

My work after leaving VicRoads

As the OPCV project in Malaysia had not been finalised I decided to accept an offer for a one year consultancy work with the firm Guthridge Haskins & Davies (GHD), working with Mr D Shrimpton, a former member of the old Traffic Engineering Division, doing an investigation of the traffic management implications of converting the suburban railway from Southern Cross Station to Werribee to Standard Gauge. I completed that project in 1994 and then started employment with another consultancy: Andrew O'Brien & Assoc. (another of my old TED staff of the early 1970's).

It was in late 1993 that, to my surprise, I learned that I had been nominated (by Mr. Phillip Jordan, Senior Traffic Engineer at VicRoads), supported by Dr Max Lay, Professor Dr. Ken Ogden & others from Victoria and my AustRoads associates in other States, to receive the Victorian Public Service Medal. I was subsequently awarded the PSM in the 1994 Australia Day Honours, for which I am forever grateful to the above and all of my other colleagues and friends who helped and guided me throughout my career.

In the early part of 1995 the OPCV were awarded the project in Malaysia and I left Andrew O'Brien & Associates to take up a two year appointment as Road Safety Adviser with the Roads Branch of the Public Works Department (PWD) of Malaysia. (known locally as Jabatan Kerga Raya (JKR). This work involved the preparation and delivery of seminars and training courses on road safety engineering in the design and operation of roads and highways in all States of Malaysia and to head quarter's staff in the PWD in Kuala Lumpur. The work also included provision of technical advice to JKR staff and management and to relevant Government Ministers on road safety and design matters and the preparation of a Road Safety Audit Manual with associated seminars and training courses for implementation of Road Safety Audit in Malaysia. This work was very well received by the Malaysian Government and they extended my two year contract for another year and expanded the scope of my work to include the Malaysian Highway Authority (MHA), the organisation responsible for the development and operation of Malaysia's 'Tollway' Roads. To achieve appropriate transfer of knowledge, skills and experience in the important area of road safety in the design and operation of roads, the Malaysian PWD allocated one of their experienced engineers (Ir. Che Ali Bin Che Hitam) to work with me on the project. As it turned out, Che Ali was a very great help to me, particularly in respect to organising the many training workshops and seminars in the various Malaysian States and his contacts throughout the Roads Branch of the JKR, the Malaysian Highway Authority, the National Road Safety Council of Malaysia and IKRAM (Malaysian equivalent of ARRB) and UPM (University Pertania Malaysia). Ir. Professor Dr. Radin Umar Radin Sohadi .

After completing the Malaysian contract, I returned to work with Andrew O'Brien & Associates until 2001 when I took on another overseas contract through OPCV, this time as a Road Safety Advisor as part of a contract for: 'Consultancy Services In Respect To Technical Assistance On Road Traffic Safety and Vehicle Weight and Dimensions Enforcement, For the Sumatra Region Roads Project (SRRP)'. This project was a three year assignment with the work being centered in the four provinces of Northern Sumatra: Aceh, North Sumatra, Riau and West Sumatra. Notwithstanding the location of the work being in Northern Sumatra, we were required to reside in the Indonesian Capital Jakarta and to commute weekly by air between Jakarta and Medan (the provincial capital Nth. Sumatra Province).

The management of the project overall was done by Mr David Foster (Canadian) with the vehicle Weight and Dimensions part of the project being done by Mr. Robert Parker (Ex VicRoads Traffic Section) and as the project included a significant element of legal work in preparing draft rules and regulations relating to the enforcement of Vehicle Weight and Dimension in Indonesia the project team also included a legal expert Mr Campbell Duncan.

My traffic safety part of the project mostly involved the identification and treatment of road crash blackspots on the main roads in the four provinces of north Sumatra and the development and implementation of associated training programs for staff. While this seemed a relatively straight forward task at first, some significant difficulties arose immediately. Firstly the recording of road crashes in the Indonesian Provinces was very basic and manual. Crashes when reported to local Police were manually written into a large book (one book per year), with just the most basic crash information recorded: names of people, deaths, injuries, date & time, some vehicle identification details, road name and identification of the location (mostly by kilometre distance from the start of the road or from a local intersection). The problem was that many / most of the kilometre posts along the major roads were missing, and road and intersection names were difficult to find. It was even difficult to find a to-scale map of the road system in the Northern provinces of Sumatra.

This manual recording of crashes by local Police stations meant that one needed to go through many yearly crash record books at several local police stations to identify recurrent crash locations. The UK Transport and Road Research Laboratory (TRRL) was supposed to have set up a computerised crash reporting system in these provinces in a previous World Bank funded project but they had not completed their project and indeed had not even achieved a workable traffic crash report form for the local police to use, or the computer hardware and software to run such a system. As a result the development of a practical / workable crash report form, training of Police (Trainers) in the use of the form and the recording of the data on a computer became a major part of my task.

With to assistance and cooperation of the head of the Indonesian Traffic Police in Jakarta I was able to achieve this task over the three years of the project, including the printing and distribution to local police stations of the new crash report forms to cover the following 12 months or so. However I suspect that after I finished my contract the Indonesian Government may not have allocated the necessary funds to continue the printing and distribution of the new crash report forms nor the provision of the computer hardware and software to the Provincial Police that was supposed to have been provided by the prior contract with the UK TRRL.

The Indonesian project finished in July 2003 and apart from some contract consultancy work I subsequently did for a Malaysian consultancy (TRRS which was set up by my former Malaysian PWD associate Che Ali Che Hitam), investigating and reporting on a Malaysian Government proposal to increase the speed limit on the PLUS highway / tollway (from Singapore to Thailand) from 100 Km/h to 120 Km/h, I became fully retired in 2006.

The following are some pictures I took while working in Indonesia and my last project in Malaysia:



Training Session with Indonesian Police & Department staff



Bird nest in signal control cabinet, Medan North Sumatra



School children transport, West Sumatra Province



Typical overloaded Trucks in Northern Sumatra



Plus Tollway Malaysia, approach to toll booth



Plus Tollway near Kuala Lumpur Malaysia