



Jim Webber joined the CRB as an engineering cadet in 1960 after completing First year of a Civil Engineering degree at the University of Melbourne. He completed his degree with 3rd Class Honours in 1963. Jim joined the rotation scheme run by Bob Billinge in 1964, spending the first 4 years in Bridge Sub-Branch under Raleigh Robinson and Brian Kemp. Certainly, he couldn't have asked for a better start. His initial experience was in Bridge Construction- a memorable aspect were the morning teas when extensive discussions took place about current projects and practices and current events- Tom Russell often played a significant role in these discussions.

Then followed 2 years in Materials Division in a project role working for Alf Gawith and David Currie. He conducted the original roughometer surveys and worked with Roy Gilmour and Graham Bryant on a project involving the brittle fracture of steel. Lunch times in the Materials own lunch area were very memorable, with many contributing to discussions of current events. During those years he completed a part-time Diploma of Town & Regional Planning at the University of Melbourne as town planning and architecture had always been a great interest to him.



1966 Belle of the CRB Ball



*BELLE OF THE BALL, Miss Kay Fisher, receiving her sash from the Hon. M. V. Porter, Jim Webber looks on.*

In 1971 he gained a CRB Scholarship to undertake a Masters Degree in Highway Engineering at the University of New South Wales. Kay and Jim had a young family and he was able to walk to the University while at weekends the family could all walk to Coogee Beach- it was a wonderful course and a great family lifestyle.

When he returned from Sydney, Jim joined Dandenong Division where he worked for Ted Goddard on the initial works on the Mulgrave Freeway (now Monash Freeway), As the project got underway he moved to the Project Office at Doveton where he worked with Dave Capon who managed the Materials testing. Again, how fortunate was he to have worked for Ted and be part of Dandenong Division which had a wonderful camaraderie under the Divisional Engineer Stan Hodgson and an extremely active social club.

In 1974 Jim was seconded to the NASRA nation- wide truck mass and dimensions exercise Economics of Road Vehicle Limits Study (ERVLS). A small very competent study team from various State Road Authorities and the ARRB was led very capably by Tony Fry.

In 1976 Jim gained a Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Scholarship where he worked for nearly a year as a traffic engineer with Mott Hay and Anderson. Consulting Engineers. He was involved in noise prediction models for a major road deviation on the Devon/Cornwall boundary. It was the first time his family had been overseas, with their children attending the local Coulsdon Primary School.

He became the Assistant Advance Planning Engineer under John Pittard when he arrived back in Australia.



1977 or 1978 Advance Planning winning table St Trinians



1977 Jumbunna Management Course (Jim is second from bottom)

Next, he was appointed Program and Budgets Engineer, before becoming Road Planning Engineer in 1980 and then the Assistant Chief Planning Engineer in 1982, working for the very competent Bill Thomas, the Chief Planning Engineer. During this period Jim was also the APEA representative on the Road Construction Authority (RCA) Task Force.

Following the Cain Government's election in 1982, the Transport Minister decided to move responsibility for major road planning in Melbourne from the RCA to the Ministry of Transport (MoT). Jim was seconded in 1983 to the Ministry to lead a small road planning team, which he did for five years. This period was the start of Governments playing a substantial role in the planning of Melbourne's major roads and freeways.

During this period at the MoT Jim completed a part-time Graduate Diploma in Organisation Behaviour, winning the Mobil Prize for the best overall student.

Responsibility for major road planning was returned to the RCA in 1986, with the result that his secondment was terminated and he returned to the RCA. He led two very extensive Environment Effects Statements into the Eastern Freeway from Doncaster to Ringwood, including the Ringwood Bypass. A Planning Scheme Amendment provided for a road reservation and the environmental clearance. The construction that followed was undertaken by the private sector, with the main enhancement being the Mullum Mullum/Melba Tunnels.

In 1989 Jim went overseas on long service leave, when he undertook an Advanced Management Course at Stanford University in California.

He retired from VicRoads in December 1991, after becoming the General Manager of the Small Business Development Corporation. He later became a Deputy Secretary in



the Department of Planning and Development, before he retired from the public service in 1996. He then set up pTrans Pty Ltd, a planning and transport consultancy, where he worked for a decade at Melbourne Docklands and managed overseas study tours for Australian and New Zealand architects for 25 years.

Jim's VicRoads Association Committee experience was as follows:

- Became a Member October 2008
- Joined Committee March 2023 AGM
- Became Secretary following Peter Lowe October 2015
- Resigned as Secretary March 2024



2025 VicRoads Association Awardees Ken Vickery, Jim Webber and David Jellie with new President John Wright



2025 VicRoads Association Committee