and employment centres.

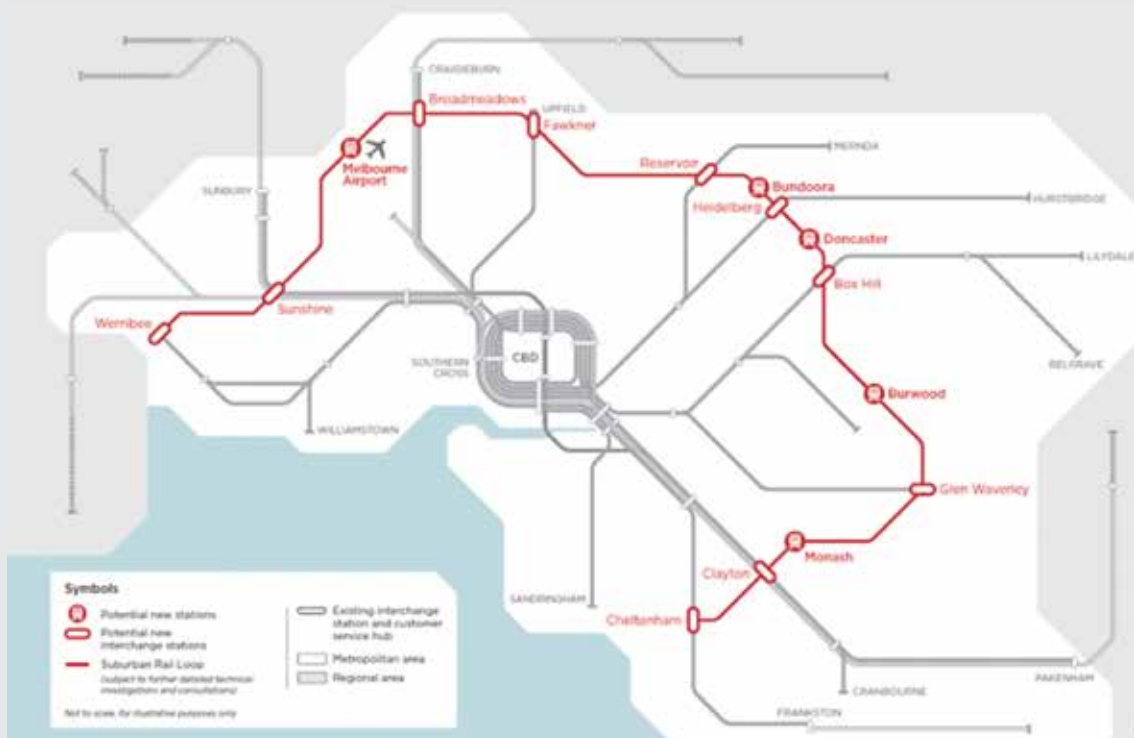
A Strategic Assessment that supports the potential development of a Suburban Rail Loop has been released. It proposes a new rail network forming a ring around Melbourne's suburbs. Three potential corridors were considered for the project, reflecting the places of state significance set out in Plan Melbourne.

The Strategic Assessment has identified potential next steps, all of which would require further funding:

1. Development of a full business case
2. Detailed technical and planning work to develop the project scope and assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of the project
3. Market engagement with industry to inform the business case development; and
4. An extensive stakeholder consultation process

As you can see, this project is very much in the early stages of planning but we will be able to glean an insight about the principles of the project and the issues and processes leading to finalisation of the design.

We propose to meet at 9.45 am at 121 Exhibition Street for a 10 am start and afterwards, head across the street to the hotel for lunch. Please note that our secretary, Jim Webber, is currently overseas so interested members should contact David Jellie at pdjellie@hotmail.com or Ted Barton at edbarton@optusnet.com.au to confirm their attendance.



Conceptual layout of the Melbourne Suburban Rail Loop

Ballarat Visit – September 11 and 12

Our proposed program is as follows:

WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

	ITEM	LOCATION
11 am	Welcome tea/coffee to Regional Roads Victoria and Western Highway Project	RRV Regional Office 88 Learmonth Road, Wendouree Parking of cars at or near office
11.30 am	Issues and Organisational Change from VicRoads to Regional Roads Victoria/DoT and Major Roads Projects Victoria.	RRV Regional Office
12.30 pm	Light lunch	
1.30 pm	Presentation relating to planning/strategic planning for development in Western Region and Projects within Western Region incorporating: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic Road/Transport Planning 2. Broader context of planning and local/regional drivers of planning 3. Planning and delivery of local, regional and major projects 	RRV Regional Office The 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm timeslot to allow 20mins for travel from the Regional Office to Her Majesty's Theatre (Lydiard St South).
3.30 pm	Guided tour of Her Majesty's Theatre restoration.	City of Ballarat – 17 Lydiard Street South Travel to Her Majesty's Theatre by personal vehicles. Some on street parking may be available in Lydiard Street South. Failing that the multi-storey car park behind Central Square Shopping Centre/Myer; Access off Dana Street between Midland Hwy/ Doveton Street South and Armstrong Street South. Afternoon session to conclude by approximately 5.00 pm
7 pm	Dinner	Golden City Hotel on the Corner of Sturt and Dawson Streets in the CBD.

THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

	ITEM	LOCATION
9.00 am	Tour of and presentation of the operation of the recently constructed Central Victoria Livestock Exchange.	Northwest of the Western Freeway/Sunraysia Highway interchange near Miners Rest. Access from the Sunraysia Highway. Take own cars. Expected to conclude at 10.15 am.
10.30 am	Guided tour of historic sites in the Ballarat CBD and possibly include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mechanics Institute 2. Craig's Hotel 3. City of Ballarat Town Hall 4. other historic sites, laneways and statues 	Meet at the Ballarat Mechanics Institute 117–119 Sturt Street, Ballarat. This tour will include a morning tea at the Mechanics Institute at the commencement of the tour. Cost \$10 per person. Expected to conclude at approximately 12.30 pm at the Art Gallery of Ballarat and this will be the conclusion of the organised program.
12.30 pm	Lunch	Group/individuals to dine as determined on the day.
PM	Return home	A tour of the Art Gallery of Ballarat may be an option for those wishing to spend a little more time in Ballarat before returning home.

Accommodation in Ballarat at this time could be difficult to find due to the Eisteddfod. We have spoken to the Manger of the Mid City Hotel.

Suggested Hotel:

Mid City Hotel, 19 Doveton Street North,
Ballarat Central 3350.
www.midcityballarat.com.au

Phone: 03 5327 7588

Contact: Josh Cartledge Manager

Standard room (Queen size bed) with breakfast: \$129
Standard twin room with breakfast: \$149

See website for other room options.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact David Jellie at pdjellie@hotmail.com or Ted Barton on edbarton@optusnet.com.au

Vale

I am sorry to inform you that Gordon Mills, a loyal member of the VicRoads Association, passed away on the 19 February 2019. He was aged 92 years.

He retired in 1987 as the Group Manager of Stores and Purchasing based at Syndal. He commenced with the CRB in December 1962 as the Divisional Accountant in Geelong and in 1976 he was promoted to the position of Assistant Chief Accountant at Head Office in Kew before moving to Syndal.

We extend our sympathies to Gordon's family.

New members

I am pleased to welcome a number of new members to the association as follows:

Peter McDonald worked for 20 years at the CRB/ VicRoads, starting as a cadet engineer in 1970, working in Benalla Division on graduation and then on to the Materials Research Division. His final position was Manager Geotechnical. In 1993 he was engaged by a private consultancy in 1993, Douglas Partners where he became the Chief Executive of the Victorian office, from which he retired in 2017.

I see Peter fairly regularly as we catch up on our association during the West Gate Freeway days. Peter is keen to catch up with a few of the people he once worked with during his VicRoads career.

Others to join are Wayne Harvey, Julie Cooper (1982-2016) and Ross Gordon.

Lost contacts

We have had newsletters returned to us from Peter Jeffreys and Alan Lade. They may have shifted recently. Can anyone provide any information about them? Please contact me on pdjellie@hotmail.com or on 0418 105 276.



What's been happening

VicRoads Wake

26 June 2019

Here are a few other photographs taken at the ceremony:



Elizabeth Hovenden, Ian Hall, Rob McQuillen, Nick Szwed, Pat Rogerson, Bill Saggars and Eve Grimm..



Nick Szwed, Andrew Wall, John Smelt and John Griffith.

Visit to the Rail Projects Victoria and Melbourne Airport Rail

6 June 2019

37 members attended this session given by Stephen Shaddock and Megan Cusack.

Rail Projects Victoria is the authority coordinating the planning and delivery of our major rail projects in the pipeline including the Suburban Rail Loop, the Melbourne Airport Rail, the Fast Rail to Geelong, the Metro Tunnel, the Regional Rail Revival, the Western Rail Plan and the Sunbury Line Upgrade. For this session, we concentrated on the Melbourne Airport Rail. The authority is developing a Victorian Government a detailed Business Case for the project, having selected the Sunshine Route as its preferred route.

The project is set to begin construction by 2022 subject to the required approvals and construction is expected to take up to nine years.

The Strategic Appraisal found that the Sunshine Route performs better than other options which looked at hubs at Maribyrnong, Flemington and Craigieburn.

Compared to the other options, the Sunshine Route provides:

- Superior connections to more areas of Melbourne through its integration with the Metro Tunnel
- Superior connections to regional Victoria through an upgraded Sunshine interchange
- Earlier deliverability at a lower cost.

This decision is consistent with the recommendation of the 2012 Public Transport Victoria study.



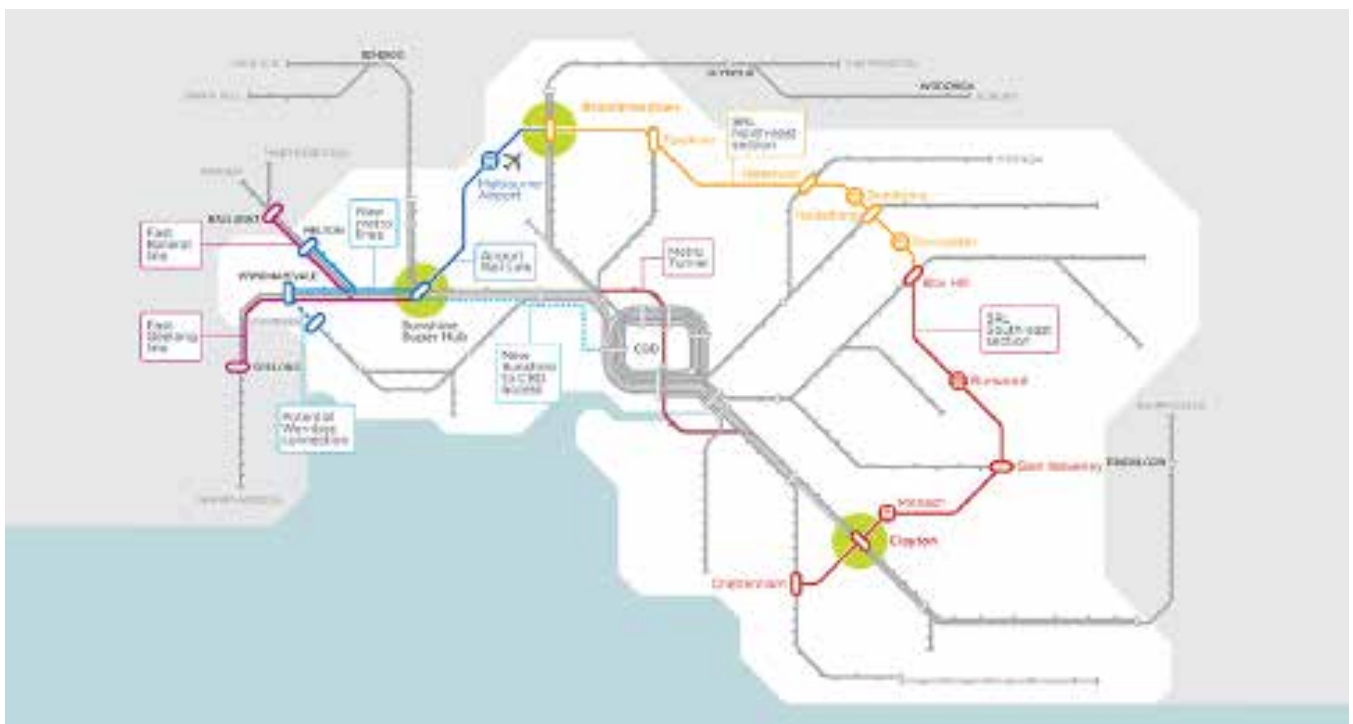
Melbourne Airport Rail will make it easier for people to get to and from the airport. This new link to the airport will deliver the following benefits:

- Reduced congestion getting to the airport – Passenger numbers at Melbourne Airport are expected to almost double by 2038 to more than 67 million people per annum. Melbourne Airport Rail will help meet this increased demand, alleviating pressure on our roads.
- Improved connectivity – Sunshine station will be upgraded making it easier for metropolitan and regional passengers (from Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo) travelling to and from the airport.
- Support the development of the Sunshine precinct – The upgraded Sunshine station would boost the development of the Sunshine employment and innovation cluster, building upon its existing facilities and services.
- Unlocking future growth – Melbourne Airport Rail has the potential to unlock further growth in western and northern Victoria by creating extra capacity on congested rail corridors, meaning faster and more frequent train services to regional centres and regional Victoria.

The map below, while at this stage is hypothetical, shows how the Sunshine Super Hub connects with the existing and future networks – both regional and metropolitan. The red and orange lines represent the future Suburban Rail Loop which also connects to Melbourne Airport.

I think I can safely say that the attendees agreed that this was one of the best excursions we have ever had and we will definitely book another session next year to see how the project is developing.

It was further enhanced by the lunch we had at the pub over the road.



Conceptual layout of Melbourne's future rail network



News from our members

Lance Midgley

Lance sent me an email after the VicRoads' wake as follows:

'I attended the "End of VicRoads" afternoon Tea at the Ballarat office today to be able to say I was there.

I really enjoyed your reflection (and Andrew's) on our past. I agree with your sentiment regarding the hope that technical expertise in managing our road network including constructing and maintaining these facilities will not be lost in the new organisational structures.

I look forward to catching up with you and others when the VicRoads Association visits Ballarat in September

The photo above was taken at the gathering showing Lance with three of his staff who were working with the organisation when he was Regional Director 10 years ago and who are still there today. They are left to right: Bradley Pryor, Carolyn Byrnes, Lance and Troy Berry.

John Wright's Odyssey (Continued)

Life in Port Moresby

We continue with John's story of life in Papua New Guinea.

Outings and parties

To begin with, we would visit the drive-in theatre, which was quite unlike any we had encountered in Australia because it had a halfway reasonable restaurant, which served quality meals with good Australian wine. You could also buy Danish beers like Carlsberg or Tuborg. We loved the drive-in and would often visit it with our friends, the Hollamby's. I recall one evening there was a torrential downpour just as we were leaving, and the roads were hopping with cane toads.

Our rare dining out sessions were usually at the Chinese restaurant in Boroko, or at a restaurant in the wide area between the two highway carriageways on the Boroko side of 3-Mile Hill, where we enjoyed Indonesian food. While many of our major outings were balls and social evenings organised by the Car Club - including one attended by the PNG Administrator, Sir Ian McClellan. We did attend other important functions because I was the Secretary of the Car Club, which was a major social group in the local community.

Babysitting was no problem. The Commonwealth Department of Works ran a babysitting service. We always had the same, older lady from the CommWorks Ladies Hostel in Airvos Avenue. She was a big-boned country girl with a refreshingly candid approach to life, who got on very well with the littlies and originated from Nar Nar Goon in Victoria. She had worked as a governess on a large rural property and told some wonderful stories about her experiences working as a live-in nanny on Gippsland farms. My biggest problem was safely transporting her back to her hostel along unlit, hair-raising narrow roads on the mountainside above Port Moresby at night while often being significantly intoxicated.

We would sometimes drive to Ilders Bay to the northwest of Port Moresby. It was a lovely place for a picnic, surrounded by coconut palms with a sandy beach and clear tropical waters in which could be seen colourful fish.



John's flat in Port Moresby

Music

There was not much in the way of commercial radio in Port Moresby, and we did not have a radio in the Peugeot. One of my favourite songs was Lazy Sunday Afternoon by the Small Faces. I would enjoy listening to it on my own lazy Sunday afternoons in the flat's kitchen while Sylvia and the littlies slept and I was methodically exterminating the holdout cockroaches who were still inhabiting the oven. I would turn it on full and wait for them to emerge, feelers waving as they sought refuge from the intense heat. Then I would kill them by drowning them in a deadly moat of insecticide.

Speaking of insects, there were the marvellous Beatles, whose songs bookmarked my life for an enormous period. Their Yellow Submarine was an enormous hit in Moresby, where a local native band The Binitangs (insects) had their own popular rendition. At one stage, I entertained the idea of working for Sir Robert McAlpine, who was then recruiting Australian engineers to work in the UK. The song Winchester Cathedral always reminds me of my totally unrealistic dreams of working there. Thank God it never worked out. In December 1966 when we were flying down to Melbourne on holiday, the Beatles song, 'We can work it out' was playing in my head.

Working

When I arrived in Port Moresby there was Ric and myself – the draftsmen and Ted and Bob, the engineers. Bob had his own, glassed-in office and was heavily involved in the World Bank financed Madang – Mt Hagen road project. One of my early tasks was to prepare a large map of the Central Highlands, based on old maps, aerial photographs and Bob's personal observations in a helicopter, to show potential routes for the project. Both Bob and Ted were often away inspecting sites in other parts of the Territory, including New Britain. Ric and I were never included and were lucky if we visited sites in Port Moresby.

Because the weather was hot and humid the office was necessarily air-conditioned. The drawing media we used would otherwise shrink considerably under the outside conditions, making it impossible to accurately trace from original drawings. When the power went off, which happened occasionally – especially during the dry season when Rouna Falls all but dried up, we had to quickly unpin our drawings to prevent them from tearing.

After heavy rain, some quite large spiders would be flushed out of their burrows in the garden. Large wasps would then appear, looking for homeless spiders to sting and carry off to their nests. On one occasion, one of these huge wasps found its way into the office, upsetting the office dog Jones (a corgi) and causing Ric and I to down tools while we pursued it around the office with rolled up plans. At that moment, the senior Partner appeared in the doorway and stood momentarily mystified by our antics.

In late 1965 Bob left the company to work for another local consultant. Not long afterwards, there was a major downturn in business in Queensland and about 14 staff including my friend Bruce, were retrenched from the Auchenflower office. I came to understand that the money we were earning from our major clients, the Commonwealth Department of Works and the Public Works Department in Port Moresby was keeping the remaining staff in wages in Brisbane.

Medical and health concerns

Sylvia managed to escape most illness and accidents, with the exception of being bitten on the hand by our poor dog Abbie who was in pain after being hit by a car. This necessitated a trip to the Hospital at night to receive a tetanus injection. Most of the nastier things seemed to happen to me, including:



A street scene in Port Moresby in 1968

Malaria and other problems

We were aware that there was a risk of contracting malaria or dengue fever from mosquitoes, and we were understandably paranoid about being bitten. We were advised to take a daily dose of anti-malaria drug called Camoquin, which supposedly stopped one from being infected if bitten. After several months of dosing myself with Camoquin I felt decidedly off-colour and was thinking about not taking it. My mind was made-up when a member of a visiting Australian football team died shortly after taking his first dose of the drug. I can't recall whether Sylvia was taking it or not.

Late in 1966 I awoke with a high fever and subsequent hot and cold fits, which became quite severe. I simultaneously developed diarrhoea and was rapidly becoming dehydrated. I visited a doctor in the medical centre near the Police Station and he cheerfully told me that I might either have malaria, hepatitis or dysentery. He did not order any tests but instead prescribed three lots of tablets and said that one of them would kill whatever it was that was ailing me. One of them did, but I never found out what was wrong with me. At the time, we suspected it was malaria, although I never suffered any of the return bouts normally associated with that disease. Notwithstanding this, the Red Cross would never accept my blood thereafter for general donation purposes.

Malaria was very common, but it was mainly the native population that seemed to be affected. I remember one evening after dinner our hausboi Telea was late in coming up to wash the dishes. Eventually there was a knock at the door and we found Telea supported on both sides by two of his mates. He was sweating profusely, and his eyes were rolling about in his head. "We've bought Telea up to wash the dishes" they said. We managed to shoe-horn him into the back seat of our car and rushed him to the hospital. The poor bloke was almost dead from malaria.

There was a special wing at the hospital for small native children with malaria. It was very sad to see them because they all had grossly swollen abdomens from malarial spleens and sad faces. We learned that nearly all of them were beyond saving because they had reached this terminal stage of the disease. Their poor parents lived in basic accommodation at the hospital to care for them.


I remembered my Uncle Bill talking about tropical ulcers from when he served in New Guinea but never gave them much thought until I had one myself. Walking past the aluminium louvres in our flat one day I grazed my forearm on one of the louvre levers. The graze quickly healed, but after a while a lump arose on the site, and this steadily grew in size and became quite tender and inflamed. I was at work one morning when the lump burst and revealed, to my horror, a bright green core that stank to high heaven. For some time afterwards, I had a depression on my arm that could accommodate most of my thumb.

I was recovering from a particularly bad bout of dysentery one week-day afternoon when I was still off work and drove Sylvia down to Ela Beach to pick the littlies from the crèche there. Sylvia had opened the driver's side rear door when she had walked off to the crèche, and for some idiotic reason, I had my hand outstretched behind me with my thumb on the pillar of the open door. Sylvia returned with the littlies, bundled them into the back seat and slammed the door – on my thumb.

By the time I was able to draw breath from the pain radiating up my arm from my poor squashed thumb and scream out, Sylvia was already sitting beside me as I frantically scabbled to reach the door handle to release myself. It took her quite a few agonising moments to realise what had happened and walk around the car to release me.

Doctors and hospitals

In the beginning, we saw Drs Jim Jacobi and Kerry Larkin in their surgery at Boroko. Dr Larkin was Wendy Woods' brother, so he was sort of family. Their surgery had this rather cold-blooded South African nurse who administered one of the most painful series of penicillin injections I have ever experienced in my life, after my cowboy dentist had carelessly infected an extraction site in my mouth by putting his grotty thumb into it to stop the bleeding. What this sadist did was to slowly push the needle into my buttock because she said my arms were too thin for such injections. Sylvia later told me that the nurse should have simply stuck the needle into my bum in one swift movement. Eventually, after a series of what can only be described as clangers by Jacobi, including Tania's birth, we stopped going there and found ourselves a different doctor near the hospital.



The new doctor was an older lady, Dr McHutchinson, who was lovely and very droll. I once presented to her with a particularly bad bout of diarrhoea that required me to map out my journey to see her via known places where a toilet might be found quickly. After checking me out, she handed me a bottle of pink liquid and said: "We call this stuff concrete. It will plug up a hole in the Queen Mary if necessary" It certainly worked wonders on mine.

We took James to see her after we found a huge worm sticking out of his bottom when we were changing his nappy. Dr McHutchinson was delighted at the size of this unique specimen and popped it into a specimen jar, telling us that it was a roundworm and that for James' sake we had been extremely fortunate in finding it when we did, as such infestations can be very harmful if left untreated. The worm had apparently come from our dog, so we had to dose both James and the dog to prevent a further outbreak.

Dr McHutchinson strongly advised us to avoid being admitted to Port Moresby Hospital for anything more serious than a cut finger if at all possible because of the poor standard of care. She also said that the penicillin they prescribed was almost useless in combatting infections because it was purchased in bulk in crystal form on a dodgy government tender system. For anything that did not require immediate, emergency treatment, we were advised to fly to the mainland and have it handled there. Notwithstanding this advice, Sylvia, James and I all attended there. For Sylvia, it was to give birth to Tania, and for me it was to have yet another tooth removed - under a general anaesthetic. For James, it was to have his tonsils removed. We were certainly not in a financial position to afford flights to the mainland and all of the other costs that would have been involved.

We heard a wonderful story about the native nurses at the hospital. They were all transported back and forth each day from the nurses' quarters in a special bus with an armed guard and were all placed on the contraceptive pill by order of the matron to stop them from getting pregnant.

Money, credit and debt

It didn't take us long to discover that despite our cheap rent and the extra money from the zone allowance and the lower taxation in Papua, we were actually worse-off financially than we had been in Brisbane. The main reason for this was the very high cost of living, which was far in excess of what we had been led to believe (or wanted to believe) when I had applied for the job. Port Moresby was full of single guys who lived frugally in shared accommodation centres, called "dongas", and they were able to make lots of money before heading south. As married parents with two young children, we were unable to enjoy the same economies.

Adding to our problems was the ready credit that was made available by Burns Philp at their supermarkets. All of our shopping there was done on credit and you only found out how much you owed when the BP bill came in at the end of the month. There were no credit cards. Almost everybody paid for everything by cheque - everywhere. The banks allowed you to run up an overdraft - subject to them holding some kind of security. In my case, it was a small life insurance policy I had. The ability to overdraw was actually necessary because in my case, my fortnightly pay would sometimes be a day or two late being deposited in the bank by the firm in Brisbane.

Dud cheques

We were far from being the only ones in Port Moresby with money problems. Every service station and all of the Chinese trade stores had a "wall of shame" on which were mounted bounced cheques bearing the account holder's name. It was always interesting to look at these displays to see who was in trouble. The only way to have your bad cheques removed from public display was to pay your debt and all associated bank charges.

There was one memorable fraudster who visited every trade store in town, bought lots of high value jewellery using worthless cheques and then attempted to board a plane to the mainland. He had underestimated the Chinese, who recognised the pattern of sales and had tipped off the police, who removed him from the plane at the airport. All of the Chinese trade store owners colluded to ensure that as soon as the culprit was released from Bomana Gaol at the completion of one sentence, another trade store owner would then press charges and the thief would go back inside again for a further stretch. He was still there when we left.

To be continued...



News from the Department of Transport

Paul Younis, the Secretary of the Department of Transport, recently made this announcement regarding the Deputy Secretary roles.

I am excited to announce the appointments of the six Deputy Secretary roles that will commence with the formation of the department on 1 July 2019.

These appointments reflect the importance of needing a strong leadership team in place to support our transition to a new integrated Department of Transport that will help deliver on the government's transport agenda to further deliver the integrated planning, delivery and management of transport in Victoria.

Following a merit based recruitment process, and consultation with Ministers, I plan to make the following appointments:

Deputy Secretary, Network Planning

Appointee – Ms Robyn Seymour

As the acting Chief Executive of VicRoads, Robyn has had many years of experience in planning a smart, safer road network and overseeing developments in new vehicle technology.

Robyn is currently responsible for the operation of the metropolitan road network day to day, supporting the city through disruption coordination and supporting more public transport services and active travel options on the road.

As Deputy Secretary, Network Planning, Robyn will determine what the network needs, plans and designs for the future to deliver on the transport strategy, system design, service planning and consolidation of road safety policy.

Deputy Secretary, Network Integration

Appointee – Mr William Tieppo

William has worked in both the private and public sectors over the last 23 years, primarily in the delivery of major transport infrastructure across road and rail. As a civil engineer, William has served in key executive roles within VicRoads, City of Greater Geelong and now within the Department of Transport leading the Network Development branch.

As Deputy Secretary, Network Integration, William will deliver the transport priorities through the development and delivery of an integrated pipeline of projects and supports the Major Transport Infrastructure Program.

Deputy Secretary, Transport Operations*

Appointee – Mr Jeroen Weimar

Jeroen is the face of public transport in Victoria, having led Public Transport Victoria as CEO for nearly five years and more recently as chair of V/Line.

Jeroen will now be responsible for delivering transport operations across all modes that millions of people rely on every day.

Delivering Victorians more travel choices and better connections, and ensuring people are well informed during the huge rebuilding taking place across road and rail networks, is a critical role as Victoria builds one single public interface for all things transport in Victoria.

*An alternative title reflecting the public facing nature of this role will be determined prior to 1 July.

Deputy Secretary, Policy and Innovation

Appointee – Ms Megan Bourke-O'Neil

Megan is a policy and strategy leader with over 20 years' experience in the transport and infrastructure sectors, including roles as Deputy Head, Policy and Reform of Transport for Victoria and Chair of Commercial Passenger Vehicles Victoria.

As Deputy Secretary, Policy and Innovation, Megan will be responsible to drive future transport legislative and policy reform and embed a deep understanding of the user and innovative technology.

Deputy Secretary, Investment and Technology

Appointee – Mr Dean Tighe

Dean's expertise is in the development and delivery of complex public sector investment and infrastructure strategy.

Dean currently heads Infrastructure Policy and Assurance at the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), having also led the Network Performance and Investment group in transport at the former Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

As Deputy Secretary, Investment and Technology, Dean will deliver DoT's investment strategy, and commercial and information technology services to drive high performance and improved commercial outcomes for the state.

Deputy Secretary, People and Business Services Appointee – Ms Melinda Collinson

Melinda has over 23 years of experience in State Government, with 18 of those in transport. She has held roles in VicRoads, the former Department of Transport, WorkSafe, Transport for Victoria and most recently, as Acting Deputy Secretary of People and Business.

As Deputy Secretary, People and Business Services, Melinda will be responsible for delivering business enabling people and corporate services functions, to drive a high performance culture and to support integrated operations.

I believe this new leadership team brings the experience, passion and skills to ensure we work more effectively, efficiently and collectively to make travel easier for Victorians at a time of unprecedented growth and investment.

Now that we have our six Deputy Secretaries appointed, I also intend to have an expanded leadership team who will meet regularly and be involved in decision-making to ensure we grow into a truly mode-agnostic transport organisation, that is focussed on delivering better outcomes.

This is an important time in us coming together. Through my visits to our office locations, I'm continually amazed at the range and complexity of services we deliver, and how people are engaging in the transition process.

Please continue to provide feedback, ask questions and engage with Design Working Groups and the Transport Transition Program Management Office (PMO) as we continue coming together as a new integrated Department.

Trivia and didactic whimsies

Look before you leap

A consulting firm, feeling it was time for a shakeup, hired a new Chief Executive. The new boss was determined to make his mark and rid the company of all slackers. On a tour of the facilities, the Chief noticed a guy leaning against a wall. The room was full of workers and he wanted to let them know that he meant business. He asked the guy, "How much money do you make a week?"

A little surprised, the young man looked at him and said, "I make \$500 a week. Why?"

The Chief said, "Wait right here." He walked back to his office, came back in two minutes, handed the guy \$2,000 in cash, and said, "Here's four weeks' pay. Now GET OUT and don't come back."

Feeling pretty good about himself, the Chief looked around the room and asked, "Does anyone want to tell me what that slacker did here?"

From across the room a voice said, "Pizza delivery guy!"

The following day, a young engineer was leaving the office at 5.45pm. when he found the CEO standing in front of the shredder with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Listen," said the CEO, "this is a very sensitive and important document and my secretary is not here. Can you make this thing work?"

"Certainly," said the young engineer. He turned on the machine, inserted the paper and pressed the start button.

"Excellent, excellent!" said the CEO as his paper disappeared inside the machine, "I just need one copy."

Sign of the times

I recently entered a competition to see who had gained the most weight and lost the most hair. It was advertised as a 'School Reunion.'



Death of Joe Bertony

Joe who?

The Sydney Opera House is an architectural icon of world-wide recognition. Last year, while in Denmark, I visited the house of its Architect, Jorn Utzon and I was reminded of the unfair treatment meted out to him by the small-minded and ignorant NSW politicians of the time. He was not invited to the opening ceremony and his name was not even mentioned so bitter was the political fallout of the time.

But there was another hero of the Opera House whose contribution was buried in time – and that was Joe Bertony. The following story about this remarkable man appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on April 12 and I think it is worth repeating here. It was written by Helen Pitt and I rang her to seek permission to reproduce it here but her recorded message said that she didn't accept messages and I thought immediately of Catch 22. But as our newsletter is not for broad distribution I thought I would take the risk. Here is an paraphrased version of the story of this remarkable and inspiring man.

Joe Bertony, the engineer who invented the Sydney Opera House erection arch, which made the building of Sydney's most famous white sails possible, has died at his Hornsby home at the age of 97.

One of the great stories about the building of the Sydney Opera House is the role played by Bertony, a French spy, who twice escaped from concentration camps in World War II and was awarded France's Croix de Guerre.

Bertony was born in Corsica in 1922 and was intrigued by maths from a young age. He went into the French navy to study naval engineering at Saint-Tropez where he was recruited to work as a spy. He worked as a French agent and was twice captured by the Gestapo and sent to concentration camps to die. He escaped both times.

The first camp was Mauthausen-Gusen near Vienna, Austria, where an estimated 320,000 people were killed.

He escaped during a transfer due to an administrative error and went back to work for the military in France.

He was again arrested in Paris and sent to Buchenwald as one of 350 western Allied prisoners forced to work for the local armament factories. Of the 238,380 incarcerated, there were the mentally ill, physically disabled, religious and political prisoners, immigrants, criminals and homosexuals. He worked as a technician in the control unit making the liquid-propelled V1 and V2 German bombs. The Allied forces called the V1s buzz bombs, or doodlebugs, Hitler's secret weapon.

Because the work of rocket control was so secret the factory was underground. There was no such thing as lunch. They were lucky to get a loaf of bread a day to be shared between five of them. From time to time they would work on a farm, where they would occasionally boil up grass to give some greenery to the inmates. At Buchenwald, he was referred to as the 'carotenfuhrer' – the "fuhrer" (leader) of the carrots. His job, when not designing armaments, was to guard the silos filled with carrots.

If any inmate of his party ate or stole a carrot he was punished for it – stripped naked and whipped and Joe was forced to watch, then he was dealt the same punishment. It happened many times because many people were hungry.

Bertony ate little and he survived purely on his wits. At the end of the war, when the Americans came to liberate those at Buchenwald in 1945, he was elated. He could hear the Americans approaching his underground tunnel. But before they capitulated, the SS soldiers rounded them up and marched them out of the camp towards the centre of Germany. At the Czech border near the mountains, they put the prisoners on to a train carrying cattle.



Joe Bertony at work on a model of the erection arch in 1963.

They stopped the train and ordered some prisoners off the train to dig a big hole. No doubt they were going to execute and bury the prisoners. Joe and another man decided to chance their luck and jumped off the train into the snow. They walked through the snow scantily clad in their camp jackets and flimsy pants – and had no food for 10 days.

When they arrived back past the SS line they were almost dead. The Americans were coming in with tanks. They split up before they got to the line because they thought their chances were best as individuals. His partner crossed the border some kilometres away. He found refuge on a farm near the frontline. They stayed in touch with each other for many years –until he died about 10 years ago.

Bertony was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government for valour for his wartime activities. General Charles De Gaulle said that during both deportations he proved his heroism to France through "courageous discipline". Much like the "courageous discipline" he was later to show at Bennelong Point, as one of the many migrant workers known then as "new Australians".

After the war, Bertony fled Europe looking for a better life. In 1952 he arrived in Western Australia and headed to Rum Jungle, to work in the uranium mines in the Northern Territory. Bertony lived in nearby Bachelor, 100 kilometres south of Darwin, a town that was built pretty much overnight to house workers, mostly single foreign bachelors without work papers like Bertony.

With the money he earned there – along with the good references he got for his impeccable problem-solving skills – he found himself in Queensland in the early 1960s where he got a job with Hornibrook. He was then asked to go to Sydney to solve the biggest construction problem they had encountered: how to erect the precast shells of the roof of the Sydney Opera House.

It was Bertony's complex hand-written mathematical equations that made the roof construction possible; it took 30,000 separate equations to work out how they should be located and stressed. The margin of error could be no more than 12.7mm when putting the segments together; anything more would have thrown the whole thing out of alignment. Everything element is curved and there is not one flat plane in the entire roof, so the geometry is highly complex.

When Hornibrook wanted to double-check some of Bertony's calculations by computer, he was relieved. It was frightening for him to think that if he had made a mistake no one would find it in all that mass of numbers. So he welcomed the opportunity to check his work using new-fangled computer programming to test the calculations. At that time in Australia there was only one computer large enough to cope with such a job: the IBM 7090 at the Weapons Research Establishment in South Australia.

The proof engineer spent one week a month working the night shift in South Australia, since that was the only time the computer was free. At no point were Bertony's calculations incorrect. The proof engineer later said of his colleague: "I doubt if there was anyone with Joe's genius to see how to develop the telescopic truss and to build the ribs with it, or to do a dozen other things of importance on that site. It would have taken many minds and many rounds of trial and error, and a much longer time and a much bigger budget, to get those ribs in the air if Joe hadn't been there. Other solutions would have lacked his elegance and genius."

After the Opera House, Bertony went back to bridges. His other major projects include Sydney's Roseville Bridge and the Hume Highway's Pheasants' Nest Bridge across the Nepean River. Bertony, who owns the copyright to the 30,000 longhand equations used to design the erection arch, gifted them to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and they are now part of the collection at the Powerhouse Museum.

What astounded him whenever he looked at the sails of the Sydney Opera House was that he helped build them with little more than schoolboy geometry.

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