

# NEW SOUTH WALES NEWSLETTER



ENGINEERS  
AUSTRALIA

**RTSA**

Railway Technical Society of Australasia  
NSW Chapter  
Mail: PO Box 6238, Kingston, ACT, 2604

**AUGUST 2008**

**EMINENT SPEAKER – SPECIAL RTSA PRESENTATION**

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September**

**16.30 for 17.00 at the SYDNEY MASONIC CENTRE, (66 Goulburn St, corner  
Castlereagh St) in the IONIC ROOM.**

**INTEGRATED LAND USE AND TRANSPORT PLANNING – A SUCCESS STORY**



**ANDREW McCUSKER**

**OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, HONG KONG MTR CORPORATION LTD**

Land scarcity and high population density in Hong Kong has shaped the requirements for effective land use and capital resources through **integrated land use and transport planning**. **MTR adopts a Rail-Property model** by undertaking residential and commercial developments along the railway lines, and creates the required integration. **The model is successful and creates a number of socio-economic benefits.**

People enjoy working, living and shopping in properties located directly above or adjacent to the railway stations which offer convenient added value and efficiency. Walking is promoted through safe and weather-free pedestrian links into the stations. **The model also enables financial sustainability of the railway development and operation without subsidy.**

A **merger between the MTR Corporation and the Kowloon-Canton Corporation** took place on 2 December 2007. The original MTR network comprised five commuter lines, an Airport Express and a Disneyland Resort Line, with daily patronage of 2.5 million. After the merger, the expanded network covers a total route length of 211 km, and **daily patronage of 4 million.**

In line with an international growth strategy, MTR has active involvement in public transport projects outside Hong Kong, in China at **Shenzen, Beijing and Shanghai** as well as the concession to operate the **London Overground** service through partnership with a local operator. MTR is also reported to be on the shortlist to operate **Melbourne's** suburban trains

*Coffee and tea will be available prior to the meeting proper.*

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## **NEXT MEETING:**

As advertised on the front page of this Newsletter we have a very special meeting on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> Sept at a new location (for RTSA). Andrew McCusker, Operations Director of the Hong Kong MTA will talk on the topic of integration of transport and land use, not surprisingly, from the perspective of the very successful model adopted in Hong Kong.

Anyone who knows anything about high density urban rail operations will know that Hong Kong is a leader in this field. Only a few decades ago Hong Kong had no rail apart from a tenuous link with mainland China via the traditional Kowloon Canton Railway. Now it has an inspirational metro system that has an enviable reliability record, rarely if ever needs to 'close' tracks for maintenance and carries a daily traffic task that is more than double the sum of all Australian rail passenger operations.

Not only will this meeting be very entertaining, it will contain a number of very important messages for us here, especially in terms of getting a new perspective on the nexus between transport and land use – something that seems to have been refined to a high degree in Hong Kong while we continue to fluff around on the edges. It will be well worth your while attending this meeting, especially those who have any pretence to involvement in urban or Metro train activities.

For those who will be at CORE during the second week of September, it is understood that Andrew's Eminent Speaker presentation will be different from his address on the first day of that conference

## **AND THE FOLLOWING MEETING:**

Our October meeting will be held in September, one week early, to fit in with the speaker's rather busy life - 24<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER at CENTRAL STATION CONCOURSE MEETING ROOM at the usual 11.30 for 12.00.

Kevin Taylor of the Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board (RISSB) will be detailing progress on the development and management of national rail industry standards, rules and codes of practice. Kevin will cover standards in preparation and those that have been issued, format of standards, intended application of standards and mechanisms and initiatives for achieving recognition of standards. All new standards commenced by RISSB will be published in time as Australian Standards.

This meeting may sound a bit dry to the more *hands on* of our members, but it will cover a number of issues of ongoing importance to everyone in the rail industry. It will be well worth your time to make the effort to come to this meeting. A separate reminder will be sent out prior to this meeting and the next Newsletter should also be out before that date as a secondary reminder.

## **WORDS FROM THE CHAIR [Andrew Honan]**

It was very pleasing to see so many new and young people coming onto the committee at the AGM held with the July meeting. The structure and dynamics of the committee will change from one that was comprised of professional male career railway people, to one that reflects the emerging nature of the rail industry with a balance of young professional women and men ('emerging leaders') well as more senior people.

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It is with pleasure that I advise the makeup of this year's Committee as well as acknowledging the honour of being re-elected your Chair for this year. The committee is:

Chairman	Andrew Honan	Member	Tomas Magyla
Secretary	Bill Laidlaw	Member	Malcolm Cluett.
Treasurer	Andrew McKay	Member	Candice Ng (New)
Member	Max Michell	Member	Lucie Mitchell (New)
Member	Basil Hancock	Member	Paul Harris (New)
Member	John Watsford	Member	Coen Stoltz (New)
Member	Chris Venn-Brown	Member	Katharina Gerstmann (New)

Congratulations to all of the above.

There are many aspects to the RTSA. First and foremost it is a technical society; something we are very proud of. Through this technical excellence and application, this human capital, we help develop the rail industry. The RTSA also has a historical and social dimension which is very important to our understanding of current day rail and also to the interests of many members. I believe the committee represents a good mix of RTSA interests.

It is my view that the RTSA has to have a lot of activities to engage and to interest the membership. Often this is hard, as many of us work full-time or have other demands on our time. However I would urge you to be as active as much as possible. The challenge for me and the committee is to be as effective as possible. The committee is large and much of the work will have to be done in sub-committees. Already this is starting to happen with our 'emerging leaders'. Candice Ng has been working on a study tour of metro rail in Asia for the first half of next year. With the support from Bill Laidlaw this is shaping up to be an exciting event.

A keen interest of mine is to see if we can participate in a schools program. Engineers Australia has a very well established Engineering Week with many rail activities. However, our discussions with RailCorp some time ago revealed that they wanted to 'do something' for students in high school particularly through career's advisors. I noticed in my own daughter's high school this year, this is now happening!

I also received notice that EA's Newcastle Division is planning its 2<sup>nd</sup> regional convention in 2009. The theme is 'Transport and Communication: Australia's Backbone Past, Present, and Future' and will provide the platform for a wide range of presentations, highlighting all aspects in transport and communication. This will be held in Grafton as part of its sesquicentennial (150<sup>th</sup> anniversary) celebrations. Newcastle Division has nominated the standard gauge railway link between Sydney and Brisbane for an engineering heritage marker, in recognition that the Grafton Bridge was the final link in the first *standard gauge* inter-capital railway (Melbourne – Adelaide was the first by half a century, but it was broad gauge). There will be a number of technical papers and tours and the RTSA has been asked to co-badge this event. Our committee, through our newsletter, will provide more information as it develops.

I hope to see many of you at Andrew McCusker's presentation on the 1<sup>st</sup> September at the Masonic Centre, or at CORE in Perth.

Please feel free to introduce yourself and talk to me or any of the NSW committee to discuss your thoughts and ideas. We hope to have the names and faces of the committee up on the RTSA web shortly.

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## PAUSE A MOMENT - WHERE IS IT?



One of my correspondents sent in the accompanying photo of a rather unusual ballast train he came across in his wanderings early this week. The picture contains a few clues as to its whereabouts. The overhead structure and the rolling stock suggest a location – but beware, this is a standard gauge line, and just to add a tad of confusion is at a platform that has existed for 150 years. The last time I rode the line there was a very apparent need for concrete sleepers and ballast, so next time I go there it should be much improved. In fact there is some new rolling stock to go with the upgraded track. Answers should be emailed to the editor before the end of the month.

## LAST MEETING [reported by the ever reliable by Malcolm Cluett]

**Daniel Thomson, Manager - Track Recording, RailCorp.**

The presentation covered both the AK track monitoring train and the Mechanised Track Patrol.

- The AK cars
- Railcar ML039 for Mechanised Track Patrols.

**The AK car set** is made up of three former FAM sleeping cars. (AK2382, AK2383 & AK2384) The locomotive required to haul the train is hired from a range of operators, including Pacific National, GWA and 3801 Limited, as well as using RailCorp's own 48 class locos. The AK cars are operated as a joint venture between RailCorp and ARTC. They are able to travel anywhere on the Standard-Gauge network in Australia, and are jointly manned by RailCorp and ARTC. Some regional maintenance personnel are also on-board.

Each section of railway is traversed three times per annum.  
The parameters that are measured are:

- Top
- Line
- Super-elevation
- Twist
- Gauge
- Corrugations and Ride Quality
- Overhead Wire (in the Sydney area)

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## AUGUST 2008

At present the output is recorded onto a paper printout, but this will soon be changed to .pdf files.

The operating speed is now 90 km/h, but in the past it did operate at 115 km/h.

The sensors use a non-contact system, and the undercarriage equipment utilises gyroscopes and accelerometers to record displacement, etc. The bogies of the car are the original passenger-car bogies, with the exception that one instrumented axle is unbraked. There are no auxiliary trolleys in contact with the rail. Modifications and improvements to the car are ongoing.

There was an article on the AK cars, and life on-board, in the September 2007 issue of Railway Digest magazine.

**Mechanised Foot Patrols aka ML039 Recording Vehicle (Footless Foot Patrols?):** During the lead-up to the year 2000 Olympics, there was pressure to eliminate foot patrols of the tracks. The original baseline requirement was that every section of track had to be walked every 72 hours. Walking on the track formation could lead to knee and back injuries. The work was unpopular in poor weather (ie, rain, cold, heat, etc). So one of the drivers for this project was an OH&S issue of reducing risk to track patrollers. There is also the risk of staff on foot patrols being struck by a train, in fact this is one of the drivers of the rather draconian OH&S on track rules in NSW.

A world study trip revealed that there were no suitable technologies for mechanised foot patrol employed in other countries. Geomatic Technologies (Melbourne) were approached to develop a system to replace (in part) the foot patrols. This was a joint venture between RailCorp and Geomatic Technologies. The project was implemented in February 2004.

The double ended self-propelled rail inspection railcar (which was the predecessor to the AK cars and then called RVX-4) was converted to be primarily a recorder of visual images during passage over the track. It takes 60 to 70 frames per second of still images. This equates to about 1 Gigabyte per kilometre. Points of interest are noted, and there is voice annotation. All of the information can be reviewed in a studio.

The information contained in the images increases the efficiency of the remaining foot patrols. The images (particularly 3D images) are also used by RailCorp Geographical Information Section. A laser device can detect structures or trees encroaching into the rail corridor.

Normally it takes 24 hours to process the data from the run. (In practice it is reviewed the following working day.) If a fault is detected that requires urgent rectification, then this can be done by means of telephone or radio communication. Staff from the district ride on-board the vehicle to provide the commentary, and to investigate points of interest.

Movements of the ML039 vehicle are governed by a Special Train Notice. If a section of track has not been inspected for more than eight days, then the track must be closed to traffic. This means that getting the track inspected within the eight days interval is given the highest priority by the Operations Division.

In conjunction with data from ML039, turnouts are now inspected by a foot patrol every 30 days and track every 90 days (apart from problem areas). Rail Flaws are detected by a different vehicle (run by the Contractor SPENO). This must be done at lower speed (~ 40 km/h) but at less frequent intervals. Hand-held devices are also used for rail flaw detection.

Both routes in a turnout need to be negotiated. This means that there are practical issues fitting the ML039 movements in around the scheduled train movements, particularly at busy junctions.

In the future, there may be Electrical overhead wire and signalling inspections too by means of the ML039 vehicle, or others like it. A future initiative is a vehicle that can be powered by battery power for the

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underground city railway. It will function like a hybrid motor car, with conventional diesel-electric operation while in open areas. An all-electric vehicle is another possibility, but would have limitations in traversing unwired sidings in the Sydney area, and also the section beyond Kiama which is currently unwired.

All recording is done in daylight hours, as the railway property needs to be scanned from fenceline to fenceline. The vehicle has very bright lights at the front (for photographic recording purposes) but to use this at night would dazzle the drivers of oncoming trains.

ML039 is used to patrol the section out to St Marys at present, although an interesting visit future visit will be on the Picton – Buxton line, which is used for steam-hauled tourist passenger services. This line sees no other traffic now, and is maintained by the Rail Transport Museum volunteer staff.

The writer remembers reading that the whole of the Northern Ireland railway network was covered by a patrol every morning before trains commenced operating (or rather, it was at the time of his visit 25 years ago). This was to look out for signs of bombs being planted, in addition to track defects. Fortunately this state of affairs does not exist in Sydney.

## **THE LISTOWEL AND BALLYBUNION RAILWAY (Basil Hancock)**

Unusual, even by the standards of some of the smaller Irish railways, the Listowel and Ballybunion Railway was unique. It was the only commercial railway ever built using the Lartigue monorail system and ran for just over nine miles (15 km) from Listowel, an ancient market town on the Great Southern and Western Railway, to the seaside town of Ballybunion on the south west coast.

The Lartigue system involved the use of a single carrying rail mounted on A-frame supports, with two lightweight lateral guide rails mounted low down on the A-frames. The claimed advantages were quick and low cost manufacture and construction, but disadvantages included difficulties at level crossings, the need for curved turntables instead of points and rolling stock which had to be split on either side of the track. This led to such unusual features as the three steam locomotives, which had a boiler on each side of the track, carriages and wagons which required the loads to be balanced carefully, and a mobile staircase which ran in passenger trains so that they could cross the track at stations and move to the other side of the train.

Tales abounded about this railway and its unusual operations, one typical example involving the farmer who wanted to transport a cow down the line. As this animal seriously unbalanced its wagon, despite the guide rails, the eventual solution was to counterbalance it with two calves on the other side of the wagon. The calves were then placed one on each side at the other end of the line and were brought back to the start.

Sadly the line only ran from 1888 to 1924, after which almost everything was scrapped, and only a few trackbed remains, one bridge and a couple of locomotive parts survive.

And that, so it was thought, was that, but in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century money was raised to build a replica, and in 2003 a 500 metre line was opened at Listowel, complete with track, turntables, stations, two carriages (including a staircase) and a full scale replica of one of the steam locos. Sadly the money did not allow for a working steam replica, so the loco is powered by a diesel engine in the tender, but it is still most convincing.

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**AUGUST 2008**



I visited the line in June and was treated not only to a ride on the train but also a cab ride and a video show featuring film of the original line taken in the early 20th century. It is a wonderful experience to ride on the train and to watch the loco turn on the turntables. And it was so accurate that some passengers had to be moved out of one carriage, cross the staircase and sit on the other side just to get the balance right. Just like the real thing!

A truly unique experience.

To learn more about this fascinating line and to see many more photos of both the original and the replica lines, the website at <http://homepage.eircom.net/~lartiquemonorail/Index.htm> is well worth a look.

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

*Letters to the editor are very welcome. In general letters should be relatively concise (no more than half a page) and should relate to either past material in the Newsletter, events or activities of interest, or reminiscences or future watching of the rail industry as a whole. If in doubt write anyway – the editor is quite pleasant to deal with after that first cup of coffee in the morning. The letter this month is an excellent example of the sort of thing we are on the lookout for!*

### **BRUCE HALL WRITES:**

Reference the article 'Granville to Westmead – A short series' by Tony Woodland which appeared in the July newsletter.

Tony's article brought back some interesting memories from my time as Project Manager Quadruplication, circa 1979 to 1981.

During this period the Seven Hills to St. Marys quadruplication was under construction and we commenced the planning and design of the Granville to Westmead section, including the upgrading of Parramatta Station. Given the complexities of the job, including the resolution of the differing track configurations and the Main South/ Main West junctions, it was not surprising that a 2 year planning period followed.

Planning included preliminary track and signalling design and an examination of construction options, preliminary design of Parramatta station and identification of the myriad of utilities crossing the rail reservation. Important Outcomes included;

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- A track construction staging plan. Kevin Ryan as Way & Works Branch Construction Engineer personally put a lot of time into this, obviously building on his extensive construction experience on the ESR and other projects,
- Resolution of the flyover and dive options. Don Hagarty's Planning department had developed concept plans of a flyover some year's earlier, but it was ruled out for location at Harris Park due to the complexities of intersecting roadway, freeway and water course issues. The selection of a dive rather than a flyover at Parramatta Park eliminated visual pollution issues that were starting to come up from the local community and requiring some careful explaining to Parramatta City Council regarding heritage concerns in Parramatta Park.
- The Reinforced Earth retaining method for supporting the rail tracks was chosen for the dive construction. This was a first for State Rail and involved some lengthy investigations and frank discussions in the Design Engineer, Len Gough's office. This choice halved the cost of the dive compared to more conventional retaining techniques.
- A preliminary project guide cost estimate based on a well documented scope of works. Around \$50m for the quad and \$4m for Parramatta Station is my memory. As Tony mentions in his article, subsequent argy bargy with council added about \$1.8m of supplementary items to the station scope of works.
- The Harris Park station issue was unresolved. Its location 0.5 km from Parramatta station begged the question why not close? A political decision was necessary to resolve this and Harris Park eventually got a full rebuild with 4 platforms!

Project managers - there were a few; me, followed by Lucio di Bartolomeo, John Zantiotis and John Fuller before the official opening ceremony in 1987.

The final outcome was one of those rare rail projects that actually finished close to time and budget. The old adage "time spent on planning is seldom wasted", or more crudely "prior planning precludes piss-poor performance" (the six P rule?) was but one of the reasons for this outcome. Moreover it was a tribute to a range of people from all parts of State Rail's engineering and operations groups who, as is usual in the rail business, when given the opportunity to work on a big project responded magnificently with their ideas, skills and experience.

I may have some of my facts wrong, it was a long time ago, so I am open to correction. If anyone out there has more or different memories, let 'em rip.

[The next in the Granville to Westmead series will be in next months Newsletter]

### **MEETINGS**

Future meetings are listed in the table toward the back of this Newsletter. Meetings are normally on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month at 12.00 in the large meeting room off the main concourse of Sydney Central (Steam) Station. The venue can be found in the North West corner of the main concourse opposite platform 2, next to the Lost Property Office.

**CHANGED MEETING DATE:** Our October meeting has been advanced a week to fit the presenter's availability – the meeting will now be held on **Wed September 24<sup>th</sup>** at our usual Central Station meeting place. The speaker will be Kevin Taylor from the RISSB talking on the topic of Railway Standards development, and is part of a National program arranged by RTSA on this important issue.

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## AUGUST 2008

### AN APPEAL

There are a multitude of activities and developments happening within our industry, again highlighted by both the editorial and last meeting report this month. Issues ranging from the high level (policy and the like) through major construction and acquisition to relatively minor matters that often go completely unrecognised and unreported are all part of our industry and in most cases are only known in detail by relatively few of us.

We are always on the lookout for interesting and varied topics for meetings later in the year and beyond. Basil has done a great job in getting an interesting and varied program up over the last 12 months, but he would welcome any, all or more bright ideas from members. So if you have a pet topic, or are overcome with curiosity about something of interest in the rail domain, then contact Basil at [basil.hancock@railcorp.nsw.gov.au](mailto:basil.hancock@railcorp.nsw.gov.au) and let him know your thoughts.

### COMING EVENTS

**CORE 2008** will be held in **Perth between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008**. Many of our members will be in Perth for this event and from all accounts can expect an exceptional event. It would have to be the first CORE where some of the technical tours are almost as far from Perth as Adelaide is from Brisbane!!!

Anyone with a last minute interest, or wishing to update themselves about the conference are directed to the CORE website at [www.core2008.org](http://www.core2008.org).

**METROS – FUTURE RAIL FOR SYDNEY** is the title for a one day symposium being organised by the RTSA NSW Chapter for **Wednesday November 12<sup>th</sup>** at the **Old Customs House (Circular Quay)**.

Bookings for this landmark event are now open to members, and will open for the general public next week. We had several bookings before the date set with the booking agent, which hopefully augurs well for a full house. Members who are interested in coming to this event is encouraged to book now to secure a place, there is a risk of missing out otherwise. Bookings can be made by:-

- **Internet** through the web sites at [www.rtsa.com.au](http://www.rtsa.com.au) or [www.cityrecitalhall.com/](http://www.cityrecitalhall.com/) then following links
- By **phone** on +61(2) 8235 2222 or 1300 797 118
- By **faxing** the completed appended form to +61(2) 9233 6652
- By **mail**, forwarding the completed appended form, to City Recital Hall Angel Place, GPO Box 3339, Sydney, NSW 2001.
- **In person** at the Angel Place Booking Office, 2 – 12 Angel Place, Sydney (between George and Pitt Streets, just north of Martin Place).

We have a range of very interesting speakers covering a range of topic and issues. The majority of speakers are from overseas and bring with them new ideas and practices that must be of interest and advantage here.

A brochure is being prepared and will be available at CORE as well as selectively around the Sydney area.

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**AUGUST 2008**

**COMING NSW MEETINGS: (black indicates confirmed, red indicates tentative)**

DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC	LOCATION	TIME
<b>Monday 1 September 2008</b>	<b>Andrew McCusker Operations Director MTR Corporation Hong Kong</b>	<b>Hong Kong MTR – Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning</b>	<b>Ionic Room, Masonic Centre, Corner of Goulburn and Castlereagh Streets, Sydney</b>	<b>16.30 for 17.00</b>
<b>7-10 September 2008</b>	<b>Various</b>	<b>CORE - Conference on Railway Engineering 2008</b>	<b>PERTH</b>	<b>[CONFERENCE]</b>
<b>Wednesday 24 September 2008</b>	<b>Kevin Taylor Rail Industry Safety &amp; Standards Board</b>	<b>Railway Standards Development</b>	<b>Central Station Concourse Meeting Room</b>	<b>11.30 for 12.00</b>
<b>Wednesday 5 November 2008</b>	<b>Graham Haywood United Group Rail</b>	<b>Pacific National Class 92 Diesel Electric locomotives and the ARG derivatives</b>	<b>Central Station Concourse Meeting Room</b>	<b>11.30 for 12.00</b>
<b>Wednesday 12 November 2008</b>	<b>Various</b>	<b>Symposium – Metros - Future Rail for Sydney</b>	<b>Old Customs House, Circular Quay</b>	<b>ALL DAY</b>
<b>Wednesday 3 December 2008</b>	<b>Speaker from the NSW Office of Rail Heritage</b>	<b>Sustainable Rail Heritage Management Strategy</b>	<b>Central Station Concourse Meeting Room</b>	<b>11.30 for 12.00</b>

The draft program for early 2009 will be included in the next Newsletter – there are some very interesting topics in the pipeline, but of course if you have something you would dearly like to see or hear about (or share with members) then by all means contact Basil Hancock and let him know.

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**AUGUST 2008**

## KEY RTSA SYDNEY CHAPTER COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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Tomas Magyla	Committee	Coen Stoltz	Committee
John Watsford	Committee	Paul Harris	Committee
Chris Venn-Brown	Committee	Lucie Mitchell	Committee
Malcolm Cluett	Committee	Katharina Gerstmann	Committee
Candice Ng	Committee		

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SYDNEY NEWSLETTER

Part of the function of RTSA is to keep members in touch with what is going on in the industry and with each other and to that end we are only too happy to publish items of interest. Articles, letters or editorial comment for Newsletter are very welcome. We have several hundred members locally some of whom have stories, events or developments of interest that could make an interesting item for our NSW Newsletter.

Contact details are –

The Editor, Max Michell,

- e-mail to [samrom@bigpond.com](mailto:samrom@bigpond.com),
- phone 02 9331 5662 or
- post to P.O.Box 279, Potts Point, NSW, 1335.

For all other matters relating to RTSA Sydney Chapter contact Andrew Honan (Chair) or Bill Laidlaw (Secretary) as above.

## CPD CREDITS

**Engineers Aust members who attend RTSA meetings and events will qualify for CPD credits as per the Engineers Australia criteria. Members are responsible for recording their own CPD for audit.**

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS RECEIVING RTSA NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

If you receive this Newsletter by post but would prefer to get it by e-mail (quicker and more reliable) then please let the Canberra know (address in the page header). E-mail saves time for you and costs for RTSA, which in the end can only mean better service to our members. There are occasions when email members are able to be advised of events or changes at very short notice which cannot get to mail members in time to be of any use.

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