

Norm Butler honoured

Norm Butler, Regional Manager for VicRoads Eastern Region, has been awarded the prestigious Public Service Medal. His achievement featured in the Honours List announced in conjunction with this year's Queen's Birthday celebrations.

The award recognises Norm Butler's distinguished service to the public of Victoria through his outstanding contribution to the work of VicRoads and his involvement in a wide range of community activities during many years. He is one of 17 Victorians, and 100 Australians, who will receive the Public Service Medal in 1998.

"I was very pleased but surprised," said Norm when asked his response to the medal. "It is an award that's not readily given, and it was quite an honour.

"I've known a number of people at VicRoads and the Country Roads Board who've been recognised before, and I know that they've put in an enormous amount over many years, so I value the award highly."

A review of Norm's career shows the sort of commitment it takes to win the Public Service Medal, which is regarded as a prestigious award within the Australian system of honours and awards.

Norm began his working life in the Commonwealth Department of Works in Melbourne, then moved to the Bridge Division of the Country Roads Board in 1963.

"In 1964 I went to Bairnsdale on temporary transfer to get bridge construction experience," said Norm. "For years I wondered whether they'd call me back again, because I found I loved working in the country."

It was at Bairnsdale that Norm set himself the career objective of becoming a Divisional Engineer, a status he achieved in 1986, just three months before the title was abolished and replaced by Regional Manager! In the meantime he had also worked in Benalla, Horsham and Ballarat in a variety of engineering positions of increasing seniority. He then returned to Gippsland, as Regional Manager Central Gippsland with the Road Construction Authority, before taking up his present position as Regional Manager Eastern Victoria for VicRoads in 1990.

"I had not always envisaged a career in the public service – or in the country," Norm said. "In the first few years I was searching for something that I would want to do for a lifetime, and I went to Bairnsdale simply because it offered a career opportunity.

"After two months the Divisional Engineer started to lean on me to stay, so I agreed. We lived in prefabricated



Norm Butler

CRB houses for a few years – they were cold and draughty in winter and as hot as hell in summer.

"But we made good homes and our kids got great opportunities and have all done well, although each of them has an allegiance to a different town.

"For our eldest daughter, Debby, who's a research scientist in London, it's Benalla; our son Peter, an accountant, identifies with Horsham and our youngest daughter, Kathy, who's an engineer with Goulburn Murray Water, sees herself as a Gippslander.

"Our other daughter, Judy, a health education coordinator, favours Ballarat. She's currently living in Western Australia and has recently given birth to our first grandchild, whose name is Zali. We're heading off there soon."

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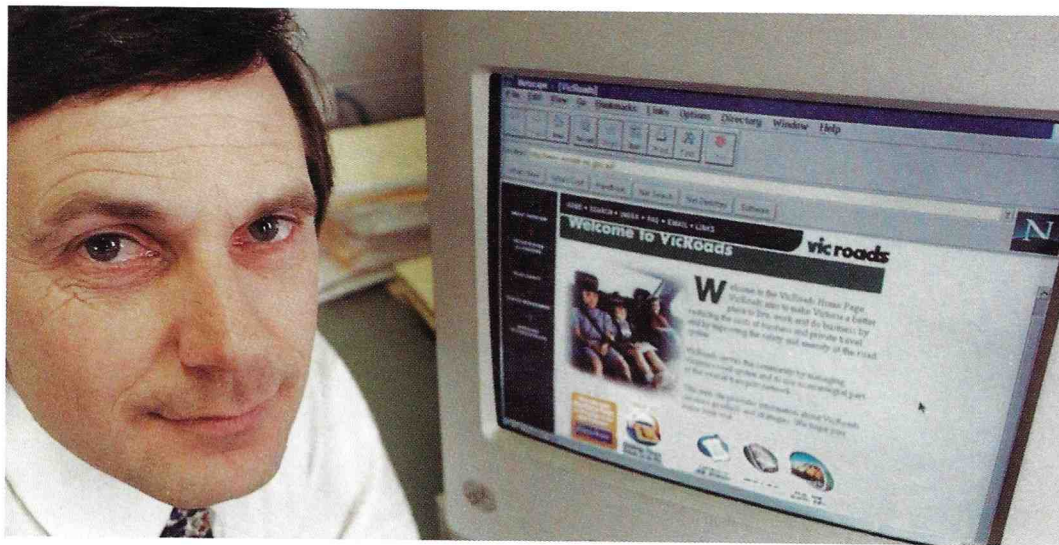
Getting to know Vern Delaney

Stop press....

Congratulations to David Anderson (former General Manager Road Safety) on his appointment to the position of Director Regional Services. A profile on David will be featured in the October/November issue of *Drive Times*. Congratulations also to Gary Liddle on his appointment to the position of General Manager Road System Management. Gary has been acting in this position since December 1997. See the next issue of *Drive Times* (August/September) for more details.

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

New look for web site



Visitors to <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au> are finding a web site that's easier on the eye, easier to use and offers an increasing range of information and online services.

"We've gone for a new look and feel which are more contemporary and more colourful," says Manager Executive Information Systems, Adrian George, whose enthusiasm for the site is contagious. "The colours are stronger and we are using curved shapes which are more inviting to the eye.

"We've also made it easier for people to find their way around the site by restructuring it so the

various sections align completely with our core businesses, rather than having core business sections plus other bits and pieces that didn't seem to belong anywhere.

"Significant new information, like the VicRoads Corporate Plan and the *Road Users' Charter* have been added, and there is more interactive material such as a road rules quiz and blood alcohol level indicator.

"We are also publishing data directly from VicRoads' databases such as details of contracts and tenders. We'll be using this method

increasingly for fast, regular updating of information: we can key in data today and publish it tomorrow – or faster, if necessary.

"We will also be looking to increase the amount of e-business available on the site. It's already linked with the MAXI site, so customers can access a range of R&L services through our internet address.

"These developments are helping to ensure the site satisfies the Government's Online 2001 Strategy, which requires publications to be available on the web by December 1999, and all transactions on the web by December 2001.

"It also satisfies VicRoads' own aspirations to improve its efficiency, service delivery and performance through enhanced use of information technology."

Adrian admits to really enjoying his work with the web site, and is a firm believer in the capacity of computer technology to broaden everyone's horizons.

"I find computers really exciting and liberating," he says. "They free you up from some tasks, and let you work much faster and more precisely on others. They provide you with fantastic opportunities to gain skills and to move into areas where you couldn't go before."

If <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au> is an area you haven't been before, now's the time to let your computer take you there.

E-cheers for R&L

Two accolades from happy customers arrived by email in May, one via the comment form on the VicRoads web site.

Elaine Wong dialled up from Hong Kong to express her thanks to Julie Kirkovski of R&L Central Services. Ms Wong had lost her Victorian licence and was experiencing delays in obtaining a duplicate. She made contact with Julie after locating VicRoads' web site and sending an email.

"Julie got it fixed for me, and I can have my licence in about a week's time. I was delighted to have her prompt reply within 24 hours and she is very helpful. The follow up service of VicRoads is marvellous!"

Andrew Gibson also emailed his thanks to Sandra Hall at Frankston R&L. Recalling bad experiences, he described VicRoads' service as 'a transformation', commending both the Telephone Information Service and the Frankston office.

"I was particularly impressed on the day the computers were down with the extra staff directing customers, the 'all hands on deck' attitude and the courtesy maintained in very trying circumstances."

Four customers chose more traditional methods for expressing their congratulations and thanks to staff at Oakleigh South R&L.

One family wrote to commend Roland Sham-Yuen for helping them establish whether the car they had bought was stolen.

Gary Mather was complimented for his 'attentive service' in helping Cerrin Tan sort out problems with the surname on her driver licence.

Another customer felt Wayne Baker 'went the extra mile' in assisting with problems registering a pensioner's car. "He displayed poise and patience. I feel Wayne is a good ambassador for VicRoads."

Perhaps the most heartfelt thanks of all came from a customer who had lost her registration sticker and in writing to VicRoads to explain the situation gave the wrong registration number and wrote out a cheque to the wrong organisation.

"I was served by a most reassuring and patient man, [called] Peter. He was unfailingly understanding and explored all possibilities in an effort to track down my letter and cheque. I would like to pass on my grateful thanks in particular for not making me feel an idiot in a stressful situation."

Top: The work of Julie Kirkovski, Team Leader Central Services, Registration and Licensing department, was gratefully acknowledged by an overseas customer.



Above: Sandra Hall, Customer Service Manager, received an e-cheer for the 'all hands on deck' attitude and courtesy encountered at the Frankston Registration and Licensing office.

North Easterners celebrate 345 years

They were kicking up their heels at Rafferty's Restaurant in Benalla on 9 June when 18 staff members from North Eastern Region were recognised for their service to VicRoads.

Deputy Chief Executive Rob McQuillen was on hand to perform one of his favourite tasks, presenting awards to acknowledge the years of service and talent staff have contributed to the organisation.

Heading the corporate honours list were Neville Leaf and Frank Rossignuolo, who have each clocked up 30 years.

The region also celebrated George Coad, Bruce Gidley and Leon Pilkington, who have all reached

Right: Deputy Chief Executive Rob McQuillen (left) congratulates North Eastern Region's Jill Earnshaw (right) on 15 years of service at VicRoads.

25 years with VicRoads, and also Janet Davies, Barry Mahoney and Robert Steel, who have each reached the 20 year mark.

Hot on their heels came Martin Britton, Daryl Clyne, Jill Earnshaw, Phillip Eaton, Denise Hancock, Alan Jamieson, Geoff McClure, Patrick Nanson, Joe Sofra and Stewart Stock, all still going strong after 15 years on duty.



Brava, Ms Bravo

Northern Region's Dianne Bravo had good cause for celebration on National Secretaries Day. She was named Secretary/ Administrator of the Year by the Institute of Professional Secretaries and Administrators' (IPSA) Bendigo branch.

The award was announced at a presentation breakfast attended by more than 200 people.

"We were pretty elated when Dianne was named as winner," said Northern Region Manager Peter McCulloch. "It was definitely well-deserved, and it's given her recognition among her peers, as well as confirming what we already knew."

To win the Award, Dianne had to complete a project which involved creating a display advertisement and brochure promoting IPSA.

"I also had to submit a letter of support from my manager, Peter McCulloch," said Dianne, who has worked at

VicRoads for nearly 13 years, the last four of them as secretary to Peter and his predecessor Bruce Phillips.

"The judges were two representatives from the IPSA and a local businessperson. They considered the nominations, selected a short-list of five, and then they interviewed us before making their final decision."

Dianne is looking forward to her prize, a trip for two to Kuala Lumpur for five nights and a year's free membership of the IPSA.

She's also had her turn as a media celebrity, with the *Bendigo Advertiser*, 3BO-FM and WIN Television all heralding her success.



Caption: Dianne Bravo pictured with Rohan Hepworth of Lauda Air (left) and Kevin Pedrotti of Travelaction Traveland, whose organisations sponsored her prize. Photo courtesy of the Bendigo Advertiser.

You can call on ITIM

For nearly 10 years, ITIM (Interchurch Trade and Industry Mission) Australia has provided professional care and counselling for the people of VicRoads. Counsellors are available to staff who need help with personal or work-related problems.

Fifteen ITIM chaplains and counsellors provide service, and according to ITIM coordinator, Chaplain Don Lacey, "many are well-known in their areas and their services have been widely appreciated".

Such services have included: care and counselling of employees and their families; emergency intervention for employees and families facing trauma; critical incident response work; referrals for marriage and relationship counselling; support with work/career related issues; and resources and support in consultations with management.

ITIM staff can provide advice and support on:

- coping with change and other concerns/conflicts at work;
- stress, depression and emotional problems;
- marital and other family problems;
- interpersonal conflict;
- alcohol or other drug misuse;
- bereavement;
- health issues;
- financial difficulties; and
- retirement planning.

Following is a listing of business areas and regions, and the relevant ITIM counsellor.

Metropolitan North West Region
Kathy Grayson

Metropolitan South East Region
John Vilianiotis

Eastern Region
Max Edwards, Greg Luxford

Northern Region
Wayne Kelly

North Eastern Region
Helen Blackwell, Susie Caulton, Alan Kelb

South Western Region
Robyn Shackell, Pam Storey

Western Region
Sue Dangerfield, Peter Hunt, Stephen McElwee

Metropolitan Works Group (NW Metro); Western Ring Road Project; and Calder Corridor Project
Kathy Grayson

Registration & Licensing; Property Services; and Exhibition Street Extension Project
Pamela Hart,
Staff Consultant Psychologist

Head Office Kew (except as listed); VicRoads Design & TRUM Camberwell; Eastern Projects; and Sprayline (Deepdene)
Don Lacey

Materials Technology, Burwood & Kew; Metropolitan Works Group (SE Metro); and Princes East Projects
John Vilianiotis

*Sprayline field groups and DOI staff in regional offices are served by ITIM staff listed for the regions.

ITIM may be contacted on telephone 9816 9522 or 1800 337 068 (toll free outside metropolitan area) 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

Seizing opportunities overseas

During the past 12 years or so, VicRoads has been involved in projects valued at more than \$18m in some 20 overseas countries. These projects boost the organisation's profile and sense of pride, and provide exciting opportunities for staff to work offshore.

"VicRoads' participation in international projects is based on two principles," says Director Production Services Kerry Burke, whose portfolio includes our international activities.

"The first is to support the Victorian private sector in seeking export opportunities, and the second is to provide for staff development.

"From a financial perspective, we don't look to international projects as a huge revenue source, but they must cover costs and return a profit, so they are not being subsidised by taxpayers' money."

VicRoads usually participates in international projects in partnership with private sector companies which take both the lead role and most of the risk. By managing that risk, they earn the right to make a profit, Kerry says, but it's often VicRoads' involvement that gives a bid the winning edge.

"About 60 per cent of international projects are for organisations like the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and various UN agencies," Kerry said, "and in these cases the credibility of a consortium going for a job can be enhanced by having a government organisation involved.

"VicRoads wants to be that organisation."

According to Export Development Manager Peter Benson, VicRoads is gaining an excellent reputation through its practical approach and emphasis on quality rather than just profit.

"We provide a lot of consulting services aimed at reorganising and strengthening organisations, looking at things like philosophy, policy, strategy and management systems," Peter says.

"In our reports we try to provide a manageable way for our clients to move forward.

"For example, road construction in many

Asian and Pacific countries is where Australia was about 20 to 30 years ago, so we understand and can help them get from that point to where we are now relatively painlessly.

"We recently won a World Bank job in India, working in partnership with Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) Pty Ltd, and this is one bid where we took the lead.

"It involves about two million dollars' worth of intensive work over some 18 months helping the road building department in the

State of Andhra Pradesh get more dollars on to the roads and less going to administration.

"The project team is now in Andhra Pradesh and we're hosting an exchange visit in July or August, when we'll present a five day workshop to a group from Andhra Pradesh, including the chief executive of the Roads and Building department.

"The workshop will provide them with a preview of what their organisation could achieve over the next five years."

Peter says another clue to VicRoads' success is our policy of ensuring our local counterparts are involved in the consultation process, so that they feel ownership for the final report and want it to work.

"A good example of this is a recent UN job in Bhutan, where we were engaged to overhaul the Surface Transport Department's operations, which include road safety, traffic management and registration and licensing," he says.

"We consulted all the interested parties as well as making our own observations and ultimately recommended setting up a new body to manage the surface transport industry.

"We then provided draft legislation to cover the changes involved.

"The Bhutanese accepted our recommendation, and they have implemented about 90 per cent of the changes over the past two years.

"This is in stark contrast with many reports that are left on the shelf because they're too hard, or because local organisations have been left out of the consulting process and feel no commitment to the end product.

"The Bhutanese were also able to contact us for further advice over the following 18 months, so they felt they really got their money's worth.

"Recently they sought UN funding for a transport strategy for the whole of Bhutan, and they specified to the UN that they wanted VicRoads to do the work."

International projects present opportunities for a wide range of VicRoads staff, providing they are expert in their field and can work in unusual environments. For example, a current project for introducing a computerised registration and licensing system in Fiji involves Greg Chambers (Manager Road Maintenance, Regional Services Division), Daryl Craven (IT&T) and David Francis (Registration and Licensing, Bendigo) all spending periods of time working in Fiji.



“Working offshore we need to be more independent and entrepreneurial and deliver the goods in an environment where we lack the normal support functions,” says Kerry Burke.

“In our corporate directions we are looking for staff who are adaptable and flexible, and working on an international project does bring this sort of attribute to light.

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Above: Bhutan's Minister for Transport and Communications Dahso (equivalent to Sir) Leki Dorji. The red shawl indicates his high rank in the community.

Opposite Top: Oh, for traffic like this! A policeman on duty at peak hour at a major intersection in capital city Thimpu.

Opposite Bottom: An Bhutanese archer in traditional dress practises his country's national sport.

A little touch of heaven

Rob McQuillen's three visits to Bhutan have given him a great affection for this kingdom nestled on the southern edge of the eastern Himalayas.

“In terms of people it is one of my favourite places – they are just lovely,” says Rob. “They are very gentle and law-abiding, and have a strong sense of history and their own culture.

“One of the most pleasing things is that there is no corruption in Bhutan, a fact that is related to their strong religious roots in Tibetan Buddhism.

“They wear traditional dress by law, which looks both beautiful and rather medieval. They have also maintained real craft skills, for example in building, which is done without the use of nails or glue.

“Their second language is English, which is taught in schools along with Bhutanese, and the children love to practise on visitors like me, and are absolutely delighted when you respond to them.”

Life is hard for most people in Bhutan, with subsistence farming the chief activity in a country which is only 5 per cent arable land. As in other developing countries, young people

are leaving the land for the seemingly more attractive life of the city, and it is coping with the strain this puts on infrastructure that has brought VicRoads to Bhutan.

Rob says it's typical of Bhutanese that they have recognised the problem and are immediately trying to do something about it. He says they are also fully aware of the tensions between the need for modernisation and their determination to preserve their culture.

His work in Bhutan has brought Rob tremendous personal satisfaction.

“There are heaps of motor scooters on the road, and when we first came here almost noone wore helmets. As one of the results of our recommendations, this has now changed.

“We also persuaded them to get rid of their ancient bus fleet and the lethal World War II jeeps they were using for taxis, and in both cases these have been replaced by safe, modern vehicles.

“Overall, our work with the Bhutanese is making a major difference to the community, and from a personal point of view, I've never felt so pleased about a project in my life.”

Words at Work

Quality systems have a whole language of their own – as we all discovered along the road to achieving ISO 9000 certification for quality assurance systems across VicRoads. This edition of Words at Work looks at three terms that have caused some confusion for staff.



Nonconformance

A nonconformance occurs when our products or services do not meet specified requirements or, to put it more plainly, something has gone wrong and the customer has not received the product or service required.

When a nonconformance occurs, we need to identify and document what has gone wrong, evaluate the extent of the problem and take action to eliminate the nonconforming product or service. This could include scrapping it, reworking it, regrading it or persuading the customer to accept the nonconforming item.

Anyone inside or outside VicRoads can issue a nonconformance to a VicRoads person. They are also issued during audits. The aim is to ensure real action is taken to remedy an identified problem. If the problem can be fixed on the spot and is not likely to happen again the nonconformance no longer exists.

Corrective action

If the problem that caused the nonconformance is likely to recur, corrective action is necessary. To carry out corrective action, we need to discover the root cause of the problem, plan and implement the corrective action, and

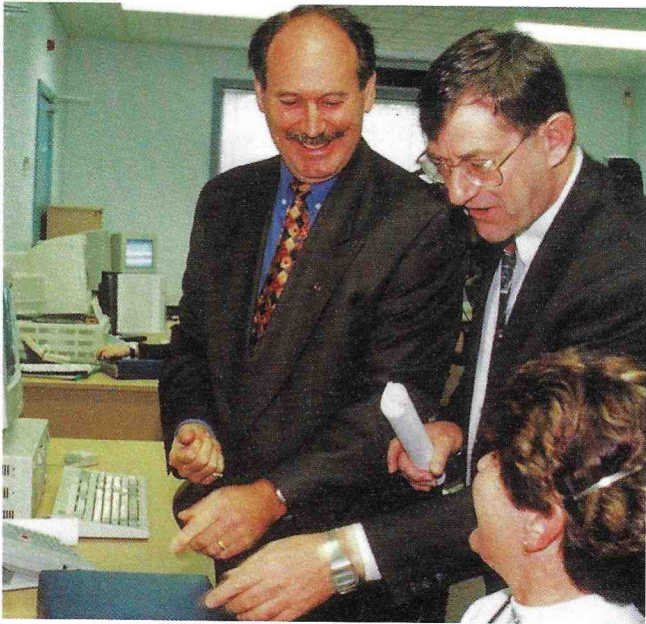
monitor results to make sure the corrective action has been effective. Corrective action is normally initiated by the manager who received the nonconformance in the first place. He/she will first establish that the benefits of taking the corrective action are worth the costs and time involved.

Preventive action

Preventive action involves anticipating what is likely to go wrong with a product/service and fixing it before it becomes a problem. To prepare for preventive action we need to establish what might cause a problem, plan and implement the preventive action, and monitor the results to ensure the preventive action has been effective. The manager will also normally initiate preventive action, following an analysis of the costs and benefits involved.

The difference between correction and preventive action is that corrective action deals with an actual nonconformance, and preventive action deals with potential nonconformances.

Lines open in Ballarat



VicRoads' new Rural Call Centre in Ballarat was officially opened on 11 June by Minister for Roads and Ports Geoff Craige. The Centre will provide improved services to country customers and create jobs.

"In line with the State Government's Rural Development Policy, and to enhance customer services for people living in country and regional Victoria, VicRoads has established this new facility with an ongoing investment of about \$800,000 per annum to maintain services at this location," the Minister said.

Local MPs Barry Traynor, Paul Jenkins, Stephen Elder and Dick de Fegely, who attended the launch, all expressed strong support for the initiative, with Member for Ballarat East, Barry Traynor noting that "the new Call Centre has created twelve local jobs".

The MPs also commented on the new Centre's state-of-the-art technology, which replaces systems which have been in place since 1985, and includes software which VicRoads is only the second organisation in Victoria to use.

The need for a VicRoads Rural Call Centre was first raised in 1996, and led to the establishment of a trial centre in Wangaratta which proved successful. With the opening of the permanent Centre, all R&L enquiries from outside Melbourne or Geelong will be answered from Ballarat for the price of a local call, with staff able to handle queries and make registration, driving test or learner permit bookings for VicRoads offices across the State.

As MP for Ballarat West, Paul Jenkins said at the launch, this will free up counter staff to provide even better service to customers visiting VicRoads Registration and Licensing Offices and agencies.

"The Rural Call Centre has been modelled on the Telephone Information Service (TIS) at Kew," explains Greg Compton, who was appointed Manager of the Centre in March, "and all staff were trained at TIS in conjunction with the R&L Training Consultants.

"The knowledge and guidance provided by TIS, in particular Rod Chapman, Michael Brennan and Chris Armstead, have been invaluable and their expertise greatly appreciated."

Greg also acknowledged the help of Peter Holmes, Telecommunications Portfolio Manager, with the VicRoads IT&T department.

One of Greg's first tasks as Rural Call Centre Manager was to recruit new staff. Trish Coleman from Ballarat R&L and Ken Dodd from Wangaratta R&L were appointed Senior Customer Enquiry Officers, whilst Jane McDonald from TIS and Carmel Hill from the Department of Infrastructure also succeeded in winning Ballarat headsets.

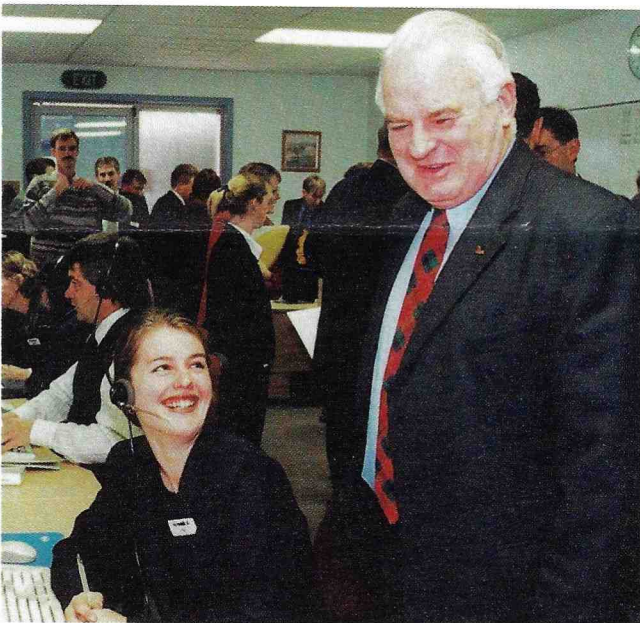
"A Ballarat employment agency was then contracted to supply the balance of staff," Greg explained.

The new Call Centre is located in the former Western Region Registration and Licensing office conference room, and renovations were still underway as staff settled in. Thanks to a lightning fit-out with furniture, computers and other equipment, the target start-up date of 18 May was achieved.

Once fully established, the Rural Call Centre will provide 12 full-time jobs in Ballarat and handle 400,000 calls each year.

As the Minister concluded at the launch, "Road transport is the lifeline of rural communities, and VicRoads has developed a close working relationship with industry, businesses and individuals throughout country areas.

"The establishment of the Ballarat Call Centre enables us to provide physical evidence of our commitment to rural Victoria, both in terms of job creation and improved customer service."



Top Left: Geoff Craige, Minister for Roads and Ports, officially opened the new VicRoads Rural Call Centre in Ballarat. The Minister (left) is pictured here with Barry Traynor, Member for Ballarat East, and (seated) Carmel Hill, VicRoads Senior Customer Enquiry Officer.

Centre Left: VicRoads staff member Kym Sandford (left) pictured with local MP Paul Jenkins, Member for Ballarat West at the opening of the new Rural Call Centre.

Below Left: Greg Compton, Manager of the Rural Call Centre (right) shows Lindsay Florence, Police District Commander, the ropes at the opening of the new Ballarat Call Centre.



Plaudits for audits Road safety graduate for TSS



Above: Road Environment Safety Officer Phil Jordan (left) and Chief Executive Colin Jordan (right) pictured at the International Road Safety Audit Forum.

As Project Manager of the Austroads Road Safety Audit Project, Phillip Jordan initiated and chaired the International Road Safety Audit Forum held by Austroads at Melbourne's Hilton on the Park on 11 and 12 May.

"The Forum was a huge success in terms of both quantity and quality," Phillip reported. "It attracted 189 delegates from 14 countries, including most of the world leaders in road safety audit, as well as representatives of national, State and local road authorities, academics, consultants and police."

Phillip explained that road safety audit is the coordinated application of road safety engineering skills to a new road project.

"It's a valuable low-cost process which should be, indeed must be, an important part of the design process of all road authorities.

"The Forum aimed to achieve mutual cooperation in, and promotion of road safety audit at local, national and international levels."

Phillip was assisted by VicRoads colleagues Simone Callaghan, Theresa Abraham, Steve DiCicco and Sam Pirota in organising the Forum. VicRoads was also the focus for two major post-Forum activities, with a number of staff playing prominent roles.

On Wednesday 12 May, three busloads of guests toured City Link and the Western Ring Road to see how safety audit has influenced these roads. George Mavroyeni, Bruno Alexic, Rob Gilpin and Mike Butler received great acclaim for their contribution to the Western Ring Road tour.

The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) and the University of New England (UNE) have formed a partnership to present professional development courses in road safety. VicRoads' Peter Schofield was among the first to be awarded the Graduate Certificate.

"The full road safety studies program is run in two stages, the Graduate Certificate takes 18 months, and the Graduate Diploma takes three years," explained Peter, who is a Transport Safety Services (TSS) Officer at VicRoads Metropolitan South East region.

"Changes in our approach in TSS mean we're working to achieve compliance from transport operators through education that will modify behaviour rather than just enforcement, and I thought the course would give me some valuable resources for this.

"I opted for the certificate because of the time factor. I work shiftwork, and this can make studying difficult, so I decided to do the first part, take a break, then go on and complete the diploma. I ended up with two High Distinctions and two Distinctions, so that's a real incentive to continue."

The course was conducted by correspondence and involved three specially designed modules: Introduction to Road Safety, Human Factors in Road Crashes and Vehicle Factors in Road Crashes.

"The course was good for me because it made me get better acquainted with lots of different parts of VicRoads, and to become proactive and develop my own initiatives and safety strategies. It also made me realise how well we do things here.

"I was the only VicRoads person on the course not in Road Safety and that made it a bit harder, but I got lots of help from our road safety area, the library and occupational health and safety area."



Above: Transport Safety Services officer Peter Schofield (centre), of VicRoads Metropolitan South East region, was among the first to be awarded the Graduate Certificate in Road Safety Studies. He is pictured here with Regional Manager Geoff Shanks (right) and Manager Transport Safety Services Peter Bell.

Volunteer program boost road safety

Following the success of its pilot program, Metropolitan South East region is continuing to train local volunteers to spread road safety messages and advice to the community.

"The program involved recruiting people for training as Voluntary Community Road Safety Representatives who would address community groups and encourage the community to take ownership of road safety issues involving young families," explained Early Childhood Road Safety Coordinators Helen Stricker and Josie Speranza.

"The representatives do not get paid for their services, but they receive training and all resources free of charge," said Josie, "and they also feel a sense of personal satisfaction in giving something of value back to their community."

The region currently has 12 trained representatives, and is planning a further intake of 20 during the next 20 months.

Letters of thanks have arrived from community groups the volunteers have addressed, like this note from the Ringwood Uniting Church Pre-School Committee:

"I am writing to thank VicRoads for providing an excellent speaker for our Annual General Meeting We were fortunate to have Dee Morella speak to us on the importance of all aspects of road safety for our children. Dee spoke in an informative and entertaining manner and gave us many hints on making life safer for our children and ourselves ... please pass on our thanks to Dee for providing us information on this very important topic."



Above: Dee Morella (left) and fellow volunteers pictured with Metropolitan South East Regional Manager Geoff Shanks, following the presentation of Certificates of Appreciation at a regional function.

VicRoadies and their vehicles

The VicRoads car park at Kew is studded with vehicles bursting with character. *Drive Times* caught up with a handful of the characters who tend these pampered petrol-burners.

Owner/carer: Manoli Loukas, Project Officer
DLS, Registration and Licensing

Vehicle: 1992 Harley Davidson Custom Softail
Manoli acquired this two-tone red touch of class about four years ago. "It was in excellent condition but I had it customised by adding high handlebars and a bit of chrome here and there.

"It's a joy to ride and I really like the way it looks, with the colour and all the chrome and leather, and I also like the noise it makes.

"The noise works in my favour as motorists can hear me coming and therefore they make room for me, rather than cut me off.

"I mainly use the bike for pleasure, and I've made some good friends through riding HDs.

"I have a commercial licence which allows me to take paying passengers for rides but I've given this up as I have recently enrolled in an MBA program which is taking up most of my spare time."

Manoli lavishes heaps of attention on the Harley.

"I always keep it in the garage, wash it after it's been out and change the oil every 3000 km or so. I spend a small fortune on cleaning materials."

Commenting on Germaine Greer's views on men and their cars (see box), Manoli said that he agrees, except instead of purring his bike *roars*.

Owner/carer: Maurice Bevan,
Employee Relations
Vehicle: 1965 Wolseley Mark II

Affectionately known as Wol (both short for Wolseley and recalling another famous English icon, Winnie-the-Pooh), this gem has been with the Bevans since 1987.

"We bought Wol from a member of the Wolseley Car Club who had rather overstretched his restoration capabilities by purchasing another vehicle at the same time. The original owner was 92 when she died and her niece and heir was 68, and in no shape to drive one and half tons of Wol around Bacchus March.

"Wol was in good running order but in abysmal stopping order. However, a new master cylinder, wheel cylinders, brake lines, reconditioned brake booster and new brake linings fixed the problem.

"The duco was in as good condition as any skin that's been exposed for 20 years, but a complete respray and rechroming of the bumper bars worked wonders."

Maurice uses Wol to commute to work and attend Wolseley Car Club outings and rallies. Wol is washed almost every week and twice a year he is polished and waxed. He is serviced by AH Plant every 6000 miles.

"What I like most about Wol is that he is stylish, reliable and inexpensive to run. He is, like me, a little out of step with the times. He is not unique, but he's a rarer sight on the road than the modern status symbol cars.

"I read Germaine Greer's article and smiled. I didn't realise she knew so many members of the

Alfa Romeo Car Club (I was a member until recently). Do I have any of the foibles she spotted with such perspicacity?

"Wol occasionally does talk back but is hardly a tigress with a purr like silk, he sort of rumbles a bit."

Owner/carer: Derek Trewarne,
Manager Property Operations
(Major Projects)
Vehicle: 1954 MG TF 1250

When Derek Trewarne bought his red MG some 23 years ago, it was pretty much a basket case.

"Most of the bits were there, but I completely restored and rebuilt it, after literally stripping it."

"I've always loved tinkering with cars and although I service the family cars, it's much more fun working on a classic."

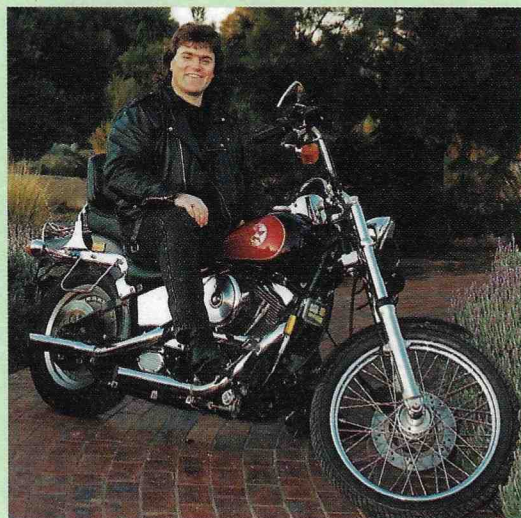
Derek uses it only occasionally to commute. He spoils his MG with the best of attention, making sure it's always garaged when not in use, and cleaning it inside and out after every trip.

"I mostly drive it in rallies with the MG Car Club. I recently took it to Tasmania for an MG National Meeting, and then toured Tassie for a week with my wife.

"What I like best about the car is the feeling of freedom with the hood down, especially on a country road. I also like the fact that you actually have to drive it – modern cars practically drive themselves!

"The other great thing is the social side, that is, being part of the MG Car Club."

In response to Germaine Greer's remarks Derek decided to play cautious – "my wife might read it!"



**Owner/carer: Brian Cross,
Engineering Survey,
Land Information & Survey
Vehicle: 1965 Austin Healey 3000
Mk III**

Brian Cross's Austin Healey arrived in Australia courtesy of noted 1960s racing driver Jim Abbott. It was a spare rally car, and had quite a bit of rust when Brian bought it in 1969.

"I spent two years doing it up, and in 1971 won the prestigious Austin Healey Owners Club Concourse de Elegance award.

"I used it as daily transport to work at the Country Roads Board. There were about five guys who owned sports cars in Survey Division. We spent all our wages getting our cars to go faster and look better!"

Around 1975 Brian decided to pull the car off the road for a full restoration.

"I had the whole vehicle, including the chassis, painted in the original colour, Jaguar metallic blue over dark blue. The interior was completely recovered in English Connelly leather, including the dash and the door trims, and the motor was blue printed.

"It has never been driven in the rain since restoration, and I now only use it on weekends for club events or short drives. Unfortunately all the care it gets these days is a regular wash, some leather conditioner and a quick going over with the chrome cleaner.

"It's very reliable, has the classic look of a real sports car and goes as hard as it looks. The engine sounds great under full acceleration."

Brian says his wife, Olga, hated the car until her company, Zurich, sponsored the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne.



"Being invited to the track and smelling all that racing fuel has had a dramatic effect on her. She now virtually orders me to take her for a drive with the hood down, and I was even encouraged to purchase a set of Dayton chrome wire wheels from America.

"We have been members of the Austin Healey Owners Club for many years and I only wish I had more time to spend on the car."

What Germaine Greer said

In an article recently published in the *Age*, Greer claimed:

- A man loves his car because it does as its told. No yackety yack. Cars don't talk back.
- A man's car can only be loved if it's his and his alone. Men cannot love cars that have to be shared.
- The car is the ultimate playmate, a tigress with a purr like silk, for his ears only.

Do you agree? What about women and their cars? Send your response to Christine Elmer via Lotus Note. The best response wins a \$50 gift voucher from the ABC Shop.

Know other VicRoadies *Drive Times* should catch up with? Dob them in via Lotus Note to editor Christine Elmer.

(L-R)

Manoli and his slinky Harley.

Maurice uses Wol (short for Wolsely) to commute to work each day.

Derek restored his red MG from basket-case to mint condition.

Brian's labours of love won his car the Austin Healey Owners Club Concourse de Elegance award.

Seizing opportunities overseas

• continued from page 4

"In the past two years we have had some 40 people offshore either on jobs or bids for jobs, and we can see the beneficial influence this has had both on the organisation and the people."

Peter Benson believes that opportunities for VicRoads staff to work offshore will increase, because countries like Malaysia and Thailand as well as Fiji are looking for more sophisticated products and services. Peter also believes that our reputation with organisations such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank is increasing and that our work through these agencies will increase.

"In Malaysia, for example, they are building toll roads with private money and they will need advanced systems to manage these," Peter says, "although the Asia money market crisis means that a number of commercial projects will be on hold.

"On the other hand, our proposal on traffic management in Penang was accepted by the city authorities and it will simply be done in smaller chunks as finances allow."

Peter and Kerry emphasise the importance of sticking by international clients in difficult times for the sake of the future, although VicRoads is also looking to diversify into other markets such as South America, "to make sure we don't have all our eggs in one basket," Peter says.

"There is a real market in South America for products like SCATS, Drive Time and other advanced technologies, and there is the advantage that they do business in a similar way to Australia and Europe."

Peter also believes that there is enormous potential for registration and licensing products in countries like China, where efficient R&L systems could make a major contribution to funding the road system, whilst Kerry feels these have a future in Northern America.

"The natural assumption is that Northern America will already do these things better than we do," Kerry says, "but our intensive literature studies show this is not so."

Kerry estimates that VicRoads wins about one in four of the international bids in which it participates, and says we are constantly refining our approach to international markets.

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Bridge calls for a sense of balance

Peter Symons began his seven year involvement with the West Gate Bridge while working at the Glen Waverley Bridge Construction Workshop, where he was leading hand. Five years ago, he became a bridge inspector and works supervisor for one of Victoria's best known icons.

"It's certainly an impressive structure. It has a very sleek design. You really have to go underneath it to appreciate the size of it. It takes up the whole of your view and stretches from horizon to horizon," Peter says.

"I do inspections for bridge construction, maintenance, minor road improvements and freeway incident management. I look for fatigue cracks, areas of corrosion, cable slippage and cracks in the asphalt. I've recently taken over the operation and routine testing of the pumphouses under the bridge. There is a detailed maintenance manual, and I try to cover as much as it specifies, as well as look for other things that may affect the integrity of the bridge.

"On a daily basis you'll find me hanging around the bridge four to six hours a day, depending on

what's going on. During bigger works contracts, you can expect me there around 10 to 12 hours.

"In days gone by I could be on the bridge for long periods of time on my own, inside the box girder. Today that's not as frequent.

"It's an interesting job. It can be a logistical nightmare sometimes, trying to organise efficient means of doing things without disrupting traffic. When I first started, I could put a two-lane lane closure on the bridge and not have a build-up. Now if we were to do that, by 11am there would be 15 minute delays, and that's on a weekend. I can see all the bigger works, requiring two-lane closures, happening at night only.

"I enjoy the challenge and complexity of negotiating works around the needs of the road user – it can be an interesting balancing act!"

Working on the maintenance platforms under the bridge calls for a different kind of balancing, the kind which calls for good 'sea legs'.

"The bridge never stands still, it's always moving," Peter says. "Vertical movement in some spans is about half an inch, depending on the stiffening of

the box itself and the support carried by the cables.

"Longitudinal movement, that is expansion and contraction during summer and winter months, causes about eight to ten inches of lengthening. In high winds, the towers wobble around a fair bit and that's probably the most uneasy feeling."

Life on the bridge is not without its human dramas. Peter's favourites are those like the recent birth that took place on the bridge while the couple was en route to hospital.

When he's not on bridge duty, Peter heads for home in Seaford, where he lives with his wife and their young daughter. Here, he indulges in his personal passions: fishing, building model railways and reading books on astronomy.

Unfortunately, there's no time for stargazing on the bridge, "but if you're there at the right time," Peter says, "you do see some spectacular sunrises and sunsets from the top."

Below: Peter Symons, of Metropolitan North West region's Bridge Maintenance, Management and Incident Management team, does the high wire act on Melbourne's West Gate Bridge.



Seizing opportunities overseas • continued from page 9

"We are getting better at tailoring our bids to overseas requirements, at accepting how long it takes to set up the relationships that are a key to doing business successfully, particularly in Asia, and at recognising how important it is to have people working on the ground in the country involved," Kerry said.

"We are also working on things like language skills, and are fortunate to have a number of staff who are either bi-lingual, particularly in English and Asian languages, or learning another language, like John Coles and Peter Benson, who have taken on Spanish."

The traffic in International Projects is not all one way – each year some 40 delegations from interstate and overseas visit VicRoads, and this is another area where we are refining our skills.

"When a delegation arrives we try to have their flag flying from the flagpole, and we have a welcome sign and miniature flags on the front desk," Kerry explains.

"In the Board Room we like to have a map of the delegation's country on a screen, so we can home in on areas mentioned during discussions.

"Our visitors literally come from all corners of the earth – Asia, the UK, the Americas and even Iceland."

As its experience in international markets has increased, VicRoads has become more selective about the jobs it goes for and the partnerships it forms.

"There is no doubt that our international work is achieving the goals of enhancing VicRoads' reputation and providing exciting challenges for staff," Kerry concludes.



"It also boosts our sense of pride when we win bids against international competition.

"We've had to become more selective to ensure we don't spread ourselves too thin, but if we don't take the opportunities, where are we going to be?"

Above: The VicRoads International Projects team (L-R) John Coles, Lucy Chew, Cheryl Slatterie-Smith, Mirella Tozzi, Peter Benson.

Norm Butler honoured • continued from page 1

Whilst Norm has an outstanding record of community service as a private citizen, his role as Regional Manager takes up most of his time these days.

"This job covers an enormous area and there are so many things going on," he said. "It takes five and a half hours to drive the length of the region, and we stretch from the mountains in the north to the sea in the south.

"Liaison with community groups is a major commitment involving a lot of travel, often to townships with wonderful names like Bonang, Gelantip and Balook.

"In this region we have also assumed responsibility for main roads, so we have to look after roads that range from freeways to narrow gravel roads that are not much different from when they were first cut out in the 1920s.

"My fetishes are to do with bridges, maintenance and VicRoads' history. For instance, I have a picture in my office that shows the building of the Leongatha-Inverloch Road in 1914. The rock for the road had to be crushed on Westernport Bay and brought into Inverloch by ship – it's really quite fascinating. I am fortunate to have been bequeathed copies of all the Annual Reports of VicRoads and its precursors from 1914.

"As far as maintenance is concerned, I believe we have to try to get the best value for the money available to us, and that, interestingly, is what Mr Calder wanted in the 1914 Annual Report.

"I have a reputation for being a bit of a bushranger when it comes to trying out something I think will work, for example, the reintroduction of cement stabilisation as a cost-effective maintenance strategy.

"The thing that pleases me most about receiving the Public Service Medal is that it recognises the work that is done by VicRoads in country regions and our good relationship with the public and local Councils.

"As well as the service we provide through keeping the roads in good working order, I'm thinking of our R&L offices, where we've really turned things around in the past seven years, so that business is geared to meet customer needs.

"In terms of my private commitments, I'd like to think the Medal recognises the work I have done with service clubs, even though it's been limited in recent years. I've been a member in Benalla, Horsham, Ballarat South and Traralgon, and I was President of Traralgon Rotary Club in 1994.

"Rotary supports a lot of small, self-help projects that add up to a major contribution to the community. I've also had a fair involvement with the Youth Exchange Program, where we've hosted quite a few young people.

"Another area of community involvement has been with school councils at Benalla and Traralgon. This was very rewarding, in being able to help with development of these schools – especially

with the financial skills and contacts we have in VicRoads."

Norm first learnt about the award when he received a letter from the Governor-General two weeks before the Queen's Birthday holiday, asking if he would accept. He then had to wait and see if his name was in the papers on the day.

"I first knew it was there from Rob McQuillen, who rang and congratulated me," Norm said. "I must confess I hadn't got out of bed yet, so his call was a very nice start to the day."

Reflecting on his career at VicRoads, Norm said: "I think that as an organisation we have moved with the times and we've not had to be directed to do so from outside.

"We've been fortunate to have people of vision who have propelled us into becoming a modern, customer-oriented business. There are many people in VicRoads with a strong commitment to service and the public."

Needless to say, Norm's wife Sandy and the family were all delighted with his award.

"Sandy was really thrilled at the whole thing," Norm said.

"These awards only come if you've got support," he concluded, "and Sandy's given me terrific support over the years."

Congratulations, Norm, from everyone at VicRoads.

Getting to know Vern Delaney

Vern Delaney joined VicRoads in June 1989 and is currently working as a Customer Services Representative in the Telephone Information Service (TIS) at Kew. Thoroughly customer oriented – no doubt a legacy of running his own business for 30 years – Vern has the sort of smile that can warm up a room – even if it's at the other end of the telephone.

How did you come to join VicRoads?

I came to Melbourne from Warrnambool because I wanted a change, and there were limited job opportunities in the country. I worked with Sandringham and Altona Councils before I joined VicRoads. I come from a background of roadbuilders, engineers and mechanics, and I ran my own business in Warrnambool selling and servicing cars and machinery, so it seemed a natural choice.

What does your present job involve?

I answer telephone enquiries on registration. I also distribute the mail and faxes which I enjoy because it means lots of contact with my colleagues. I also enjoy the opportunity to act as mentor to new recruits to the TIS – many of them are fantastic.

Where else have you worked in VicRoads?

I began in road maintenance in Metro North West. But as I got older, my body started to object to jobs like digging drainage channels in the middle of the road in mid-winter, so I decided it was time to come inside. I applied for the TIS and was accepted, and I've enjoyed every day of my time here.

Is your career turning out the way you expected?

It's been a chequered career but it's been wonderful, and I think I'd do the same things again. I really relate to the moves VicRoads has made in terms of customer service. My view is that we have the customers all their lives, and that VicRoads is important to the life of every Victorian, and that's one of the great features of working here.

What is your long-term ambition?

I've recently pulled back to two days a week at VicRoads after working for nine years full time. In the not too distant future I'd like to retire and start up a small cartage business on my own in the country.



Vern Delaney pictured at work at the Telephone Information Service (TIS) Kew. He enjoys acting as a mentor to new recruits.

What are your personal interests?

Currently I'm President of the South West National Servicemen's Association, which involves looking after members and running meetings and social activities. I'm a mad Collingwood supporter and Club member, and I was a volunteer fireman and competitor for over 40 years, although I've retired now. I'm also a practising Christian, a Presbyterian, and I lead the choir – I'm a tenor, and not too bad, I think.

Can you tell us a little about your family?

There's my wife, Margaret, and I have three children from a previous marriage, Robert, who's 30, Louise, 28, and Emma-Jane, 21, who has two children of her own. My mother and father are 83 and 84 respectively, they're very important to me. They've just built a new home in Warrnambool and I've spent a lot of time helping them move.

What is your favourite food?

Dinky-di Aussie food like steak, lamb, pork and ordinary old vegetables.

What is your favourite past-time?

I spend a lot of time in my garden. I also really like seeing children enjoy themselves, and watching young people perform.

What makes you laugh?

Happy people, good jokes, funny films and live TV shows like 'Alive and Kicking'. I'm always very impressed by that American TV show 'MASH', it was put together so brilliantly.

What one thing would you change in the world?

I am very satisfied with my lot. I think we are pretty right in Australia. I can't think of anything that really upsets me.

Those were the days!

After 40 years of service with the CRB, RCA and VicRoads, Trevor Stanley has retired. Trevor's career provides fascinating snapshots of the organisation's early years.

Trevor began his career in 1957, working with the late Fred Houghton on the Patrol Gang at Healesville. The 'patrol depot' was Fred's backyard, the 'patrol truck' was Fred's own utility, and tools used were picks, shovels, Trawalla jacks and wheelbarrows.

"The wheelbarrows were handy because, turned upside down, they could be used as shelters."

The Gang gained a 'proper' home when the Healesville Depot was established in a disused quarry near the Maroondah Reservoir. Electricity was considered a luxury, so a Tilley lantern provided both lighting and warmth!

In the days before the current bridges across the Yarra River flood plain, Trevor and his colleagues spent many nights guiding traffic through flooded sections of the Maroondah Highway using red kerosene lamps. When trees fell blocking the highway, crosscut saws and muscle power were used to remove them.

During the 1980s Trevor was Maintenance Worker in Charge on the Healesville Depot Roadside Gang, and was promoted to Roadworker in Charge in 1993.

Restructuring in Metropolitan South East in 1995 led to closure of several Patrol Depots, including Healesville. The Healesville Gang was relocated to Lilydale, where Trevor finished his working days.

Having once travelled the roads of the Dandenong Ranges with eyes for pavement only, Trevor intends to travel Australia with Shirley.

"Trevor's loyal career with VicRoads is a remarkable achievement which few have matched for longevity," said Manager Metropolitan Works, Ian Mullett.

"VicRoads thanks him for his contribution and wishes both Trevor and Shirley a long, happy retirement."

Story by Bill Wilson
Section Manager Eastern, Metropolitan Works Group



Trevor and Shirley Stanley.