

Sun Shines on Metro North West Opening

Metropolitan North West's new Sunshine headquarters was opened by Geoff Craige, Minister for Roads and Ports, on Sunday 15 February. VicRoads Chief Executive Colin Jordan welcomed some 120 guests to the celebrations, including a large contingent of VicRoads staff and their families.

Both Colin Jordan and Minister Craige spoke with pride of the many benefits the new complex provides to customers and staff, and thanked staff for their role in the planning process.

"This new office underlines this Government's commitment to improving service delivery to the people in the western suburbs," Minister Craige said.

"It features the latest in technology and design to offer a full range of VicRoads services in the best possible facilities for customers.

"It also houses planning staff from the Department of Infrastructure, enabling customers such as local government to conduct their business in a one-stop-shop."

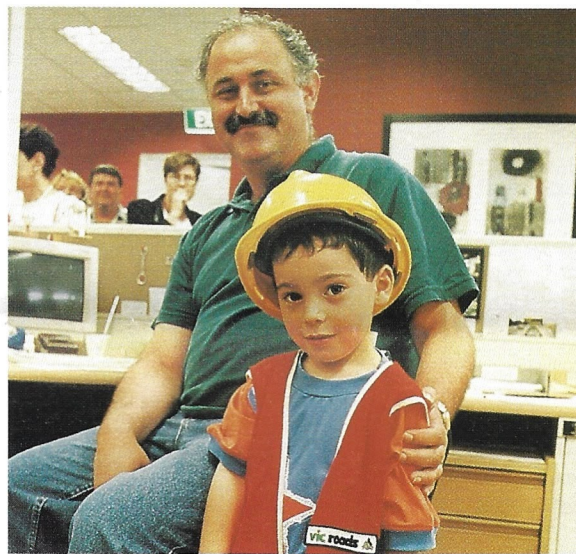
The Minister's enthusiasm was reinforced by guests, including the Mayor and four Councillors from the City of Brimbank and the Chief Executives of a number of other municipalities served by VicRoads Metropolitan North West region.

"The Brimbank group in particular was extremely impressed, and saw our new office as the start of a new business centre for Sunshine," reported Metropolitan North West Regional Manager, Brian Negus.

"Several people told me that they felt the invitation was a genuine recognition of the importance of staff to VicRoads, and also a good opportunity for mixing with other staff and their families," he said.

"It was great watching the kids – they really enjoyed seeing where Mum and Dad work, and had a great time trying out all the whizz-bang gear."

After the speeches and site tour, guests tucked into a delicious barbecue lunch. A marquee was wisely provided, but in true Victorian style a cloudy morning became a fine afternoon, and Sunshine lived up to its name.



Bill Gouliotidis and son Thomas enjoy the opening festivities at Metro North West, Sunshine.

Minister Geoff Craige mingled with VicRoads staff at the opening of Metro North West Sunshine. Pictured (L to R) are Minister Geoff Craige, Judy Christie, Alicia Peres and Lucy Cambareri, Registration and Licensing Office Manager.



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And the Winner is....

Glen Hesketh, VicRoads Traffic Management Engineer, who has come up with a great new title for the newsletter, Drive Times. Glen not only nominated several excellent possibilities, but provided a great rationale for his winning suggestion:

- the one thing all VicRoads key businesses have in common is the driver;
- the one thing all drivers have in common is that they drive; and
- drive can mean to force or motivate.

Congratulations, Glen. We're sure you'll enjoy your visit to the ABC Shop.

Many thanks to all the other entrants in the competition, who came up with some fine ideas (and gave us a few good laughs). Special mention was awarded to Jim Tullberg, whose tongue-in-cheek suggestion 'The Prints of Denmark' tickled the Shakespearian fancy in all of us.

If you have any ideas for stories, please contact the editor, Christine Elmer, on 03 9854 2779 or via email: elmerc@vrnotes.roads.vic.gov.au

Bike Program Manager Appointed

Pedal power has received a boost with the appointment of Alistair Cumming as Manager Bicycle Programs at VicRoads.

Alistair comes to VicRoads with a wealth of experience and a high profile in the cycling community. He spent the past three years with Bicycle Victoria, where his work included lobbying VicRoads for more bike lanes. He is also the author of their recent booklet *It Can Be Done*, which explores practical ways of catering for cyclists on the arterial road network.

In reporting Alistair's appointment, *The Age* (12 February) agreed with Minister for Roads and Ports Geoff Craige that the State Government has shown a big commitment to cycling by establishing the new position Alistair has filled.

"Only 2 per cent of all trips in Melbourne are by bicycle compared with 20 per cent or more in European cities," Minister Craige said. "A big challenge to Melbourne is to increase the use of bicycles both for recreation and commuting."

Alistair uses his bike for both work and leisure, but he also admits to travelling on foot, by motorcycle, public transport, car or even truck if the occasion demands it.

"I'm a transport pragmatist," he says.

His new position will include working on further development of the Principal Bicycle Network and in making cycling safer and more accessible for all.

"My role is to extend the good work that VicRoads is already doing for cyclists," Alistair said.



Newly appointed Manager of Bicycle Programs at VicRoads, Alistair Cumming.

Wang R&L Does VicRoads Proud

Wangaratta R&L office has chalked up two Pride of Workmanship Awards for its achievements in customer service.

"The Rotary Club of Appin Park presents Pride of Workmanship Awards each year to individuals and work groups who show outstanding ability and commitment in their field of endeavour," explains Robert Paino, Manager Registration & Licensing, Wangaratta and Benalla.

"We were delighted when both Chris Foley, our Senior Customer Service Officer, and our whole Customer Service team each won 1997 awards, for 'distinguished service and dedication' to their vocation.

"In our case, this means providing quality customer service to the community of north eastern Victoria.

"Their success was especially pleasing because these are open awards, so VicRoads staff were competing as business people and not in a special public sector category.

"The certificates are now proudly displayed in the public area in the Wangaratta office, and they're spurring us on to go one better, and to challenge for the main award in 1998."

Calling All Basketballers

If slam dunk, swish and jam are part of your sporting vocabulary, you're needed for the VicRoads team at the Australasian Public Sector Games.

The games will take place in Melbourne from 15-19 April this year, and involve 5000 participants from Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, representing some 300 public sector organisations.

Basketball is one of 18 sports where individual, team and enterprise awards are up for grabs, and Col Scammell, Reporting Officer from Eastern Region, is looking for four or five players for a VicRoads team.

"We desperately need a dynamic person of either sex who shoots three points, can dunk and defend and dribble the ball," Col reports, "and we'll be having practice sessions in both Traralgon and Melbourne, so don't let geography put you off!"

Aspiring dunkers and dribblers can contact Col on ph 03 5172 2642, or email <Scammec@vrnotes.roads.vic.gov.au>. An enthusiastic reception is guaranteed.



....and non-basketballers

Other sports involved in the Games are athletics, cycling, lawn bowls, shooting, swimming, touch football, badminton, golf, netball, softball, table tennis, triathlon/duathlon, indoor cricket, road run, squash, tennis and volleyball.

You've still time to enter yourself or a team by calling the Games hotline on 03 9583 9178, but don't delay!

You can also check out the Games web site at <<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~apsgames>>.

The Martians Haven't Landed

Have you noticed our urban freeways have suddenly sprouted a crop of innocuous grey-blue boxes, sited next to what look like giant fly swats? Some people suggest they've been planted by aliens, but it's the sun, not Mars, that is the real power behind these mysterious structures.



Frank Thomas (left) and Barry Jan of the System Implementation Section check out the test site located at the VicRoads Depot off Ferntree Gully Road, Mulgrave.

The fly swat and friend keep VicRoads' Traffic Control and Communications Centre up-to-date with traffic flow on the South Eastern Freeway.

The grey boxes are in fact the on-site processor stations for VicRoads' Incident Detection System. They operate 24 hours a day collecting information on traffic volume and speed from the detection loops that are embedded in most of our urban freeways.

This information is transmitted every 20 seconds to VicRoads' Traffic Control and Communications Centre (TCCC) in Camberwell. It's used to set off warning alarms when there is an interruption to traffic flow or an unusual traffic pattern detected on the freeway. It is also used to predict the travel times and congestion levels for the Drive Time system.

The grey boxes and the fly swats provide considerable data to VicRoads and a valuable service to the community at large.

From brain power to solar power

They are also evidence of creative thinking in VicRoads System Implementation Section, working together with the Telstra Mobile Satellite and Radio Services and HiLux Technical Services Pty Ltd.

Each processor station requires a power supply for the on-site equipment and a separate communications connection to transmit the data to the TCCC. Traditionally, this has required connections with a 240 volt local power supply and the Telstra cable network respectively.

VicRoads and its colleagues have, however, come up with a method for providing power through solar panels, and wireless communications via the Telstra State Mobile Radio Network.

The obvious advantages include:

- **elimination of the need for conduits or trenching, saving both labour and cost;**
- **siting of processor stations is no longer dependent on the availability of services;**
- **no power bills;**
- **transmitting data over the State Mobile Radio Network is significantly cheaper than via a comparable cable network; and**
- **the system is environmentally friendly.**

Overall, it is estimated installing a solar-radio Incident Detection System costs up to 25 per cent less than a fully wired version, and operating costs can be up to 60 per cent less per annum.

Solar power rules

The system was successfully trialled on the South Eastern Freeway, with the solar storage system proving dependable even through the short daylight hours of Melbourne's winter months. It has since been implemented on the Eastern Freeway between Hoddle Street and Bulleen Road.

Not surprisingly, the new solar-radio technology is rapidly becoming VicRoads' preferred option for installing and operating site processor stations, and discussions are underway with Telstra for marketing the system to other States and overseas.

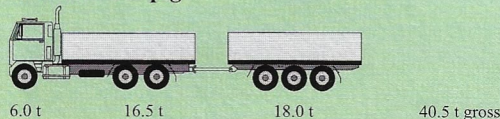
Congratulations to our System Implementation Section and their Telstra and HiLux colleagues for achieving this significant technological breakthrough.

Words at Work

About 85 per cent of freight in Australia is carried by road. Freight is carried by vehicles of many different shapes, sizes and configurations. The following definitions should help next time your 14-year-old son challenges you to tell the difference between a pig and a dog trailer, or a B-double and a road train.

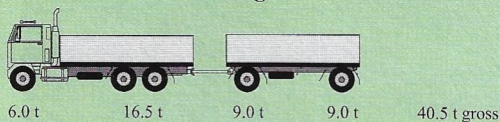
trucks are all-in-one vehicles made up of a van body or a tray attached to a cabin.

19 m truck & pig



pig and dog are two types of trailer that can be towed by trucks. A pig trailer has all its axles in the centre of the trailer. A dog trailer has its axles mounted at each end of the trailer, making it more stable than a pig trailer. Pig and dog trailers are connected to a truck by a draw bar.

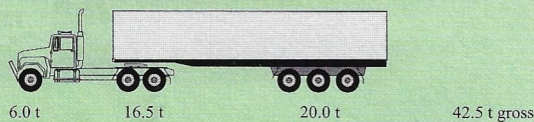
19 m truck & 2 axle dog



prime mover is a truck that has a turntable on its back instead of a van body or tray, so it can tow a semi-trailer.

semi-trailers are trailers with all their axles mounted towards the rear. They are connected by a turntable to the prime mover.

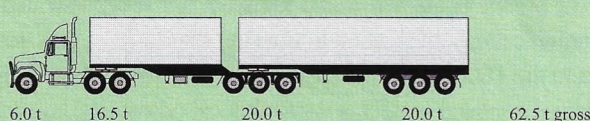
19 m articulated semi-trailer



B-doubles are large vehicles which involve a prime mover and two trailers.

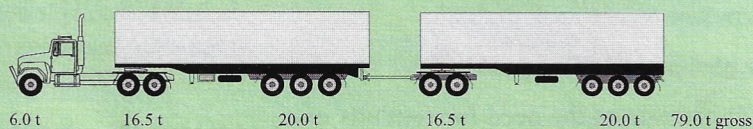
The front trailer is mounted onto the back of the prime mover, and the second trailer is mounted onto the back of the first trailer. As the name suggests, a B-triple involves a third trailer and this again is mounted onto the trailer in front of it.

25 m tri-tri B-Double



road trains involve a prime mover and two to four trailers. The front trailer is mounted onto the back of the prime

36.5 m road train



mover, and the other trailers are joined by draw bars. Road trains do not generally operate in Victoria, although special provision has been made for two-trailer road trains to cart bulk cement and produce from Mildura into New South Wales, to ensure the viability of important local industries.

All heavy vehicles must meet certain length and gross (loaded) weight requirements before they can legally be driven on the roads. One of the major tasks of VicRoads' Transport Safety Service (TSS) officers is to ensure vehicles operate within legal dimension and mass limits to promote road safety and protect Victoria's valuable road network.

Working

The Department of Infrastructure (DOI) was formed to facilitate Victoria's economic growth and achieve a high quality life for present and future generations. How does VicRoads fit into the DOI?

The Department of Infrastructure (DOI) was created in April 1996, when Victoria's public service was reorganised into just eight departments.

In the case of the DOI, this involved grouping together a range of operating units previously associated with the former Departments of Transport, Planning and Development, and Treasury and Finance, one of these being VicRoads. The aim was to achieve a more coordinated approach to planning, transport and economic development that would result in:

- specialised agencies working together more effectively;
- simplified dealings between the DOI and other elements of government, and between government and the private sector;
- strengthened forward planning and provision of high level advice to government; and
- a stronger regional presence for the DOI.

Authorities such as VicRoads retain their individual identity and legal autonomy within the DOI – in fact the DOI expects to benefit from the positive image many of these authorities have.

Together for Victoria's Future

VicRoads and the Department of Infrastructure

What is the DOI responsible for?

The DOI is responsible for a broad range of activities, including

- large projects such as Federation Square, Docklands, the Melbourne City Link and the Western Ring Road;
- major road, rail and port works;
- planning, managing and developing the built environment;
- public transport services such as train, tram and bus passengers services and rail freight services;
- public transport safety and regulation, road safety and regulation through driver, taxi and tow-truck licensing; and
- overseeing of the local government sector.

As this list indicates, VicRoads' four core businesses – Road System Management, Traffic and Road Use Management, Registration and Licensing and Road Safety – make a key contribution to the outcomes required of the DOI.

How VicRoads contributes

The expert advice VicRoads provides through its core businesses helps shape the direction of Victoria's infrastructure planning and development beyond its current purposes and capabilities. VicRoads also plays an important role in the integrated delivery of the DOI's services, for example by working in cooperation with other areas of the DOI on multi-faceted projects such as the City Link, the Exhibition Street extension and the lowering of the railway line at Boronia.

It also supports the objectives of the DOI through its everyday operations. By providing safe, reliable and efficient road conditions, and by acting as project managers for further developments in the road network, VicRoads helps ensure urban and regional development proceeds as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Building on our strengths

VicRoads has a particularly important role to play in assisting the DOI to establish a strong presence in regional Victoria.

We have a high profile in regional areas, and excellent contacts with local government, business and industry and the community.



DOI staff located at VicRoads North East regional office in Benalla. Pictured (L to R) are: Jenny Taalman, Grant Scate and Lisa Gervasoni.

By locating planning and local government staff in existing VicRoads offices, the DOI is able to capitalise on the goodwill and contacts VicRoads has developed over many years. Customers benefit from improved access to a range of DOI services, a more coordinated approach on matters involving both transport and planning, and generally speedier decision-making. VicRoads is also a leader in the application of technology both in the office and on the roads. There is considerable scope for applying our expertise in business systems and Intelligent Transport Systems across other areas of the DOI.

Working together for the future

During 1997, VicRoads also contributed to the DOI through our Chief Executive Colin Jordan, who spent three months as Departmental Secretary.

"The past 12 months have seen the consolidation of the Department, and real progress towards our goal of achieving a strengthened infrastructure capacity for Victoria," Colin Jordan said.

"VicRoads has made a valuable contribution to this process, and I have no doubt we will continue to do so.

"I extend a warm welcome to DOI staff who have joined us in our regional offices. We look forward to participating in initiatives that will provide benefits to our customers throughout Victoria."

"Authorities such as VicRoads retain their individual identity within the DOI – in fact the DOI expects to benefit from the positive image many of these authorities have."

The Departments and authorities grouped together in the Department of Infrastructure cover these projects and activities:

Building
Building Regulation
the Docklands
Heritage
Local Government
Major Projects
Melbourne City Link
Planning
Ports
Public Transport
Roads
Transport Regulation
Urban/Land Authority
VicRoads

Call Centre Calls for the Best



Fancy a job where you can talk on the phone all day, in an environment specially designed and decorated to maximise your comfort? Then Mike Brennan of VicRoads' Telephone Information Service (TIS) may have just the job for you.

In fact it takes a very special sort of person to work in a large call centre – the industry's name for services like the TIS.

"Each of our Customer Services Representatives (CSRs) takes an average of 135 calls a day," Mike explains, "and they have to deal with a complete cross section of society.

"They have to bear the brunt of dissatisfaction of some callers, deal with the inevitable venting of spleen, and at the same time remember they are the organisation's front line ambassadors for many road users.

"I think they have one of the toughest jobs in VicRoads."

This challenge has clearly brought out the best in Mike and his team, because the TIS has been achieving real improvements in service delivery, coupled with decreases in service cost.

"In the 1997 financial year we were able to improve our performance through smarter use of our existing resources, particularly our people, and through the development and application of quality systems," Mike said.

"We'll continue building on these improvements in 1998, but we're also going to benefit from the introduction of our new telephone and IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system, which enables customers to select various menu options by pressing numbers on their telephone key pad.

"I believe we are already one of the most effective government call centres, and we benchmark favourably with a number of private operations."

Smarter technology helps meet growing demand

The principal function of the TIS is to handle enquiries relating to VicRoads' registration and licensing business.

"Our business has increased significantly during the past five years," Mike says, "from about 950,000 calls in 1991 to more than two million in 1997.

"This reflects the community's increasing use of the telephone as a business tool.

"To manage this increase we've contracted with Nortel Australia for the supply of a Meridian 1 digital PABX telephone system with a range of high-tech features including Automated Call Distributor, VoiceMail, IVR, Enhanced Management Information System, and Customer Caller Routing, a facility which allows us to match the caller to the operator with the right skills."

The new system is capable of processing more than 2000 operator-managed and IVR calls per hour.

"Currently we offer a very simple recorded information service, but our IVR system will be developed significantly during the next 12 months, and will make a major contribution to achieving the Government's Electronic Service Delivery objectives," Mike said.

"Customers will be able to carry out transactions like renewing their registration, booking learner permit and licence tests, finding out their demerit point records and ordering replacement registration labels, simply by lifting the phone."

Converting customers to ESD

The TIS is keenly aware of the resistance many callers feel towards electronic service delivery, and is promoting its system as a 'self service' option which offers customers the convenience of 24 hour-a-day access. Mike also emphasises the importance of staggering the implementation of changes like the introduction of IVR in order to maximise acceptance.

"The key is to educate the callers," he says, "and in the first instance we're concentrating on our regular callers like financiers, the motor trade, driving instructors and professional drivers.

"Our CSRs will talk them through the process, and we also send out diagrams of the architecture of the call flow, so they can literally see the route their call is following."

Keeping our CSRs comfortable

Meanwhile, back at the call centre, the CSRs are enjoying the comforts of new premises in VicRoads North Building in Kew, where they moved in January.

"We engaged a call centre consultant to do the architectural design and decor for the centre, and what you see reflects occupational health and safety and work flow requirements, and the need to maximise comfort for staff doing a difficult job," Mike says.

"One of the most important areas is the break-out room, where staff can go to relax and, if necessary, let off steam."

It's a pleasant, airy space, with tables, chairs, television and a kitchen area – which suggests callers to VicRoads are at least less abusive than those to a company reported in *The City Weekly*, which built a sound-proof room so employees could lock themselves in and scream their lungs out to release their frustration!

"The company calls it the post-call evaluation room – its unofficial name is the padded cell," *The City Weekly* wrote.

Promoting service excellence

The redoubtable staff of the TIS comprises 100 people (including part-timers) split into six teams of 14 members, plus a support team of seven people. The support team handles difficult enquiries that need investigation and possibly corrective action, monitors the quality systems and also manages the queues of callers holding on.

"Our goal is to achieve an average speed of answering calls of 30 seconds, and to lose no more than 6 per cent of calls," Mike says.

"We monitor this constantly, so that in addition to being tolerant extroverts, CSRs need to be happy working with equipment that automatically records how long they log on for phone work, the talk time per call, how long they log off for non-phone work and so on.

"On a more informal basis, we also have an 'honour' board and a 'shame' board, where we put up the frequent letters of congratulation and the few grumbles.

"In the case of the grumbles, we white out the identity of the operator, and simply use the letter to give us ideas for improving our service delivery, but in the case of the congratulations, we make sure everyone knows about it.

"In addition to this informal system, our quality system registers complaints as non-conformances against our service, in order to maintain the impetus for continuous improvement."

Top left: VicRoads' high-tech new call centre is capable of processing more than 2000 calls per hour.

Bottom left: The break-out room provides a comfortable space where VicRoads customer service representatives can relax during breaks.

From the Honour Board

These two letters from the 'honour board' show what important ambassadors Telephone Information Staff staff can be.

The Managing Director of Educational Communications, Roger Taylor, wrote to VicRoads last November to express his appreciation of the way his calls to 13 1173 were handled.

"I have needed queries answered twice in the last week and your staff have been very helpful and polite each time," Mr Taylor wrote.

"If most of the private organisations I deal with were as helpful on the telephone, my life would be far less stressful. Once again thank you for creating a culture of service."

His sentiments were echoed by Alex Hampel, Managing Director of Man to Man, who spoke with Customer Service Representative Carol Edwards.

"A situation had arisen where my car was discovered to be unregistered," explained Mr Hampel. "Carol not only facilitated the registration in an efficient manner but, even more importantly, displayed an understanding of my predicament. Her interest in following through this case, waiting until the cheque arrived, making arrangements for the cheque to be accepted by a security officer if it arrived late, was a great display of customer service.

"Being in a business that relies wholly on customer service, it was greatly appreciated. Please pass my congratulations on to Carol, and also accept my thanks for creating an environment where this attitude is encouraged."

Barwon Road Safety Campaign a Winner

Barwon Community Road Safety Council has won the community award in the 1997 Achievement in Automotive Safety Awards, sponsored by Windscreens O'Brien.

Barwon's multi-faceted road safety campaign is credited with contributing to a 42 per cent reduction in casualties in drivers aged 60 and older since 1993.

Barwon's comprehensive program of education and positive policing included a strong evaluation component. Other measured achievements included a reduction in positive breath tests from 1.30 per cent to 0.68 per cent, and a 100 per cent adoption by primary schools of a 'No helmet, no bike' policy.

There are 21 Community Road Safety Councils throughout Victoria, which were created and are strongly supported by VicRoads and the Victoria Police. VicRoads' contribution includes providing expertise in the form of Road Safety Officer Colin Cotterill, who divides his time between the Barwon and Colac Community Road Safety Councils.

"Stan Robertson, the General Manager of Windscreens O'Brien, said that one of the hallmarks of this year's awards was the large number of community-based nominations received from all over Australia," Colin said, "so we won against some stiff competition."

"The judging panel was impressed that the Barwon program was able to achieve measurable results, and that it gave the community ownership of the road safety issue as an alternative to the 'big stick' approach."



Barwon Community Road Safety Council Chairman Russell Purdey (left) and Colin Cotterill display the award, which was presented by Minister for Roads and Ports Geoff Craigie at the National Gallery of Victoria.

Outstanding Safety Record

Deputy Chief Executive Rob McQuillen recently presented awards for outstanding safety records to the Eastern Patrol Depot and Bridge Maintenance teams at VicRoads Metropolitan North West region.

The Eastern Patrol Depot team is headed up by Herb Hansford and his deputy, Eddie Wallace, and includes Joe Santamaria, Barry Allan, Peter Tsourouhas, Frank Scalise, John O'Brien, Andrew Mooney, Giovanni Maccarone, Steve Houdalakis, Jim Forde, Kon Dimoulas, Tony De Donato and Rod Buckton.

Between them they have achieved 250 days without losing time to accidents. The team's job is to carry out routine maintenance activities and minor construction work on major roads. They also attend incidents and accidents and undertake traffic management works for special events such as fun runs, marathons and the Grand Prix.

As Regional Manager Brian Negus noted at the presentation: "This is a very heavily trafficked network with some freeways carrying up to 90,000 vehicles per day.

"The team's safety record is to be highly commended considering the extremely hazardous environment in which they work."

The Bridge Maintenance Team is responsible for maintaining more than 500 bridges and other structures across the region.

They've reached a magnificent total of 1650 days without losing any days due to accident.

The team's work includes routine cleaning and inspection, repair of concrete beams and columns and replacing expansion joints and bearings.

Team members often work in the midst of heavy traffic and in difficult terrain.

"This record of 1650 days without any time lost is an outstanding achievement given the type of work this team undertakes," Brian Negus said.

The team is led by George Charalambides and comprises Paul Salomone, Vinnie Ciantar, Frank Hanley, Barry Healy, Nestor Viota and Paul Ciccuro. Between them, the seven team members have clocked up 174 years of experience with VicRoads.



It was smiles all round when Deputy Chief Executive Rob McQuillen (front row left) presented Metro North West's Bridge Maintenance Team with their safety award.



Rob McQuillen was also on hand to present Metro North West's Eastern Patrol Depot with their award for safety achievements.

Way to Go VicRoads!



We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of VicRoads' reads a large sign on a vacant 22 acre block on the Koo Wee Rup Road in Pakenham. This generous acknowledgment owes much to Bill Tomkins, Team Leader of Statutory Planning at Metropolitan South East region.

The Berwick Go Kart Club Inc and the Koo Wee Rup Motorcycle Club had been searching in vain for land suitable for a motor sports complex. Joe Borg, a spokesperson for the Go Kart Club, said club members were elated when they finally struck gold after contacting VicRoads.

"VicRoads offered us a ten year lease with two five year options, which was great," Joe Borg explained, "and this allowed us to obtain proper financing."

"We hope to see the track in existence for 15 to 20 years, unless plans for the freeway through this area get underway sooner than currently expected."

"We really appreciate Bill's persistence with this issue. He has been very encouraging."

Bill insists that his efforts were just part of his job.

"I certainly can't take all the credit," he said.

"Faye Wiltshire and Don Crozier from Property Services and Simeon Christoff of Road System Management also assisted in securing the block of land for the club."

Joe Borg said that the construction of the go kart track will mean even more than fulfilling members' dreams. The project is a community effort aimed at all age groups, and particularly the youth of Pakenham and East Gippsland.

Go go Bill! Bill Tomkins of Metro South East in a two stroke 100cc Yamaha motor go kart with the President of Berwick Go Kart Club, Andrew Broadbent (left) and Joe Borg, spokesperson for the Berwick Go Kart Club.

"There's little for young people to do out here," Joe said, "and, as a result, many kids turn to petty crimes."

"Our aim is to get these young people back on track, and the go kart track is one that can provide both social and educational opportunities."

"After discussion with Handbrake Turn, a youth program run by police, we have decided to offer young people the chance to gain new skills which will keep them busy and out of trouble."

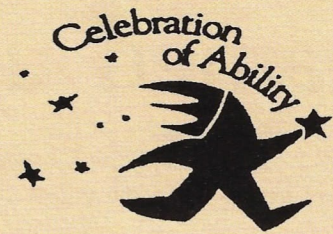
"They can work on cars, build their own go karts and race at the track."

"Plans are also underway to incorporate driver and advanced driver education courses, a traffic school for primary students and so on, so it will be much more than just a go kart track and motorcycle club."

"The design for the 750 m track has been completed, and we hope to commence work on building it this year, and have it finished in 1999."

"However, we're still looking for a major sponsor, and when we do, the complex will take the name of this sponsor - for example, The VicRoads Motor Sports Complex'!!!!"

If you're interested in supporting this imaginative project, contact Joe Borg on 03 9702 2220 or 03 5944 4430.



**International Day of
Disabled Persons
3 December**

VicRoads was recently presented with a certificate of thanks for its participation in Expo 97, held to celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons.

The event was organised by the Wyndham Disability Advocacy Group (WYNDAG) and included plenty of fun and games as well as opportunities to gather information and test-ride specialised vehicles like single and tandem power scooters and wheelchairs.

VicRoads was on hand to answer questions on topics such as licensing and learner permits, disabled parking permits and the multi-purpose taxi program.

Our involvement was spearheaded by Patrick Daniels of VicRoads Metropolitan North West region and colleague Jan Crooks, who set up displays as well as fielding hundreds of enquiries.

"I believe in a close-knit community, and I think our presence is important at such events to convey to the general community that registration and licensing are not our only functions," says Patrick.

"It was also an opportunity for us to meet other service providers to share and exchange information that can help us provide an even better service to customers."

"I am grateful WYNDAG secretary Graeme McKinnon invited us to participate, and I'm looking forward to repeating the experience next year."

"As Graeme said to the *Werribee Banner*, disability does not mean inability, and expos like this make a positive contribution to the lives of three million Australians who have disabilities."

Teamed up for Success

Rayoni's

VicRoads Metropolitan North West region proved hard to beat at the Annual Golf Day in November, with a tally of trophies and prizes culminating in the C G Roberts VicRoads Team Trophy.

About 90 keen golfers, including VicRoads staff and friends, played the day away at the Kingston Links Golf Course in Melbourne, as well as putting in time at the nineteenth hole.

"The weather conditions were perfect and so was

the course," said Metropolitan North West's Walter Viti. He won the K Shea VicRoads Social Handicap Trophy.

"I think everyone enjoyed themselves on both a social and competitive level. The Golf Day is always a success, thanks to Gary House, from the Design department at Metropolitan South East region, who organised it again this year.

"A special thanks is also due to all the sponsors for supplying the prizes."



Metro North West's winning team, from left, John Welsh (Manager Transport Safety Services), Walter Viti (Bridge Maintenance), Alan Baker (Manager Quality and Road Safety Services) and Brian Negus (Regional Manager).

The main prizes awarded were:

- **F R Oldfield VicRoads Club Handicap Trophy**
Len Quinlivan
(Operations, Bendigo)
- **K Shea VicRoads Social Handicap Trophy**
Walter Viti
(Bridge Maintenance, Metropolitan North West)
- **J D Thorpe Senior Trophy**
Ray Stokes
(Materials Technology, Kew)
- **D E Neefe Visitor Trophy**
Matt Ederle
- **Club Handicap A Grade Prize**
Gary House
(Design, Metropolitan South East)
- **Social Handicap A Grade Prize**
Tony Milne (Registration & Licensing, Kew)
- **Club Handicap B Grade Prize**
Alan Baker
(Manager Quality and Road Safety Services, Metropolitan North West)
- **Social Handicap B Grade Prize**
John Boston
(Planning, Metropolitan South East)
- **Secret Nine**
Warren Butcher
(Western Ring Road)
- **Longest Drive 9th Hole Prize**
Alan Baker

Some 100 million people in 131 different countries play the fast and furious sport of badminton. One of them is Rayoni Head, member of the Australian Badminton Olympic Squad, and of the VicRoads IT&T team.

A graduate of the University of South Australia, Rayoni moved to Victoria to join the Olympic Squad, which is based here. Currently ranked fifth in singles and fourth in doubles in Australia, she's been the number one singles player in her home State since 1995.

Rayoni started playing badminton at school in 1988, was selected for the under-16 South Australian State Team in 1991 and has not looked back. She achieved her first Australian singles ranking in 1994, the same year she won the Australian under-18 singles title and travelled with the under-18 Australian team to New Zealand. She returned to New Zealand with the senior team in 1997, and also played in the Swedish Open, the All England Championships and the Switzerland Open in that year.

International success

Her most recent overseas trip has been to represent Australia for the second time in the Uber Cup, an international women's badminton team event which is played every two years.

"I set annual goals for myself," Rayoni says, "and selection for the Uber Cup competition was one of them.

"I'm now working towards selection for the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur – the selection process takes place around April."

Striving for excellence

Rayoni's preparation involves a combination of court work, shot practice, weights and fitness training.

"Badminton is the fastest racquet sport in the world," Rayoni explains, "and players have to be very agile.

"You have to have very good racquet skills, be fast around the court and good at jumping, and have fast reaction times.

"You need a reasonable amount of strength and power, and since games last for an average of 45 minutes, you must have plenty of stamina."

Rayoni's excellent results have led to her being nominated in the sports section of the Young Australian of the Year Awards from 1993 to 1997. In 1997 her coach nominated her for the women's section of the Asthma Foundation of Victoria's Sporting Achievers Award, where she was a finalist.

Ahead in Badminton

Rayoni takes time out for the camera at a training session.



"It's been won in the past by an Olympic gold medallist in hockey and an Olympic swimmer, so I was very proud to make the finals," Rayoni said.

"I also appear in the 'Women in Sport' section of a book called *Outstanding Women in Australia* by Gillian Rolton, which was published last year.

"The author looked at a number of different sports and focussed on one athlete involved, and I'm very honoured to find myself in the company of sporting icons like Dawn Fraser, Evonne Cawley and Cathy Freeman."

Combining work and sporting commitments

At VicRoads, Rayoni is currently on her final rotation in the Graduate Recruitment Program, working in IT&I.

"When I made the move to Victoria I was concerned I would have to choose between my sporting and business careers, but I was very happy to be selected by VicRoads for the graduate program," she said.

"VicRoads has been very supportive of my commitment to badminton in terms of my rotations, which have been arranged to minimise disruption and maximise benefits to both me and the organisation.

"Being able to work flexitime has been very good, and has enabled me to coordinate my work and training commitments.

"People at work are always interested in how my sport is going, and that's really encouraging.

"John Davis of Employee Assistance also put me in touch with two other athletes on staff,

Bill Hooker (Manager, Program Delivery, Operations, Metropolitan South East Region) and Ken Hall (Project Officer DLS, Registration and Licensing) who've helped me with issues like juggling work and training time, whether to take leave without pay and so on."

A popular sport

For those not in the know, badminton is played all over the world, and is particularly popular in Denmark, England, Malaysia, China and Indonesia. In Australia there are about 20,000 registered badminton players and an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 social players. Numbers of men and women participants are equal.

Badminton made its debut at the Olympics in 1992, where a viewing audience of 1.1 billion made it the most-watched sport of the entire Games. It drew similarly high audiences in 1996, particularly in Asian countries.

Needless to say, the Olympics are Rayoni's next goal after this year's Commonwealth Games. So television moguls can expect another surge in ratings as the whole of VicRoads tunes in to see our badminton champ in action in Sydney 2000.

Walking to Win

If a pack of walkers powers past you on the way to Kew Junction, it's probably our gang of seven preparing for the Corporate Cup.

"The Corporate Cup is open to competitors from private and government enterprises, and involves a number of different sports," explains Jeff Briggs (Regional Services Support, Kew), the leader of the VicRoads walking team.

"Power-walking was included for the first time last year, and involves seven races spread over 14 weeks.

"Every fortnight the team heads for the Royal Botanical Gardens in Melbourne, and each of us does a lap around the tan. The four fastest times are then added up and count towards our final time."

Walking has been in fashion at VicRoads Kew for some time, but received a boost with the influx of some keen walkers from the former Carlton office.

Besides Jeff, the Corporate Cup Team includes Robyn McCutcheon, Julie Maling, Marta Farkis, Jennie Koernig, Mike Ryan, Tom Le and Teresa Donnellan.

"VicRoads has provided us with corporate t-shirts for the event, so we'll be looking pretty sharp when we hit the tan for the first race," says Jeff.

Good luck, guys – we know you can bring that Corporate Cup home!

The VicRoads walkers limber up (L to R) Tom Le, Mike Ryan, Teresa Donnellan, Jeff Briggs, Robyn McCutcheon and Jennie Koernig.



Badminton

- is played with light weight racquets and a shuttle
- the court is approximately 13 m x 5 m
- consists of five events, ladies' and men's singles, ladies' and men's doubles and mixed doubles
- at international tournaments badminton is played as the best of 3 sets to 15 points, except for ladies singles, which is played as the best of 3 sets to 11 points.

Getting to know Des O'Keefe

Des O'Keefe says that one thing he'd like to change about the world is the speed of modern day living. Then more of us could take time out to share the natural beauty of his work surroundings, Victoria's glorious Alpine Region.

How did you come to join VicRoads?

My father had his own horse teams, which he worked on the railway and road works on the Murray Valley Highway. As a kid I had thoughts of being a grader driver. I started with the Country Roads Board as a truck driver with the spray gang at Wodonga under overseer Frank 'Dad' Beggs on 27 March 1961.

What does your present job involve?

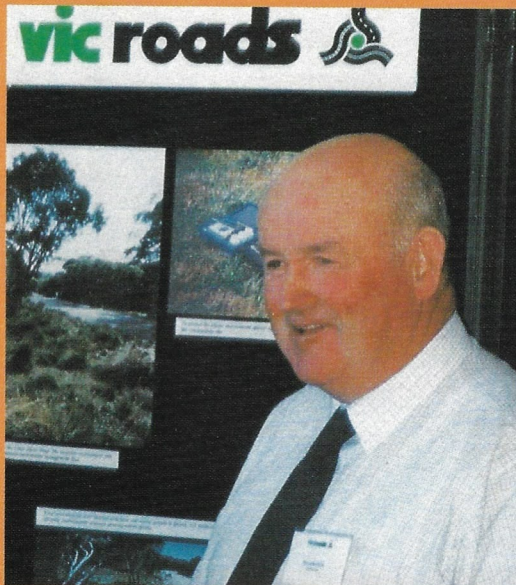
I'm Works Manager on the Great Alpine Road at Mt Hotham, Dinner Plain and Emu Plains. This year we're doing 12 km of widening and sealing on the Great Alpine Road. I've done a lot of years at Mt Hotham. I like the rural setting and the longer jobs, which are more satisfying.

Where else have you worked in VicRoads?

In 1969 I transferred to the Dandenong Division as a grader driver at Beveridge Bypass on the Hume Freeway, South Gippsland and Five Ways, south of Cranbourne. Later the same year I applied for and gained the position of relieving instructor driver at mechanical sub-branch, Syndal, covering most divisions (Dandenong, Metro, Geelong, Benalla, Warrnambool, Bairnsdale and Traralgon). However in 1973-74 I worked mostly in the metro area. While relieving at Benalla I applied for an overseer position, was successful and started on 1 June 1974, in charge of snow clearing on Mt Hotham in winter and construction in the summer period.

Is your career turning out the way you expected?

Yes, I have enjoyed career success.



Des O'Keefe pictured at the official opening of the Slatey Cutting to Dinner Plain section of the Great Alpine Road.

What is your long-term career ambition?

It is hard to look at long term ambitions. One doesn't know when the axe may fall. My goal is to travel around Australia and take my time.

What are your personal interests?

I like to keep in touch with rural matters, stock and cropping prices etc.

Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

Married to Lyn, who is a Police Reservist at Mansfield. We have one child, Allison, who has recently returned from two years overseas. She is a qualified Intellectually Disabled Services Officer, and is now working in Melbourne.

What is your favourite food?

Sunday roast. I'm not a sweet tooth.

What football code do you follow?

AFL Geelong.

What makes you laugh?

Good humour and comedy.

What one thing would you change about the world?

I would slow it down.

Dean Cops a Thank You

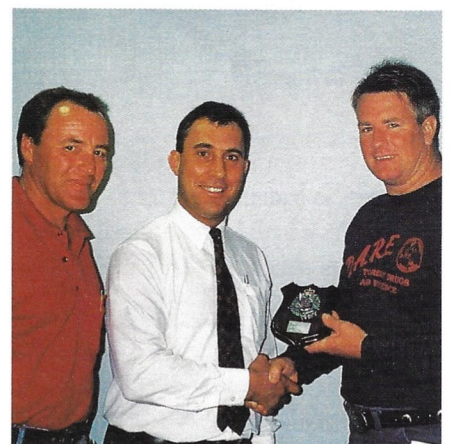
The great results achieved by Dean Zabrieszach and his team in managing traffic involved in last year's Motorcycle Grand Prix have earned them an award from colleagues in the Victoria Police.

"The presentation came as a complete surprise," said Dean, "but it was most appreciated, because it obviously reflected the great job VicRoads had done to ensure that the horrendous delays and congestion previously experienced on Phillip Island were a thing of the past."

"Whilst the presentation was made to me as Chair of the Grand Prix Traffic Committee, it also recognises the work of Bruce Hicks of VicRoads Metropolitan North West region, who spent many long hours including weekends translating our traffic management concept into diagrams everyone could understand, and Michael Mattingley from VicRoads Eastern region, who provided the local knowledge and resources to ensure works such as shoulder sealing, linemarking and intersection modifications were successfully completed.

"Bruce and Michael also spent long hours during the event ensuring the entry and exit plans were implemented efficiently and with minimum disruption to road users.

"As with the Formula One Grand Prix in Melbourne, the success of our efforts was also a tribute to the enthusiasm, energy and cooperation shared between all the agencies involved, and I was particularly proud that VicRoads was able to take a lead role in bringing all parties together to achieve this great result."



Dean Zabrieszach receives the plaque presented in appreciation of his work as Chair of the Grand Prix Traffic Committee.