IRT celebrates 15 years at Monash University

The Institute of Railway Technology recently reached a significant milestone: completing 15 years at Monash University, Australia’s largest university and a member of the prestigious Group of Eight (Go8) coalition of universities.

Originally part of BHP’s Melbourne Research Laboratories, IRT moved to Monash University in 2000. Within a short period IRT has become recognised as one of the most successful business units within the university, generating significant industry-based research income which has elevated its stature to that of one of the key industry research groups.

IRT specialises in providing comprehensive solutions to technical issues in existing rail systems, whether they transport iron ore, freight or commuters. IRT is also a leader in remotely monitoring tracks and rolling stock using cutting-edge technology to detect faults before catastrophic failures occur. IRT has an established track record in solving railway-related technical challenges, including wheel-rail interface issues, and its solutions have been adopted by railway systems throughout the world. Its recommendations have led to significant savings to its customers’ operating and capital costs and provided value-added environmental benefits.

At Monash, IRT was able to broaden its client base and it now provides technical assistance to the world’s four biggest iron ore producers - BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto, FMG and Vale (Brazil) - and more than 110 other railway entities, including leading passenger rail authorities such as MTR Corporation in Hong Kong (a major shareholder of Metro Trains in Melbourne) and MRT in Singapore.

One of IRT’s recent clients is Public Transport Victoria (PTV). PTV has engaged IRT to develop a suitable specification for the tourist and heritage (T&H) railway sector for the use of a plastic/composite sleeper. The specification will enable testing of sleepers to validate their use within the T&H railways. For information on IRT, visit www.irt.monash.edu.

Lecture series honours stalwart

IN 2014 the Institute of Railway Technology initiated an annual lecture series called the Stephen March Lecture in Railway Engineering to honour the contribution, over 40 years, to the railway industry by Dr Stephen March.

This annual event is a key forum for sharing technical knowledge about railway engineering from leading experts in railway technology.

The 2015 lecture, titled Strategies to Counter Wheel and Rail Rolling Contact Fatigue in Heavy Haul Service, was delivered in March by Harry Tournay, a senior scientist at the Association of American Railroads Transportation Technology Centre in Pueblo, Colorado, United States.

The next issue of Track + Signal will provide detailed coverage of Mr Tournay’s lecture.