

# Boom time – but now what?

On Friday 27 October, the Permanent Way Institution (PWI) New South Wales hosted more than 400 rail industry delegates at the 2017 annual convention held at the International Convention Centre Sydney.

The theme of the convention was 'Boom Time! But Now What!?', which acknowledged that the NSW rail industry was one of the big winners from the capital investment portfolio funded by state and federal governments and questioned how the industry was going to deliver this record level of infrastructure.

The day's proceedings were opened by then Secretary of Transport for NSW, Tim Reardon (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 undertaking, including Sydney Metro Northwest, Sydney Metro City & Southwest, CBD and South East Light Rail, Newcastle Light Rail, Parramatta Light Rail, new rolling stock including the New Intercity Fleet, Sydney Growth Trains and the Regional Rail Replacement program, and other non-rail projects such as B-Line and the six new Inner Harbour ferries.

The first paper of the day was presented by Ravi Ravitharan, director, Institute of Railway Technology Monash University, Victoria, on stretching the maintenance dollar using state-of-the-art automated in-service vehicle-track condition monitoring. He spoke about the use of instrumented revenue vehicles (IRV) to provide faster and more regular feedback on track condition and reduce the potential risks to railway operations. By using IRV technology, track conditions and the corresponding vehicle dynamic behaviour can be measured for use in implementing proactive evidence-based track maintenance strategies.

Peter Winder, EGM interstate division, Australian Rail Track Corporation (ATRC), spoke about the challenges and opportunities of building Inland Rail in a boom time for infrastructure. He provided an outline of the \$10.7 billion na-



tion-building project and the challenges of constructing the mega project and containing costs during a booming infrastructure climate.

David Spiteri, general manager of asset management and assurance, Transport for NSW, presented on a topic that is often not considered up front in the planning, design and construction of projects: maintaining the assets beyond the boom. He spoke of the substantial value of assets that Transport for NSW currently managed, which he said was set to grow significantly over the next 10 years. With this will come the challenge of building such a large program of works while maintaining value for money, as well as finding the funding to provide ongoing stewardship of the assets. He pointed to the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking, a new public-private partnership in the European rail sector with aggressive targets of delivering projects for 50 per cent less, reducing maintenance costs by 50pc and increasing reliability by 50pc.

Marg Prendergast, co-ordinator general, Transport for NSW, presented a very topical paper on keeping Sydney moving. She provided an overview of the work of the Transport for NSW Sydney co-ordination office which ensures Sydney keeps moving in amongst significant construction works. The Sydney co-ordination office takes a threefold approach to travel demand management: through capacity creation projects, real-time network creation and long-term sustainable

behaviour change, such as the successful Travel Choices program.

The final feature of the day was an exciting panel with Clare Gardiner Barnes, deputy secretary of freight, strategy and planning at Transport for NSW; Naomi Frauenfelder, executive director of the TrackSAFE Foundation; Ms Prendergast; and Susannah Le Bron, executive director of customer service at Sydney Trains; with guest MC Jean Kittson. The panel discussed a range of topics around the boom time including resourcing the boom and attracting the best skilled and competent 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 high quality of work, dedication and innovation evident in the rail industry with all of the entries for the PWI NSW annual awards. Congratulations go to all the PWI award winners:

- **PWI Young Achiever Award** – Rebecca Coffey, Lycopodium;
- **Welders Award** – Will Stapley, MP Rail;
- **Alan Barham Maintenance Award** – Coffs Harbour Provisioning Centre, ARTC;
- **Ken Erickson Innovation Award** – Multi Purpose Platform, Speno Rail Maintenance Australia;
- **Steve Maxwell Platelaying Award (Minor Category)** – Central 628AB Turnout Renewal, Sydney Trains; and
- **Steve Maxwell Platelaying Award (Major Category)** – Port Botany Rail Line Upgrade Contract Area 4, John Holland.

The day was capped off with a networking event sponsored by the Transport for NSW Asset Standards Authority where delegates could catch up with old friends and make new ones.

PWI thanks all its corporate and enhanced corporate members – particularly our platinum corporate members CPB Contractors, John Holland, Laing O'Rourke and Lendlease – for their continued support and helping PWI NSW make this one of the best-value one-day

conferences around. PWI's thanks go also to the presenters and session chairs for making the day such a great success.

## August technical meeting

The August PWI technical meeting and AGM was held on Thursday 17 August and was proudly sponsored by Speno.

Bazil Miller, general manager of Speno Rail Maintenance Australia, presented on how 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 privately owned heavy-haul network in the Pilbara, Western Australia. The MPP provides the client with highly accurate, quality data in a single run, including high-speed ultrasonic, track geometry, rail profile and head loss as well as a vision system for track irregularities.

This reduces the track possession footprint and provides a one-stop-shop for supplying the critical track data to integrate into the client's track condition monitoring system.

He also outlined Speno's latest-generation 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 for crossing and plain line grinding. This machine delivers increased capacity while maintaining the flexibility of being road/rail, adding value to the network owners.

## November technical 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 Palf opened proceedings with an overview of ASA's purpose, products and services and Dave Cooper, principal engineer of track structure, provided an outline of the process of type approval of track products.

Steve Allday, manager of communications and rail systems in the Sydney Metro delivery office, presented on the differences between heavy rail and metro systems, using 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 metro operations, requiring specific corridor management, a preference towards straight platforms and a requirement for platform screen doors. **T+S**



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



• LEFT Tim Reardon, 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 Jean Kittson 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.