Edward (Ted) Barton: My Way through the CRB, RCA, VicRoads

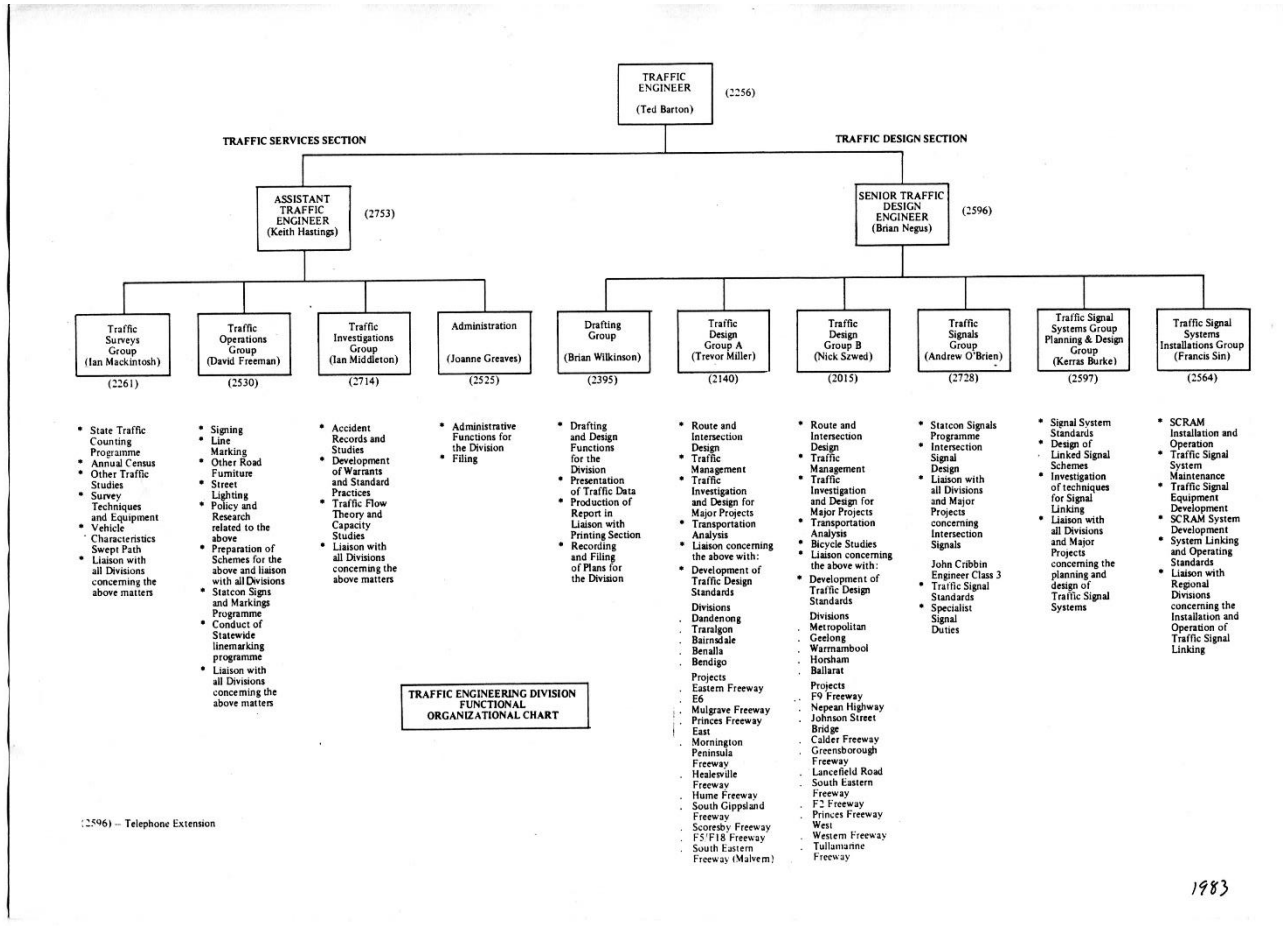
Part 3: 1983 to 1993

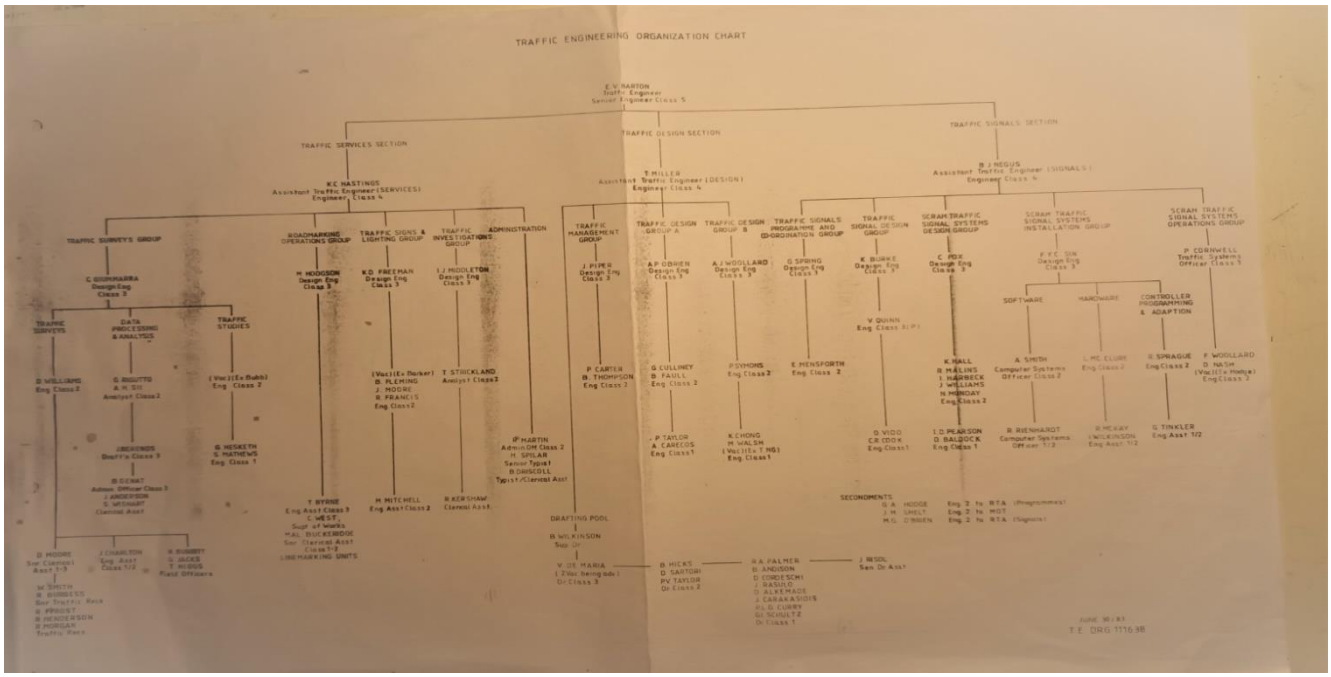
In 1981 I was nominated by the Board to do the Advanced Management Program at the Australian Administrative Staff College at Mt Eliza, in bayside Southeast Melbourne. This course, which ran from 5th November to 18th December 1981, had 67 participants, including many from overseas organisations was excellent for the development of organizational management skills and by association with the broad range of interests and experience of the participants, the high standard of academic and tuition staff and the first class accommodation and recreation at the college.

Major Organisational Changes 1982/83

In 1983 the newly elected Labour Government introduced the Transport Act which abolished the TRB, RoSTA and the CRB and established the Road Construction Authority (RCA) and the Road Traffic Authority (RTA). This resulted in more than half of my staff in TED moving to the RTA.

The following picture is a chart showing the TED Functions immediately prior to the restructuring:

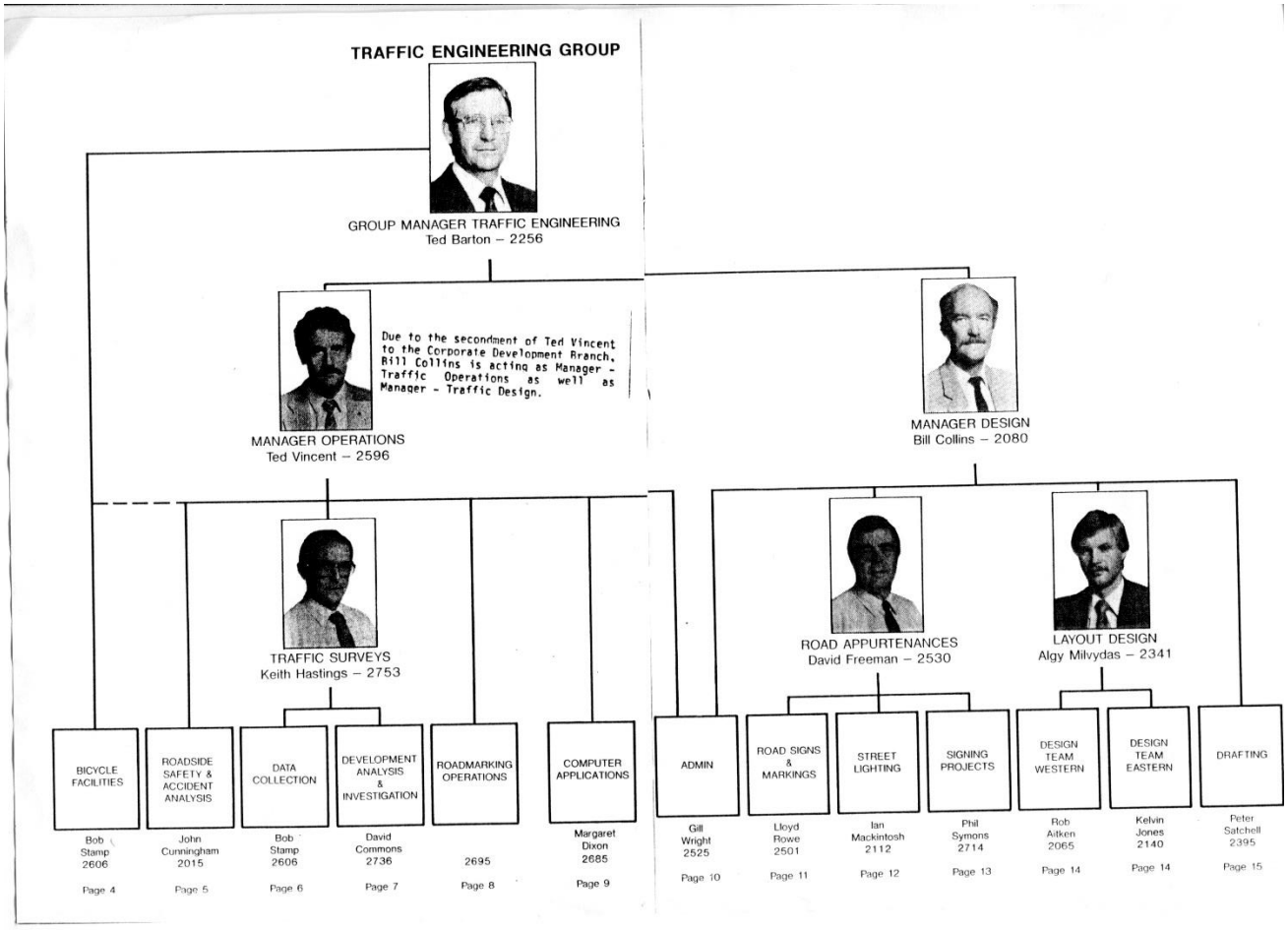




Traffic Engineering Division Organisation Chart showing all staff at the time

At the time, like other CRB staff working in the traffic management area, I had the option of moving to the RTA or remaining with RCA and I chose the latter.

The major change to the work of the TED after the restructuring was that all traffic signal planning and design was done in RTA along with some urban intersection layout design. Intersection layout design associated with major projects, especially work associated with freeway interchanges was still done by the RCA. At that time (mid 1980's) there was major works on the South East Freeway (later named Monash Freeway) and its connection to the MMBW built section from Punt Road to Toorak Road. The John Cain led Labour government opposed the section from warrigal Road to Toorak Road being built as a freeway and as a result initially this section was constructed with at-grade intersections at Tooronga Rd., Burke Rd. and High St. Road. There was also considerable traffic design work associated with rural and regional sections of freeway development such as the Hume, Calder, Western and Princes Freeways that involved the TED. These works also involved our traffic signing, roadmarking and street lighting groups, and we were still responsible for the collection of traffic survey data, including analysis and publication of the data collected.



The above picture shows the TED organisation chart after the restructuring:

At the time, like other CRB staff working in the traffic management area, I had the option of moving to the RTA or remaining with RCA and I chose the latter.

During the 1980's I was quite involved with the traffic engineering activities nationally through NAASRA (National Association of State Road Authorities) later called 'AustRoads' and was Victoria's representative on the Traffic Engineering Committee (TEC) of that organisation from the late 1970's to 1993 when I retired from VicRoads. I was chairman of the committee for its meeting in Melbourne in June 1984, its members are shown in this picture:

Back Row L to R

Rod Troutbeck ARRB, Cliff Arndt MRD WA, Derek Hyde Dep. Housing & Const., Ron Scriven Hwys Dep. SA.

Front, L to R.

Phil Charles NAASRA, Don Watson DMR. NSW, Ted Barton RCA, Vic, Geoff Middleton MRD QLD, John Lock DMR Tas. Geoff Farrugia, NAASRA.

I remained a member of the TEC until my retirement from VicRoads in1993.

In the late 1980's the work of the TEC included the update of its publication: Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice. (GTEP). I was heavily involved in this to the extent that RCA/VicRoads allowed me to put aside my normal work and devote almost all of my time to the NAASRA / AustRoads work. The day to day management of TED was done by Keith Hastings and I was assigned, as Technical Editor, the task of producing the new publication. This involved arranging and managing the authorship of all 12 individual parts of the publication including the major part of the actual writing of 5 parts as detailed below:

Part 1, Traffic Flow: Consultant Technical Writer, Dr MAP Taylor, Monash University

Part 2, Roadway Capacity: Consultant Technical Writer, Mr R Underwood, Chisolm Institute of Technology.

Part 3, Traffic Studies: Consultant Technical Writers: Dr M A P Taylor & Dr W Young, Monash University.

Part 4, Road Crashes: Technical Writers: Mr Ted Barton, MR John Sliogeris, RCA Victoria.

Part 5, Intersections at Grade. Technical Writers, Mr Ted Barton, RCA Vic. & Mr Geoff Middleton Main Roads Dep. Qld.

Part 6, Roundabouts: Consultant Technical Writer: Dr R Troutbeck, Queensland Univ. of Technology.

Part 7, Traffic Signals: Drafting Committee: Mr R Blinco, MRD Qld, Mr F Hulscher, Roads &Traffic Authority, NSW, Mr Ted Barton RCA Vic, Mr C Arndt MRD, WA.

Part 8, Traffic Control Devices.. Technical Writer: Mr J Shattock, DMR NSW.

Part 9, Arterial Road Traffic Management. Consultant Technical Writers: MR J Piper RTA Vic, Dr Chris Hoban, ARRB.

Part 10, Local Area Traffic Management. Drafting Committee: Mr. A O'Brien,

(Andrew O'Brien & Assoc.), Mr. G Anson, RTA, Vic., Mr Ted Barton RCA Vic.

Part 11, Parking. Consultant Technical Writer: Dr W Young Monash University.

Part 12. Roadway Lighting. Technical Writer: Mr. Ted Barton, RCA Vic.

Drafts of each part were circulated to all member organisations of NAASRA and other associated organisations, their comments and suggestions were sought and then considered by myself, as Technical editor, and discussed with the Traffic Engineering Practice Steering Committee set up for this publication: (Mr John Bliss, DMJR NSW & Mr Bob Solly, RCA, Vic.) and the agreed final draft was then forwarded to NAASRA publications editor (Mr Phil Charles) to arrange printing and Publication.. Since its original publication in 1988 additional parts have been published such as 'Bicycle Facilities'.

In addition to the work on the GTEP publication I was also involved with work for NAASRA/ AustRoads on their publication of Standard Vehicle Turning Path Templates. This involved a detailed review and update of vehicle dimensions (by Type of vehicle) to account for the current and possible future vehicle populations, running actual turn path tests and plots for the several vehicle types used in the geometric design of roadway intersections and manoeuvring areas. This work lead to the development of computer based programs by ARRB that ultimately superseded the use of transparency plots of 'swept path' used in roadway design. After my retirement from VicRoads in 1993, I completed this work for AUSTROADS under a consultancy contract. By the beginning of the 1990's I had resumed my normal work of managing the Traffic Engineering work of the newly formed VicRoads.

Apart from the usual work of geometric design of at-grade intersections, traffic signs, roadmarking and delineation devices, street lighting and traffic counting and surveys etc. the work of the group also included preparation of the VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual Volumes 1 & 2 which largely documented the work of the group especially in respect to specialised work of traffic signing & road marking.

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's I was always in close liaison with professors at both Melbourne and Monash Universities in respect to the content of undergraduate courses in the transport and traffic engineering fields and in the development and conduct of our own organisations internal training courses in this area of engineering specialisation. I was also involved in liaison and advisory activities with the relevant staff of ARRB, especially in respect to their work on roundabout capacity and delay analysis (Dr. Rod Troutbeck) and the analysis of operational characteristics, traffic capacity and delay at signalised intersections (by Dr Rahmi Akcelik) and his development of the SIDRA suite of computer programs associated with this.

During this period I was a member of the engineering professional organisations: Institution of Engineers Australia Victorian Transport Section and the Institute of Traffic Engineers, later called Institute of Transportation Engineers, (ITE) an international organisation centred mostly in USA and Canada. ITE had only a small following in Australia at that time as it was somewhat in competition with a newly forming local organisation, the Australian Institute of Traffic Planning & Management (AITPM). I had joined the ITE rather than the AITPM because I thought that its international membership provided more information and experience of overseas practices in the traffic and transportation field. I became President of our small Melbourne ITE section in 1985/86 and saw it grow in stature with increased membership, especially under the chairmanship of Mr. Andrew O'Brien, who was largely responsible for the Australian Section being recognised and incorporated into ITE International. It was also Andrew O'Brien who nominated and supported me being awarded Honorary Membership of the ITE, (the first Australian to receive this award), at its Annual conference in Toronto, Canada in 1998.

The formation of VicRoads

In about 1986 it became obvious to the Victorian Government that having one organisation (RCA) responsible for designing, building and managing roads on the one hand and another (RoSTA) designing, installing and operating the traffic management devices (traffic signals) on the other was not a sensible arrangement. It had resulted in significant problems of coordination of actions between the two State Government organisations and also with Municipal Councils. This ultimately led to the amalgamation of RCA and RTA to form VicRoads.

In the traffic engineering area this organisational change led to the large staff of RTA traffic signals group forming a separate group within VicRoads and my traffic engineering division remaining as a specialised service and advice group working on a consultancy basis within the overall VicRoads organisation. The nature of my work did not change much apart from the loss of direct responsibility for traffic signal design and associated operations. At that time the Victorian Government was trying to reduce the size of the 'Public Service' by shedding staff and offering staff redundancy packages to leave the organisation. About that time I had been asked by Mr. David Jellie, (formerly a VicRoads bridge construction engineer), but at that time with the Overseas Projects Corporation of Victoria (OPCV), if I was interested in doing some consultancy work overseas. OPCV were bidding on a World Bank funded road safety project in Malaysia at that time. I indicated that I was interested and although that project would not start for another year or so I decided to apply for retirement from VicRoads as part of their redundancy arrangements. Initially that was not agreed to by VicRoads CEO (Mr. R Patterson) on the basis that I could not be replaced from existing staff, however I was able to convince him that if I retired Mr John Cunningham was experienced enough to take over my position without much difficulty. This was finally agreed to and I retired from VicRoads in June 1993.