Boom time - but now what?

On Friday 27 October, the Perna
Wag Way Institution (PWI) New
South Wales hosted more than
400 rail industry delegates at the
2017 annual convention held at the
International Convention Centre Syd
The theme of the convention was
"Boom time! But what?", which
acknowledged that the NSW rail indus
was one of the big winners from the
capital investment portfolio funded by
state and federal governments and ques
tioned how the industry was going to
develop this record level of infrastructure.
The day's proceedings were opened by
then Secretary of Transport for NSW,
Tim Readon (who subsequently started
in the role of Secretary of Premier and
Cabinet on 18 November 2017). He
spoke about the significant program of
works that Transport for NSW was undertak
including Sydney Metro Northwest,
Sydney Metro City & Southwest,
CDB and South East Light Rail, Newcastle
Light Rail, Parramatta Light Rail, now
rolling stock including the New Intercity
Train, Sydney Trains and the Re
cional Rail Replacement program,
and other non-rail projects such as B-Line
and the six new ferries.
The first paper of the day was present
by Ravi Ravitharan, director, Institute
of Railway Technology Monash Univer
City, Victoria, on the special mainte
ance dollars using state-of-the-art auto
mated in-service vehicle track condition
monitoring. He spoke about the use of
instrumented revenue vehicles (IVV) to
provide faster and more regular feed
back on track condition and reduce the
potential risks to railway operations. By
using IVT technology, track condition and the corresponding vehicle dynamic behav
ior can be measured for use in implementing proactive evidence-based track maintenance strategies.
Peter Winder, EGM interstate divi
sion, Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), spoke on the new delivery opportunities of building inland rail in a
boom time for infrastructure. He pro
vided an outline of the $1.27 billion na
lion-building project and the challenges
of constructing the mega project and
containing costs during a booming infra
structure climate.
David Speiter, general manager of
asset management and assurance, Trans
port for NSW, presented on a topic that
is often considered a moving chain in the
planning and design of projects: maintaining the assets behind the boom. He spoke of the substantial
value of assets that Transport for NSW
currently manages, which he said was
set to grow significantly over the next 10
years. With this comes the chal
ge of building such a large program of
work while maintaining value for mone
y, as well as finding the funding to pro
vide ongoing stewardship of the assets.
He pointed to the Rail Joint Under
taking, a new public-private partnership
in the European rail sector with aggres
sive targets of delivering projects for
50 per cent less, reducing maintenance
costs by 50% and increasing reliability
by 50%.
Marg Prendergast, co-ordinator gen
eral, Transport for NSW, presented a very
logical paper on keeping Sydney mov
ning. She provided an overview of the
work of the Transport for NSW Sydney
co-ordination office which ensures Syd
ney keeps moving in amongst significant
construction works. The Sydney co-ordin
ation office takes a thorough approach
to travel demand management: through
capacity creation projects, real-time net
work creation and longer sustainable
behaviour change, such as the success
ful Sydney Light Rail program.
The final feature of the day was an exc
eling panel with Clare Gardiner Barnes,
department of the City of Sydney, strategy and
planning at Transport for NSW; Naomi
Frauenfelder, executive director of the
TrackSAFE Foundation; Ms Prenderga
and; Susannah Le Bron, executive
director of customer service at Sydney Trains;
with guest MC Joan Kitson. The
panel discussed a range of topics around
the boom time including resourcing the
boom and attracting the best skilled and
capable people, keeping transport networks moving efficiently in the midst of disruptive construction works, and
maintaining safety at the forefront while the
industry is under pressure.
Throughout the day, delegates saw the
City quality of work, dedication and
invention evident in the rail industry with
all of the entries for the PWI NSW
Loyalty Award going to all of the PWI
award winners.
- PWI Young Achiever Award - Rebecca
  Coffey, Lycopodium.
- Welders Award - Bill Stapley, MP Rail.
- Alan Barham Maintenance Award -
  Harbour Regeneration Centre, AKC.
- Ken Erickson Innovation Award -
  Dr Chris O'Halloran, Spono Rail
  Maintenance Australia.
- Steve Maximov Awards (Major
  Category) - Campus, Central
  City Rail Line Upgrade Contract
  Area 4, John Holland.

The day was capped off with a net
work event sponsored by the Trans
port for NSW Asset Standards Authority
where delegates could catch up with old
friends and make new ones.
PWI thanks all its corporate and en
hanced corporate members - particu
larly our platinum corporate members
and customers - for the threaddle support and help on delivering this one of the best-value one-day
conferences around. PWI thanks also
to the presenters and session chairs
for making the day such a great success.

August meeting
The August PWI technical meeting
was held on Thursday 17 August
and was proudly sponsored by
Spencer.
Barry Miller, general manager of Spono
Rail Maintenance Australia, presented
on the company's multi-purpose platform
and road/rail utility switch grinder
added value through technology and
innovation.
He spoke about the multi-purpose
platform (MPP) which was built for a
private network heavy-haul rail network in
the Pilbara, Western Australia. The MPP
provides users with a high-quality, high-
accuracy data in a single run, including
speed and ultrasonic track geometry,
track profile and head loss as well as a vi
sion system for track irregularities.
This reduces the track possession to
three hours a day and provides a one-stop-shop
to supply the critical track data to the
client and its clients' condition monitoring
system.
He also outlined Spono's latest-gen
eration road/rail utility switch grinder,
which now has 12 stones instead of eight
in the most recent generation. The utility
grinder is primarily used for switch
and turnout grinding but can also be utilised
in crossing work. This machine delivers increased capacity while maintaining the flexibility of being
roadable, adding value to the network owners.

November meeting
The November technical meeting
was held on Thursday 16 November
and was sponsored by the Transport for
NSW Asset Standards Authority (ASA).
Lead track engineer John Faff held open
proceedings with an overview of the
ASA purpose, products and services and
David Cooper, principle engineer of the
structure, provided an outline of the pro
cess of the type approval of track projects.
Scott Allan, manager of communications
and rail systems in the Sydney Metro
delivery office, discussed the pressures of
the planned Sydney Metro City & South West
as a case study.
He explained some of the challenges
that would be faced in converting the Bankstown line from heavy rail to mid
line operations, requiring specific corri
dor management, a preference towards
straight platforms and a requirement for
platform screen doors.

Mark Harris and Julian Sharp with the 2017 Young Achiever Award winner, Rebecca Coffey from Lycopodium.

Left: Tim Readon, former Secretary of Transport for NSW and now Secretary of Premier and Cabinet, with PWI NSW president Mark Harris. RIGHT: Marg Prendergast, co-ordinator general, Transport for NSW, presented on 'Keeping Sydney moving'.

Marg Prendergast, Clare Gardiner Barnes, Susannah Le Bron and Naomi Frauenfelder with guest MC Joan Kitson for the open panel session.

LEFT: Presenters Peter Winder and Ravi Ravitharan and session chair David Robotham. RIGHT: More than 400 rail industry delegates attended the 2017 PWI NSW annual convention at the International Convention Centre, Sydney.