

VICROADS ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg No A0022250S

46th Annual Report

March 2025

I have pleasure in presenting the 46th Annual Report of the VicRoads Association.

This will be my last Annual Report as President. I have been President since 2003 and it is appropriate that the presidency should now go to another person. I will remain on the committee and assist the new President and the Association in any way I can.

I have enjoyed the journey and I am very grateful to all our committee members over the years for their contributions and friendship. It made the task very enjoyable. I am grateful, too, for the support and encouragement I received from the membership at large – it was an honour to serve you.

Membership

This year, with the attendance at the Farewell to Kew and an increasingly popular Christmas party, our membership has increased to 311. This represents an increase of 26 new members.

Since our last AGM, the following people have joined our Association:

Chris Boardman, Allan Bowman, Martin Boyd, David Challman, Geoff Chambers, Brian Fitts, Jeanny Griek, David Harris, Brian Head, Klaus Kiesel, Bruce La'Brooy, John Lewis, Shelley Marcus, George Mavroyeni, Clive Mottram, Tracee Piper, Peter Newitt, Allison Pinto, Liz Pollock, Jacqui Sampson, Rob Steel OAM, Sri Thangarajah, Sybil Yardin, Keven Urbancic, Kerry Willis and Bruce Wood.

Since the end of February, the Committee has also approved membership applications from Peter Crook and Norm Bettess.

I am particularly encouraged by the increasing number of women and former staff from a range of areas across VicRoads joining our Association – and I hope this trend continues.

The new application form, in electronic form, appears on our website and this has made it easier for those interested to submit membership applications. Please share it with former colleagues who you think would enjoy the fellowship and activities of the Association. It has also made it easier for the Association to collect and record information such as emergency contacts. Our thanks to Patsy Kennedy for its development and modification.

It is also my sad duty to report that we were made aware of the death of the following members during this time – Les Bull, Birute Don, John Glenn, Dick/Frank Howland, Colin Kosky, Bob Parr, David Rowland and Leon Stevens. We were also advised of the passing of Barbara Salmela in early March.

Newsletter

Since March last year, we issued 10 newsletters. I am very grateful to John Wright for volunteering to become the editor. The two most recent newsletters (Nos 264 and 265) were produced under his editorship, and I think you will all agree, he has done an excellent job.

Our newsletters are emailed to members or member's contacts and shared on our website – <https://vicroadsassociation.org/>

Having written the newsletter for a considerable time, I know how helpful it is to receive submissions from our members. It makes the task much easier and provides a diverse range of interests for our readers. I therefore encourage you to submit your stories and recollections to reinforce our connections and friendship. Just email any contributions to John Wright - ananasw@gmail.com

Our website

Nick Szwed has continued in his role as webmaster. The website has a regular stream of hits from all over the world. Nick also takes lots of photos at our events and these then become part of our record of people and activities on our website.

If you have not visited the website (vicroadsassociation.org), or not recently, I encourage you to do so. It is probably the largest, single source of data about VicRoads and its people.

Events

2024 saw attendances at our functions increase significantly.

We had six occasional lunches at Shoppingtown Hotel in Doncaster last year. Attendance averaged over 21 people with 47 different attendees and a maximum of 29. These figures are very slightly down on last year's but they are the second highest over the last 20 years since we have been recording numbers. I want to thank Kel York who continues to make all the arrangements with the hotel.

We also had a mid-year lunch at the Waverley RSL. This was particularly successful so we have included another one in our 2025 program of events. Thanks to Ken Vickery for making the arrangements for all events held at Waverley RSL.

We wrote to the Minister for Roads late in 2023 seeking agreement to mark the permanent closure of Head Office at 60 Denmark Street Kew. On 8 May many of our members and other former employees attended a function and morning tea to say farewell to VicRoads head office. With generous assistance from the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), the "Farewell to Kew" was the biggest event on our 2024 calendar and it was an outstanding success. It brought together 200 former employees – the venue limit. Presentations were given by David Jellie, Peter McCullough and Jill Earnshaw – but the day was stolen by Tom Glazebrook. Tom, the long-term Divisional Engineer in Bendigo, captivated all of us with some of his recollections, the best of which was his famous statement that his favourite view of Head Office was in the rear vision mirror of his car on his way back to Bendigo. This was from a man who celebrated his 98th birthday the day before. The photographs on our website are a wonderful reminder of the day.

The delicious gourmet morning tea put on by the DTP in the original Café area enabled guests to mingle, meet old friends and make new ones. Many attendees then adjourned to the Skinny Dog Hotel in High Street which had been a gathering spot for many CRB and VicRoads employees over the years. A smaller group then finished off the day at Buoy Pizza, another gathering spot for former employees.

On 28 May, over forty members and guests travelled to the Transport Accident Commission in Geelong. There, we received an excellent presentation by Samantha Cockfield, Executive General Manager Road Safety and other senior TAC staff and former VicRoads employees John Matta and Antonietta Cavello. This was followed by a lunch on the veranda of the nearby Sailor's Rest Hotel. It was great to see a number of our members from the Geelong area join us for this event.

On August 19, 50 members and guests met in the city and took a bus tour of parts of the West Gate Tunnel project. The running commentary on the bus by senior DTP staff and contractors and presentation at the Project Information Centre proved extremely interesting. It was also an opportunity for a number of junior DTP staff to mix with former employees; a number of whom had previous experience with traffic management and major road and bridge construction in the adjacent areas. We then lunched in the city at The Crafty Squire hotel.

On 9 September over 25 members did an informative, guided tour of the Shrine of Remembrance. This was followed by a very pleasant lunch at The Rising Sun Hotel in South Melbourne.

We didn't attract as many members and friends as we expected to the Annual Golf Day in October – but we haven't given up and we have scheduled another one later this year. For the record, Roy Gilmour won the trophy yet again!

In 2024, our annual road trip traversed the Great Alpine Road. It was held on 6th – 8th November. We lunched with ex-Traralgon colleagues at the Moe Racing Club on the way to our first night stop at Bairnsdale. The following day we commenced the drive along the Great Alpine Road and stopped for lunch in Omeo. There, we met up with Ric Anderson (ex-Benalla Division) who was our very genial and knowledgeable guide for the rest of the journey. Rick's local knowledge was invaluable and we stopped off at places of historical and technical on the way to Bright where we stayed the following night. I want to thank Ric for making this trip so interesting for us.

This year's Christmas party at Waverley RSL attracted 110 members and guests – our largest ever Christmas gathering. Everyone enjoyed catching up with friends and meeting some of our newer members. Once again Jill Earnshaw made up our Christmas hamper for our lucky draw. The hamper was won by Sybil Yardin who had recently joined the Association.

Our first function in 2025 was in February when we gathered in the theatre of the Department of Transport and Planning for presentations by William Tieppo, Deputy Secretary, Network Design and Integration, Praveen Reddy, Executive Director Freight Victoria at DTP and Marcelo Vidales, Head of Road Safety Victoria at DTP – all former VicRoads employees. Topics covered included the current structure and governance of the Department and major changes since many of us worked in VicRoads, the Freight Plan and the Road Safety Action Plan 2. This function, attended by about 45 members and guests, was followed by lunch at Young and Jacksons hotel in the city.

Committee

President: David Jellie

Secretary: Jill Earnshaw

Treasurer: Ken Vickery

Membership Secretary: Iris Whittaker

Members: Jim Webber, Graham Gilpin, John Wright, Patsy Kennedy, Noel Osborne, Alan Mackinlay, Nick Szwed and John Rebbechi.

Ken Sinclair also attended several Committee meetings as an Observer.

Since our 45th AGM in March 2024, we have held six Committee meetings; five in 2024 and one this year.

Once again, I would like to thank all the Committee members for their support and contributions.

In April 2024, Jim Webber resigned as our Honorary Secretary. Jim joined the VicRoads Association in October 2008 and became a committee member in March 2013. In October 2015 he succeeded Peter Lowe as the Honorary Secretary. On behalf of the Association, I want to express our sincere gratitude to Jim for his service, and the dedication and grace he displayed in carrying out his duties.

The role of the Secretary is the most onerous on any committee. Apart from managing the record keeping and communications, it requires attention to detail and empathy for the needs of members. Jim showed great wisdom and humour and tirelessly gave his time and energy in carrying out these tasks. He participated in all our events and meticulously planned our road trips.

As President, I valued Jim's opinion and assistance and his willingness to answer the phone at any time of day. I was also pleased that Jim had decided to remain a committee member so that we still have the benefit of his knowledge and experience.

Jill Earnshaw was elected by acclaim at our following committee meeting to become our next Secretary. Jill played a leading role in the Farewell to Kew celebrations as well as a number of other functions and designed our program of events for 2025. Thank you, Jill, for taking on this role.

Ken Vickery, our Treasurer, has continued to keep our income and expenditure recorded and arranges the annual auditing of the accounts.

Iris Whittaker volunteered to act as Membership secretary and does an excellent job managing our membership data and producing name tags for participants at all our events.

60 Denmark Street, Kew

In August 2024, on behalf of members, the Committee made a submission on the Draft Boroondara Planning Scheme Amendment which dealt with the future development of the land at 60 Denmark Street, Kew. Our informal submission sought the retention of the eucalyptus trees on the Denmark Street frontage and other canopy trees on the site.

Rules of Association

At our 2023 AGM a motion was passed that we should review our rules of association as they required updating. A sub-committee, led by Graham Gilpin, identified that the State Government through the Department of Consumer Affairs was in the process of updating its latest version of its Model Rules for all registered Associations which were first produced in 2012. The Committee agreed to upgrade its rules in line with these, now-finalised and updated Model Rules.

Hence, at this AGM we will be putting a motion to this effect to the membership.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Doug Thompson for auditing our accounts.

Thank you to all our members for being so loyal and appreciative of what we do. After all, that is our mission – to support each other with our friendship.

David Jellie
President
March 2025