

# VicRoads Association

## Newsletter No 189



Major road works – Warragul Rd

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

Dear Members,

There was a little bit of a mix up with the last newsletter in that I made a few last minute changes but I forgot to incorporate them when I sent it off for printing. It was all my fault – but you wouldn't have realized it. But one of the changes however is worth mentioning. I mentioned that Norm Bryant died recently and I had been told that Norm started work with the CRB as a young man in the early 1950s – at around the same time as Noel Allanson. So I thought that I would ring Noel just to confirm a few details. Actually it was Christmas Eve and I was a bit hesitant to call him. However I did. Noel confirmed that Norm worked his entire career in the Accounts Branch in the Municipal Claims area.

You may recall I wrote fairly recently about Noel entering the Essendon Football Club's Hall of Fame and I also described some of his football and cricketing feats. I think Noel was one of those naturally gifted blokes who could play any game he liked and excel in it. At any rate I made an enquiry about his general health and he hinted that he was slowing up a bit. He was having to cut back on his golf. In fact he had played a round that day. I asked him how old he was and he replied "David – I am 89 years and 364 days old". So a belated happy birthday and Merry Christmas to Noel!

This newsletter provides details of some of our forthcoming program of events. We would love to see as many of you as possible – including partners and friends. Our first visit is to the Level Crossing Removal Authority on 9 May.

This should be a very interesting visit and I have provided a list of all the crossings under consideration later in this newsletter. Of course, until recently, level crossing removal was VicRoads' responsibility but this has now been vested in the new authority.

Finally, many thanks to Bruce Mainka who sent the Association (via John Smelt) a collection of photographs going back to the early days of the CRB. Anyone having photos taking during their time at the CRB and subsequent organisations are invited to send them to the Secretary of the Association.

Hope you enjoy the read.

**David Jellie - Editor**



## Dates For Your Diary

DATE	TIME	EVENT	
April	Monday 11	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
May	Monday 9	9.45 am	Visit to Level Crossing Removal Authority 121 Exhibition Street,
	Thursday 26	6.30 pm	Melbourne Drinks and dinner at Waverley RSL
June	Monday 6	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
July	Thursday 21	TBA	Visit to Vizy Recycling Centre, Heidelberg
August	Monday 8	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown Hotel
September	Wed 14 and Thur 15		Members and friends visit to Geelong Regional Office Ex-Geelong Division/Regional staff encouraged to attend
October	Monday 10	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown
	Thursday 13	6.30 pm	Hotel Drinks and dinner at Waverley RSL
	Thursday 27	TBA	Visit to VicRoads western metropolitan projects
November	Monday 7	12 noon	Occasional Lunch, Shoppingtown
	Thursday 24	TBA	Hotel Visit to Melbourne Metro Rail Authority
December	Monday 5	12 noon	Christmas lunch at Head Office
<b>2017</b>			
February	Monday 6	12 noon	Occasional lunch, Shoppingtown
	Friday 24	TBA	Hotel VicRoads Association Golf Day

Please note the change of date for the June Occasional lunch.

Details of all these activities will be included in future newsletters.

Please remember too that family and friends are always welcome to attend our functions.



## What's Coming Up

### **Occasional Lunches – Shoppingtown Hotel – Monday 11 April and Monday 6 June 2016**

Please note the change of date for the June lunch.

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. Incidentally we had a record attendance for our luncheon in February.

### **Visit to the Level Crossing Removal Authority – Monday 9 May 2016**

We propose to meet in the foyer of the Authority at 121 Exhibition St at 9:45am. Please contact Jim Webber before 1 May if you propose to come. Subject to work commitments on the day, the CEO Kevin Devlin will be involved in the presentation. Friends and partners are welcome to come along. Following the visit, we will have lunch – at a venue yet to be decided.

### **Drinks and Dinner at Waverley RSL – Thursday 26 May 2016 at 6 pm.**

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@ttppgg.com.au](mailto:kenvickery@ttppgg.com.au) or Jim Webber on 0412 064 527 or [jimwebber@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jimwebber@optusnet.com.au) so that we can arrange the catering. We had a record number turn out at our last one - so if you haven't been before come and join us. It is a great night.



# What's Been Happening

## Golf Day Green Acres Golf Club 26 February 2016

Jim Webber provided the following report.

Congratulations to John Ford who won with 39 points on our 3rd Annual Golf day at Green Acres Golf Club. John played a consistently outstanding round. He was followed by John Gavin and Noel Ransome on 33. Eight members of the Association played, our highest number to date. John's name will be added to the trophy- previous winners were Ken Vickery in 2015 and Jim Webber in 2016. John was presented with his cup at the AGM.

Four visitors joined us. The winner of a very even contest was Colin Cust with 35 points.

Thank you to all those who played. Next year we will again play on the last Friday in February.



Ken Vickery passes the cup to Jim Webber who presents it to John Ford

## Annual General Meeting 21 March 2016

The Annual General Meeting was held at Head Office and I presented the President's report and Ken Vickery the Treasurer's report. Our membership has risen by seven members and we welcomed a new committee member, Alan Mackinlay. I also acknowledged the generous assistance provided by VicRoads in supporting the Association. We also presented John Ford with the cup for winning the golf. If anyone would like to receive a copy of my report, please contact me and I will send you a copy.

## VALE

### Norman Bryant

I have previously reported the death of Norman, but since then Len Brush (who now lives in Henley Brook, WA) who attended Norman's funeral, sent me the following photograph from the memorial brochure.



Norman Bryant

# VALE

## Dr Keith Moody

Keith George Edward Moody died on 22 December 2015 a few months after his 90th birthday. His great grandparents established a home and a family bakery in South Geelong and this was where Keith was born. His father went to the Great War and was wounded on the Somme. Keith was a bright student and attended the Gordon Institute of Technology to study civil engineering.

Keith had a great interest in motorbikes and aviation and when the Second World War broke out, he applied to join the RAAF but he was too young. Instead he was sent to the Northern Territory with the Country Roads Board to assist in the construction of the North South Road and various aerodromes along the way. Much of the history of this era (and its projects) was recorded in the oral history of the North South Road undertaken by the VicRoads Association about 10 years ago. Keith recalled one day a couple of American fighter planes on a training mission had to make an emergency landing on an unfinished landing strip with a bulldozer sitting in the middle of the runway. The first plane came down and just cleared the bulldozer and made a safe landing – but the plane following was not so lucky and it snagged on the bulldozer where it stuck fast. Miraculously the pilot was uninjured.

He was a contemporary of Tom Russell who lived in Geelong and together they attended GiT and were posted to the Northern Territory. Tom is the sole surviving CRB veteran of that project. After the war, Keith went on to university and graduated with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering in 1946 and later with First Class Honours for a Master of Engineering Science in 1950. He met Connie in 1946 and they married in 1948.

After their marriage, Keith and Connie shifted to Benalla Division and in 1951 Keith was awarded a Fellowship of the Commonwealth Fund. This enabled him to attend the University of Illinois where he obtained his Ph. D in 1953. He researched shear strength in precast reinforced concrete beams – bread and butter to most structural engineers now but pioneering work back in those days. He won the American Concrete Institute Medal in recognition of his work there. Although he enjoyed his time there, he was always ambivalent about America because of the social and racial inequality he witnessed.

On his return to Australia he resumed working in the Bridge Branch in 1953 but he left in 1958 to become a senior lecturer at the University of Melbourne. However he came back to the CRB in 1965 to become the Materials Research Engineer, then the Chief Bridge Engineer and later the Engineer-in-Chief. During his career he led many programs that we take for granted today including the removal of timber bridges from the road network, developments in bitumen and sprayed sealing, and the introduction of divided carriageway roads.

During all these achievements he found time to build his own home in Doncaster East where he and Connie raised their family of five children, planting up his garden with rhododendrons. Keith was a driving force in the master planning of the National Rhododendron Garden at Olinda, he became an authority on rhododendrons and was the President of the Australian Rhododendron Society.



Senior Management of the Country Roads Board - 1975  
Bill Brake (Member), Tom Russell (Member), Dr Keith Moody (Engineer-in-Chief), R.E.V. (Ted) Donaldson (Chairman), Russell Cooper (Chief Accountant) and Noel Allanson (Secretary).

## News from Our Members

### D. V. Darwin

Talk about a rumour spreading! Tom Russell sent me this story which had been sent to him by Peter McCullough who received it from Les Malseed – written by Rob Youl who was an engineer with the Forest Commission and a member of the Citizen Military Force. It was published in the Royal Australian Engineers Association (Vic) Association's newsletter. I rang all of them and Rob has very kindly given his permission to publish his story in our newsletter. It is an appropriate story to publish in the month of ANZAC Day. Here it is.

'VicRoads Association members will well recall that, until the 1980s, many heads of Victorian state departments were household names, such as Alf Dunbavin Butcher, Alan Croxford, Alf Lawrence, Dr Lawrie Shears, Dr Eric Cunningham Dax, and so on. They put their stamp on their organisations: one saw their names on posted lists of regulations and foundation stones, for example, and, in contrast to today, they seemed to appear in the press more often than their ministers.

One of these eminent men (women departmental heads were generally absent until the late 1980s), although less public than some of his colleagues, was Donald Victor Darwin MM, BCE (Melb), MCE (Melb), MICE, MIEAust, CE, FAPI, a civil engineer who ably chaired the Country Roads Board.



D. V. Darwin

Darwin was born on 11 October 1896 at Redhill, South Australia, son of Henry Darwin, a bank manager of colonial birth, and his wife Jessie Louise Clela, née Gmeiner. Educated at St Peters, Adelaide and the University of Melbourne (BCE 1920; MCE 1926), where he served for three and a half years in Melbourne University Rifles, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 3 January 1916, deferring his studies. He reached France in November as a sapper in 10 Field Company RAE. From 28 March to 4 April 1918 at Buire-sur-Ancre, between Amiens and Albert, he reconnoitred front-line posts and drafted crucial plans and maps whilst under continual fire, for which he was awarded the Military Medal. He was discharged in Melbourne on 25 May 1919, apparently a lance corporal.

Joining Victoria's infant Country Roads Board, Darwin was appointed an assistant engineer in October 1920 and bridge engineer in 1924. A major project of the decade was the Princes Highway crossing over the Barwon at Geelong. In 1928, as assistant chief engineer under founding chairman, William Calder, in an era when cars were proliferating, Darwin helped develop CRB plans for a system of 'low cost' motor roads. The Board tested numerous local soils and rocks for their road-building qualities, and encouraged the development of efficient construction machinery and streamlined bitumen surfacing techniques for arterial motor routes. Amongst many activities, Darwin supervised the compilation of load limits for the various classes of Victorian roads. All the while, he continued to lecture and examine in civil engineering at his old university.

Promoted to chief engineer in 1941, Darwin found his extensive home state highway responsibilities extended to building munitions facilities and airfields in Victoria, and to defence-related construction in the Northern Territory, including the Stuart Highway. Donald Darwin was appointed to the three-member CRB board in 1945, becoming chairman in 1949 when WL Dale retired. Directing long overdue maintenance and modernisation of Victoria's roads and bridges, he also had his staff plan for and commence work on the high-density, heavy-duty freeways that connect major centres today. Foreseeing that the CRB would increasingly be involved in metropolitan projects, he further ensured some of his staff acquired planning qualifications and became members of the then Regional and Town Planning Institute.

Because of his military service, Donald Darwin always supported the army, and played an important role in inaugurating the RAE's post-war Supplementary Reserve (SR), which operated very effectively thereafter in Victoria and NSW for some four decades.



The West Australian of 23 March 1949 recorded that the Institution of Engineers had just announced that the Minister for the Army, Mr Cyril Chambers, had accepted the Institution's proposal to create the SR, a new force of part-time engineering units sponsored by government departments and authorities, and designed to ensure specialist skills were rapidly available in strategic emergencies. Personnel with trades required more or less immediately after mobilisation did fourteen day's training annually in military skills. The report named Donald Darwin as a key proponent. Many of his employees would soon enlist, or re-enlist if they were WWII veterans, in either of three formidable CRB-sponsored units: HQ 22 Construction Regiment, 104 Construction Squadron and 107 Plant Squadron (Heavy) in 6 Engineer Group RAE at Swan Street, Melbourne.

Moreover, several senior CRB staffers, such as Caleb Roberts and Ian ('Paddy') O'Donnell, were also soldiers. Roberts, son of artist Tom Roberts, born in NSW in 1898 and educated in Britain, served in the RE in WWI in Palestine, France and north-west Russia, and was awarded an MC. Returning to Australia in 1925, he worked for the CRB. During WWII he led Australia's military intelligence effort, including the Pacific coast-watchers. Following Donald Darwin, he chaired the CRB briefly from 1962-63 before retiring. An officer POW in Singapore, 'Paddy' O'Donnell, the revered group commander at Swan Street from 1959-62, followed Roberts as chair from 1962-71. Bill Dolamore and Bob Eastick were other WWII veterans who became reserve officers.

Highly intellectual and articulate, Darwin was renowned for going straight to the nub of an issue. With his superb memory, he was a demanding administrator and stern critic of insufficient effort, but equally had visionary goals and fostered leadership throughout the CRB. One contributor to a CRB staff oral history in 1985, recalled 'an academic person ... quite shy but humorous ... a hard person to get to know'. Another said he was 'dynamic ... fearless'. When a stenographer suggested what the CRB might do in a certain situation, he said something like: The cheek of her, trying to tell me how to run my business!

Les Malseed, a CRB employee and later a well known squadron commander at Swan Street, asked him about his MM; he replied that he had merely compiled some maps. Darwin's penetrating questions always had Les and colleagues on their toes. In the event he didn't have an answer, Les resolved to openly admit, 'I'm sorry, Mr Darwin, I don't know the answer.' When he attempted this ploy, Darwin said, 'That's not good enough! We pay you to know these things!'

Someone else wrote of his limp handshake, but undoubtedly he was a gentleman and gently humorous. It was said, however, that CRB influence declined because of his lesser political skills and lack of compromise.

Apparently his relationship could have been better with Public Works Minister, Sir Thomas Maltby, whom he met every Tuesday at 10.00 am after a flurry of reassessment of the board meeting the afternoon before, often necessitating retyping and rebriefing, before a swift car ride to East Melbourne. Nevertheless, the Maltby Bypass around Werribee opened in 1961, the first stretch of roadway in Victoria built to freeway standards.

Moreover, he was utterly dedicated to engineering and its professional institutions. Darwin became a councillor of the Institution of Engineers Victoria Division from 1949, and its president in 1957. He was appointed to the Tourist Development Authority in 1958, from which he stood down in June 1962, however after he retired he continued at the Australian Road Research Board. That same year he received the Kernot medal; in 1963 the Imperial Service Order (ISO) followed, and finally the Peter Nicol Russell Medal from the Institution of Engineers in 1966.

Otherwise his life seems to have been his family and his local Anglican church, and he sketched and painted. On 1 March 1930, at the Presbyterian Church, Malvern, Darwin married 24-year-old Auburn music teacher Evelyn Hope Scott, born in Melbourne on 13 September 1905, a violinist from a well-known medical and musical family. They lived in Canterbury. Their one child, Alice, born in 1945, sadly had spina bifida, relying on a wheelchair. Her parents resolved that she would lead a conventional life, rather than go to an institution, so she attended Fintona, where facilities for disabled students did not exist—doubtless an almost universal situation then. She got to first-floor classes by pulling herself hand-to-hand upstairs. Family photos and records however reveal her as a gutsy and happy woman who donned ballgowns for school dances, was a bridesmaid for her cousin Janet Hubbard, drove herself everywhere, painted, played the violin, tutored and was studying for her MA in philosophy at Melbourne when she died of kidney failure, aged 27, a few weeks after her father's passing on 8 March 1972 at Malvern. Her experience with her daughter drew Mrs Darwin towards Christian Science. She continued to live in the family home, but dementia set in and she resided in a hospice until her death in 1997.

Finally, in preparing this column, facilitated by Major Paul Nowak, Major Austin Byrne and the Hubbard family of Strath Creek, I have had access to Darwin family records: letters from WWI, family histories, photo albums, CRB official and oral histories, some of Darwin's pencil sketches from northern France, travel and theatre brochures, fragile battlefield maps, faded newspapers and intelligence reports, and so on, an interesting, indeed moving experience. To end the column, here are a couple of items that increased my appreciation of this fine man, and an excerpt from the war diary of 10 Field Company RAE.'

Rob also provided the following additional information.

#### Letter home from France 14 May 1918

My Dears

*The last week has gone like winking and I hope a mail hasn't been missed. We've been having a decent time of it, and are enjoying the spring sunshine when it's not drizzling or thunderstorming. The woods are now fully out, & I have seen a few neatly tucked-away little nests of eggs.*

*There are woods here between all the villages, very fine timber in them too: some giant beeches with shiny leaves & tall upright stems, a few of the copper variety, a few white blossomed tall cherries, darker young oaks, airy birches, and along the rivers white fluttering poplars.*

*Sunday a few of us went up to divvy H.Q. to a presentation. They give you a bit of ribbon pro tem & say come back again in six months for the disc. Ted got his medal, which he won at Ypres. It took us about an hour to get sorted out into order, then came three bands and three of our brigade's battalions, all of which had to be moved into position around a flag. There were about two or three hundred recipients altogether, most of them of pretty ancient prestige but others up for the latest handout.*

*Then came two divines (?), as we began with general salute as the red ones stalked up, and then carried on with church parade, when we helped those good old bands with odd verses of Fight the Good Fight, O God our Help, and Onward Christian Soldiers. Then the medal queue began, Birdie (presumably General Birdwood) handing over the shiny stuff with about two words to each, as a staff captain proclaimed the proud one's name and award. Then came the ribbonists in a similar wiggle undergoing a similar undemonstrative treatment. Then we got into several rows (not to compliment them with the military term 'line') behind the flag, while the 'pongos' (affectionate term = infantry) marched past & kept the generals' hand in an eyescratching attitude.*

*Then, as a drizzle came on, we were dismissed on the spot without further ado. Altogether a decently quiet show. A few words more another day, for now Geo calls me for the umpteenth time to rub out our old whist enemies.*

#### 16 May 1918 – same letter

*The old sun's still out, & rather too warm for protracted labour except in short, sharp rushes, with a spell every few minutes. Indeed we're not doing much. The section has had a couple of decent jobs during this & last month, & I managed to get off the 'old Henry' stunt and join them. Now that he's got a lift to 2nd Cpl. I have been shivering lest they'd haul me back again but all's been serene to date. Today we had a holiday, having presented No. 1 with our job. Yesterday after the shift I had a swim in the adjacent creek so as to wash off all the sweat of toil for a few days.*

*In the evening wrote out and got censored another cable. Our list now comprises eight, Harold, "Johnnie" (Mungo is too long) George Cov. Ted. Frank. Les & me. Today took a stroll to next village where there's nothing to see.*

*Will write again soon.*

*Best love always*

*Don*

Extract from War Diary—10 Field Company RAE, 1AIF

HEILLY 8.5.18

Re No 10239 Spr Darwin DV on 28th 29th 30th March 1918 and 1st 3rd 4th April No 10239 Spr Darwin DV carried out a reconnaissance of Front Line Posts in daylight and accurately fixed positions of same by Compass bearing at great personal risk. His work was of great value owing to the uncertainty of the exact position of our Infantry. The work was done under heavy shell & machine gun fire. His coolness and daring whilst doing this work was remarkable. (Awarded Military Medal DRO 4051/ aiv? 1806 of 21.4.18).

Below is a copy of the citation signed by John Monash.

*read about*  
During the period from 28th. March to 1st. April, 1918, at SUIRE, this sapper carried out reconnaissance of Front Line posts in daylight and accurately fixed their position at very great personal risk. This work was of great importance owing to the uncertainty of the line held by the infantry, and was carried out under heavy shell and machine gun fire, and it was only his coolness and disregard for danger that he completed the task.

*John Monash*  
Major General,  
G.O.C. 1st Australian Division

## The Graham Street Bridge Port Melbourne

Each month I write a small story for VicRoads' internal magazine called The Frog and Toad. The one below was published in December 2015.

In 1969 I was supervising the construction of the bridges on the Lower Yarra Freeway from Blackshaw's Road in the west to Williamstown Road in the east. This work was proceeding at a pace because the West Gate Bridge was under construction by the Lower Yarra Crossing Authority and the Country Roads Board was responsible for the construction of the approach roads.

Of course, fate dealt an awful hand when, on 15 October 1970, the West Gate Bridge collapsed – killing 35 construction workers and engineers. It took another eight years for the bridge to be redesigned, rebuilt and opened to traffic.





The Bridge Construction Engineer, Bruce Watson, rang me one day and asked me if I would supervise the building of a bridge in Graham Street, Port Melbourne, over the railway line. Actually he didn't ask me – he told me. His reasoning was that it was down near West Gate Bridge where I was working, but I recall that it was about a forty-five minute drive from one side of the river to the other in peak hour.

The bridge was to be built by the Board's own direct labour gang under the supervision of one of the Board's best bridge foremen, Ted Malcolmson. This was quite a different kettle of fish for me compared

to the bridges on the other side – because they were all being built by contract. I had to do the engineering survey work, design the formwork and do all the other things that a contractor had to do. We had to order the steel reinforcement and the concrete, hire the cranes, drive the piles and generally make sure that work flowed at a continuous, steady pace. It was a great learning curve for me – especially having such a wise mentor as Ted.

But the first thing we had to do was to establish a compound on the site to store tools and materials and to place our office and crib sheds. Ted and I went down one day and pegged out a suitable location and I rang our fencing contractor to arrange for them to come that afternoon to erect a two metre high chain wire fence with posts in concrete foundations. They arrived about two o'clock and completed the job by knock off time.

When I called in to the site the following morning, I found that the fence had gone. The holes formed by the posts in the concrete were the only evidence that a fence had ever been there. Stealing a fence of this length and weight would be no mean feat. They would not only have required a truck or two, but also a crane and quite a few workers. I rang the fencers again, explained what had happened and asked them to build another one.

I also called in to the Port Melbourne Police Station and reported our missing fence. I told them that we were going to erect another one that afternoon and they said that they would get one of their patrol cars to call in from time to time to keep an eye on it.

The following morning I called in but – again - there was no fence. I went round to the Police Station and they said that they had gone down there at about 6 o'clock the previous evening but there was no sign of a fence. They thought that the work had not been done. I re-ordered the work for a third time but this time I arranged for a night watchman and a hut to be stationed there and our third fence endured for the rest of the project.

I have many happy memories of the job – not the least of which being called away on the 4th June for the birth of my second daughter.

David Jellie

## Working Conditions in the 1930s

This is another Frog and Toad story – extracted from *Reminiscences of Life in the Country Roads Board published in 1995.*

It is a story recalled by Jack Ryan who worked on the roads in the 1930s.

'Today when people go out on a job there is usually someone there to meet them; a truck or something like that is in town for provisions and they take the men out to the job. They work it in such a way that there is transport. In the old days it was a fair bit of catch as catch can. One instance which comes to mind is when I went to Daylesford/Ballan and I didn't know anything about where the job started or ended. The engineer said "I will give you a ticket to Daylesford" so I got on the train and went to Daylesford but much to my consternation, I found out that the job was 16 or 17 miles from Daylesford.

I had no money to get any further. I thought I had better see if I could sell something, but the only thing of any consequence that I did own was a wrist-watch, which I had received some years before for playing football. I had quite a big job in persuading the jeweller in the town to lend me ten shillings. Eventually he did, after reading me a long lecture how it wasn't his practice. I got the ten shillings and got down to the job; he eventually got his money back, and I got my watch back. It gives you an idea that the organisation was a bit haphazard in those days.

The organisation was still haphazard when the war broke out and it wasn't really our Board that revolutionised the camping and general conditions, it was the Allied Works Council that jolted them into gear. The Allied Works Council was in charge of all works in the Northern Territory, when they built the North-South Road during the war. Different people who worked on it, including my own Dad, all had the same story to tell.

The Board had to bring its ideas up to date with camp conditions and sanitary and hygiene conditions because the Allied Works Council had insisted on it. So people who go to Board jobs nowadays have an armchair ride compared to what we had.'

I spoke to Tom Russell (ex Chairman of the Country Roads Board) who worked on the North South Road as a young man. He remembered Jack's father who was nicknamed Bull – because of the strength in his arms. Bull was seriously injured up there to the extent that he could no longer work in the field, but he was gainfully employed for his remaining working life as a storeman in the Traralgon depot. Jack served with the RAAF during the war.

David Jellie

## Robin Underwood on the Past, Present and Future

Robin wrote as follows:

### 1. Up to 1988

Motor cars first appeared on Australian roads in about 1900. Prior to the 1950s traffic engineering activities, such as traffic counting, some traffic studies, signing and line marking, intersection design, installation of traffic signals and some aspects of road safety were being applied, but the term "traffic engineering" generally was not being used. The first Standards Association Australia Road Signs Code appeared in 1935.

In 1947 the first engineering position in Australia with the word "traffic" in it was created when the Country Roads Board appointed H. P. George as Traffic and Location Engineer. He relinquished the position in 1949 and it lapsed. He returned to the position in early 1953. In 1954 the Department of Main Roads (NSW) appointed R. E. Johnston as Traffic Services Engineer. Two other State Road Authorities made traffic engineering appointments in 1956, with the other States following in 1963 and 1970.

A very significant step in the recognition of traffic engineering as a separate branch of civil engineering in Australia was the establishment in 1955 of a Traffic Engineering Standing Committee by the then Conference of State Road Authorities, which became the National Association of Australian State Road Authorities (NAASRA) in 1959 and Austroads in 1989. NAASRA produced a Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice in 1965. Since then, this Guide has been regularly reviewed, up-dated and expanded.

In early 1955 the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Melbourne conducted a one-week Summer School in Traffic Engineering with attendees from all over Australia. This was the first intensive course in traffic engineering offered in Australia.

In the same year, the Australian Automobile Association had provided support to establish a Chair in Traffic Engineering at the University of New South Wales and Professor W. R. Blunden was appointed as the Foundation Professor of Traffic Engineering in 1956. Professor Blunden introduced short courses in traffic engineering and transport planning and these, together with graduate studies and research opportunities, provided significant training opportunities for many Australian and overseas students.

During the 1950s traffic engineering activities grew rapidly, and by the end of the decade traffic engineering was firmly established and recognised as a separate branch of civil engineering in Australia. Traffic management authorities were created in all States, municipal Councils became increasingly involved in traffic engineering activities, and the Automobile Associations were becoming increasingly involved in traffic management considerations.

During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s there were many significant developments in the theory and practice of traffic engineering, traffic engineering applications substantially increased, and much larger numbers of people became directly involved in traffic engineering.

In 1960 the Australian Road Research Board (now ARRB Group Ltd) commenced operation and since then it has played a significant role in encouraging and supporting research and disseminating research findings in traffic engineering (and in all aspects of road engineering).

During the late 1960s, Melbourne, Monash and Queensland Universities appointed staff with specific traffic (and transport) engineering interests and by the late 1970s most Australian Universities and Institutes of Technology offered courses in these areas.

By the early 1970s there were significant changes to community attitudes to road works, perhaps largely due to concerns about the sociological and environmental implications of emerging proposals for major urban works, such as urban freeways, and sections of the community began to question the need for, and desirability of them. As a result, a number of interest (or action) groups formed usually to oppose specific works. Road proposals became political issues, and this led to environmental protection and assessment policies, and to requirements for community participation. In 1974, the Commonwealth Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act and Regulations under the Act were enacted, and States legislation soon followed.

At about the same time, increasing inflation began to significantly increase the cost of roadworks, including the cost of land acquisition. In addition, there was increasing uncertainty about the future availability and cost of fuel for transport and population growth and vehicle ownership trends. Pressures emerged to make maximum use of existing facilities, and this tended to highlight the growing importance of traffic management practices.

In 1970 the number of deaths on Australian roads peaked at 3,798. Since 1970, improved and safer roads and traffic facilities, including the provision of freeways, town bypasses, divided roads, road-rail grade separations, access control, improved (safer) road sides, the extensive use of traffic management measures, including intersection improvements, signing and delineation, lighting and correction of black spots, together with improved vehicle standards, improved and better observed legislation and road rules, coupled with more intensive road safety publicity, education, training, licensing and enforcement, and a more road safety conscious community, have all contributed to a significant reduction in the road toll.

## 2. Since 1988

In 1989 the ARRB published Special Report No. 42, A History of Traffic Engineering in Australia which outlined the history of traffic engineering in Australia from the inception of the motor car on Australian roads in about 1900 up to 1988. In February 2016 the ARRB published an update of Special Report No. 42 as Research Report ARR 391 A History of Traffic Engineering in Australia (1989 – 2015) covering the period since 1988. A summary of the contents of ARR391 is as follows:

- Following an introductory Chapter, as background Chapter 2 provides a brief summary of the contents of ARRB Special Report No. 42 (i.e. up to 1988).
- In Australia, responsibility for traffic engineering and related activities is shared by the Commonwealth, States and Territories and Local Governments. Chapter 3 summarises these responsibilities and describes the changes in organisation at the three levels of government since 1988.
- Chapter 4 summarises the important role and some of the relevant activities of key National organisations, namely NAASRA/Austroroads, the Australian Road Research Board and the Standards Association of Australia since 1988.
- Chapter 5 outlines the traffic engineering related role, and significant activities, of selected professional organisations including the Institution of Engineers, Australia, the Australian Section (and since 1996 the Australia and New Zealand Section) of the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Australian College of Road Safety (which in 2003 expanded its membership and changed its name to the Australasian College of Road Safety), and the Australian Institute of Traffic Planning and Management.
- Over the years, many Australian Universities have made significant contributions to the theory, practice and application of traffic engineering by teaching, research, consultancy, professional society, and community activities Chapter 6 summarises the contributions of six selected Universities to indicate the wide variety of their contributions.
- The roles of the Australian Automobile Association and of the various State and Territory Associations are outlined in Chapter 7.
- Chapter 8 summarises various aspects of road safety including an overview of road safety, National, State, Territory and Local Government strategies, road safety audits, the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011 – 2020, the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP), the Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) and an overview of road safety management.
- Since 1988 traffic management principles and practices have continued to evolve. Chapter 9 outlines developments relating to traffic management centres, speed management, road rail level crossings, local area traffic management and safety provision for heavy vehicles.
- Chapter 10 discusses intelligent transport systems, including background, traveller information systems, smart roads, managed freeways (motorways), improved safety at road rail level crossings and the introduction of automated (autonomous) vehicles.
- The Report concludes with Chapter 11 providing an overview/reflections on the development of traffic engineering in Australia since the inception of the motor in 1900, and provides a brief look at the likely future.

## 3. The future

In the years ahead:

- Australia's population is likely to increase substantially. ABS projections indicate that it could be in the range 36.8 to 48.3 millions by the year 2061.
- The number of registered motor vehicles is likely to steadily increase well into the future, and the motor vehicle will remain the dominant form of transport (although its percentage of total travel is likely to decline slightly).
- Safety on Australian roads is likely to continue to improve (for instance, deaths on Australian roads are likely to be of the order of 300 per annum by 2050 (compared with 1,150 in 2014),
- Autonomous vehicles (both fully and partially) will become an increasing important component of road travel within the 2020 to 2030 time frame.
- Electric and/or hydrogen fuelled vehicles will significantly increase in future years.

The continuing and increasing future application of intelligent transport systems, and in particular the use of traveller systems, smart roads, managed freeways (motorways) and the like have potential to optimise performance while maximising safety, reliability and capacity. These, and other traffic engineering techniques to make best use of existing facilities, should be encouraged. However, there is a limit to what they can achieve, and in view of the likely future increase in population and the likely commensurate increase in motor vehicle numbers, their wider spread application will not eliminate the future need to provide for selected new major construction.

The full report is available on the ARRB website, the link being <https://arrb.com.au/Home/News.aspx?newsID=263>.



## News From Vicroads

### Horror month for Motorcyclists

On 1 March 2016 VicRoads reported the death of a man after a motorbike crash in central Victoria, taking the state's motorcyclist death toll for February to a staggering 19 fatalities. Two motorcycles clipped each other 10 days earlier when they came across sheep on the road in Moolort. One of the riders sustained critical injuries and died in hospital. The other rider was not injured in the crash.

The state's overall road toll then stood at 55, which is 11 more than the same period in 2015.

I am not quite sure that this information was correct. Perhaps they meant to the end of February. Either way, this is an appalling situation. If they did mean February alone, it would mean that if this rate were sustained over the year it would mean that motorcycle deaths would be more than half of the whole of last year's road toll.

Victoria's road toll is more than 20 per cent higher than the same time last year, due mainly to the increase in motorcycle deaths. More than a third of the motorcyclists killed this year did not have a licence. To mid-March 23 motorcyclists have been killed, nine of whom were unlicensed. At the same time last year 9 motorcyclists had been killed. There were 30 fatalities of motorcyclists in 2015. More are killed in urban areas than in rural areas.

The age profile of those killed has also risen. One school of thought (or conjecture) is that older people are abandoning their cars for commuting journeys because of congestion on the roads – but my conjecture is that people are not sharing the road courteously and looking out for each other.

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### VicRoads role in the recent bushfires on the Great Ocean Road

During the recent fires VicRoads worked under the direction of Emergency Management Victoria, with other agencies such as Victoria Police and the CFA providing support. Early preparations needed to be made about the possibility of evacuations and road closures.

By 10 a.m. on Christmas Day the fire was out of control and threatening several townships including Wongarra, Kennett River, Wye River and Separation Creek – all of which were eventually evacuated. Lorne was also on high alert. VicRoads officers attended the Regional Control Centre in Geelong and then later the Incident Control Centre (ICC) in Colac.


VicRoads set up road blocks and detours and assisted with the evacuation of several towns. After the fire there was much work to be done in repairing the damaged pavements, guard fences, signs and guide posts. Roads were inspected for damage and potential landslip risks, hazards identified and removed and road blocks set up and maintained. VicRoads also staff also attended community forums.

VicRoads officers at the the ICC and managed the road network and coordinated the relocation of the Falls Festival from Lorne to Mount Duneed Estate - cramming months of planning into just one day. Unfortunately 116 homes were destroyed in the blaze, but thankfully no lives were lost.

On Sunday 27 December VicRoads Traffic Management Centre answered more than 800 fire related phone calls. Most calls were from members of the public seeking travel advice to popular Great Ocean Road holiday destinations.

On Boxing Day in Melbourne, temporary business rules were activated to help customers affected by the fire. When Customer Service Centres reopened on Tuesday 29 December, they could offer free driver license replacements and refund vehicle registrations vehicles affected by the fires. VicRoads also attended public meetings in Forrest (attended by 200-300 people) and Apollo Bay which had nearly 1,000 people attend.

Throughout the period of the fires, VicRoads constantly updated alerts on its website, Facebook and Twitter. They maintained constant communications with the media, the Minister's Office and VicRoads CE. VicRoads staff working out of South Western Region, helped to disseminate information from the people on the ground, to and from the communications team at Kew. Meanwhile, contact centre voice messages were updated and a dedicated phone line was established for those affected by the fires.





## Level Crossing Removals

The Level Crossing Removal Authority is now overseeing the delivery of the level crossing removal projects, ensuring that level crossings are removed in a coordinated and efficient manner.

The Authority is responsible for all aspects of the project including planning and development, stakeholder engagement, procurement, through to construction and delivery. Below is a synopsis of the work they have ahead of them.

### Crossings removed

- Burke Road, Glen Iris – Glen Waverley line

### Crossings under construction

- North Road, Ormond – Frankston line
- Centre Road, Bentleigh – Frankston line
- McKinnon Road, McKinnon – Frankston line
- Main Road, St Albans – Sunbury line
- Furlong Road, St Albans – Sunbury line
- Heatherdale Road, Mitcham – Belgrave line
- Scoresby Road, Bayswater – Belgrave line
- Blackburn Road, Blackburn – Belgrave line
- Mountain Highway, Bayswater – Belgrave line

### Crossings at tender stage

- Grange Road, Carnegie – Cranbourne line
- Poath Road Hughesdale – Cranbourne line
- Clayton Road, Clayton – Cranbourne line
- Centre Road, Clayton - Cranbourne line
- Heatherton Road, Noble Park - Cranbourne line
- Koornang Road, Carnegie – Cranbourne line
- Corrigan Road, Noble Park - Cranbourne line
- Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena – Cranbourne line
- Chandler Road, Noble Park - Cranbourne line

### Crossings in planning and consultation

- Station Street/Bondi Road, BonBeach – Frankston line
- Charman Road, Cheltenham - Frankston line
- Balcombe Road, Mentone - Frankston line
- Melton Highway, Sydenham – Sunbury line
- Kororoit Creek Road, Williamstown North – Altona loop
- Bell Street, Preston – South Morang line
- High Street Reservoir – South Morang line
- Station Street, Carrum - Frankston line
- Edithvale Road, Edithvale - Frankston line
- Skye/Overton Road, Frankston - Frankston line
- Eeel Race Road, Seaford - Frankston line
- Abbotts Road, Dandenong South – Cranbourne line
- Thompsons Road, Lyndhurst – Cranbourne line
- Grange Road, Alphington – Hurstbridge line

### Early planning and engineering assessments underway

- Clyde Road, Berwick – Pakenham line
- Camp Road, Campbellfield – Upfield line
- Buckley Street, Essendon – Craigieburn line
- Glenroy Road, Glenroy – Craigieburn line
- Hallam Road, Hallam – Pakenham line
- Toorak Road, Kooyong – Glen Waverley line
- Manchester Road, Mooroolbark – Lilydale line
- Cherry Street, Werribee – Werribee line
- Ferguson Street Williamstown – Williamstown line

# Trivia and Didactic Whimsies

## Amazing bridges

I have a series of amazing bridges to show you. I will drip feed them to you over the next few newsletters.

The first one is the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. Spanning the River Tyne, this bridge is nicknamed the Winking Eye Bridge because of its eye-shaped look when in motion. The bridge has a deck for pedestrians and cyclists, and a supporting arch. The bridge rotates as a single structure, with the arch lowering and the deck rising, counterbalancing each other, forming a pathway for water traffic.



## Australian Meteorology

It was April and the Aboriginals in a remote part of Northern Australia asked their new elder if the coming winter was going to be cold or mild. Since he was an elder in a modern community he had never been taught the old secrets. When he looked at the sky he couldn't tell what the winter was going to be like. Nevertheless, to be on the safe side, he told his tribe that the winter was indeed going to be cold and that the members of the tribe should collect firewood to be prepared.

But being a practical leader, after several days he had an idea. He walked out to the telephone booth on the highway, called the Bureau of Meteorology and asked, 'Is the coming winter in this area going to be cold?' The meteorologist responded, 'It looks like this winter is going to be quite cold.'

So the elder went back to his people and told them to collect even more wood in order to be prepared. A week later he called the Bureau of Meteorology again. 'Does it still look like it is going to be a very cold winter?' The meteorologist again replied, 'Yes, it's going to be a very cold winter.'

The elder again went back to his community and ordered them to collect every scrap of firewood they could find. Two weeks later the elder called the Bureau again. 'Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to be very cold?' he asked.

'Absolutely,' the man replied. 'It's looking more and more like it is going to be one of the coldest winters ever.'

'How can you be so sure?' the elder asked.

The weatherman replied, 'Our satellites have reported that the Aboriginals in the north are collecting firewood like crazy, and that's always a sure sign.'

## Senior Computing skills

You know what it's like when you there are no grandchildren around when you need them for computer support. Of course you can always ring a techo for advice and the stories below demonstrate how hard it must be for them.

.....  
**Tech support:** What kind of computer do you have?

**Customer:** A white one...

.....  
**Tech support:** Click on the 'my computer' icon on to the left of the screen.

**Customer:** Your left or my left?

.....  
**Customer:** Hi, good afternoon, this is Martha, I can't print. Every time I try, it says 'can't find printer'. I've even lifted the printer and placed it in front of the monitor, but the computer still says he can't find it.

.....  
**Customer:** My keyboard is not working anymore.

**Tech support:** Are you sure it's plugged into the computer?

**Customer:** No. I can't get behind the computer.

**Tech support:** Pick up your keyboard and walk 10 paces back.

**Customer:** OK

**Tech support:** Did the keyboard come with you?

**Customer:** Yes

**Tech support:** That means the keyboard is not plugged in.

.....  
**Customer:** I can't get on the Internet.

**Tech support:** Are you sure you used the right password?

**Customer:** Yes, I'm sure. I saw my colleague do it.

**Tech support:** Can you tell me what the password was?

**Customer:** Five dots.

.....  
**Tech support:** What anti-virus program do you use?

**Customer:** Netscape.

**Tech support:** That's not an anti-virus program.

**Customer:** Oh, sorry... Internet Explorer.

.....  
**Customer:** I have a huge problem. A friend has placed a screen saver on my computer, but every time I move the mouse, it disappears.

.....  
**Tech support:** How may I help you?

**Customer:** I'm writing my first email.

**Tech support:** OK, and what seems to be the problem?

**Customer:** Well, I have the letter 'a' in the address, but how do I get the little circle around it?

.....  
**Customer:** I'm having a problem with my printer.

**Tech support:** Are you running it under Windows?

**Customer:** 'No, my desk is next to the door, but that is a good point. The man sitting in the cubicle next to me is under a window, and his printer is working fine.'

.....  
**Tech support:** 'Okay Bob, let's press the control and escape keys at the same time. That brings up a task list in the middle of the screen. Now type the letter 'P' to bring up the Program Manager.'

**Customer:** I don't have a P.

**Tech support:** On your keyboard, Bob.

**Customer:** What do you mean?

**Tech support:** 'P'..... on your keyboard, Bob.

**Customer:** I'M NOT GOING TO DO THAT!

## My Graduation

No one rose to the challenge I put out in the last newsletter asking who in the photograph worked for CRB or its successors. I can only take it that you aren't interested – but I am going to tell you at any rate!



Back row – first and second left - Alan Mackinlay and John Coles, centre David Jellie, last on the right, Gary White.  
Centre row – second on the left, Michael Finlay.  
Front row – extreme right, Sew Me Wong (Tom).  
And the trick was that one of our lecturers, Alec Kennedy, second in the front row also worked for the CRB.

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