

RTSA NSW CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

RTSA



JULY 2014 EDITION

NEXT MEETING – MONDAY 28th JULY

AUTOMATED TRACK INSPECTION

Saverio Ditroilo; Sales Director, MERMEC Group, Asia Pacific



An important aspect of maintaining railway performance is to constantly ensure a good quality infrastructure. New diagnostic systems enable monitoring of all the components of railway infrastructure.

Through computer vision and pattern recognition and their integration and miniaturization, it is now possible to provide monitoring vehicles for railway infrastructure able to perform fast and accurate analysis of the Track and Catenary Infrastructure.

The data supports longer-term predictive assessment of the status of the track and overhead line systems, and lead to preventative maintenance strategies through a better understanding of infrastructure degradation modes.

This presentation will cover technologies currently offered by MERMEC which have been deployed globally, including recently in New South Wales.

**RTSA TECHNICAL
PRESENTATION**

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PRESENTATION**

VENUE:

Bradfield Room,
Central Station
Meeting Rooms, -
next to Lost Property,
opposite Platform 2

DATE:
Mon 28th July 2014

TIME:
11.30am for 12.00pm

*LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
WILL BE PROVIDED
FROM 11.30am, PRIOR TO
THE PRESENTATION*

**MEMBERS, GUESTS AND
INTERESTED FRIENDS
ARE MOST WELCOME TO
ATTEND.**



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WORDS FROM THE CHAIR – STEPHEN MUSCAT

Welcome to the August edition of the NSW RTSA newsletter.

This will be some of my final words to be printed as the NSW chapter chair. With the AGM upon us, my time has come to step down from this role and hand the throttle over to the next Chapter Chair. The NSW RTSA AGM will be held prior to the August technical presentation at which time elections will be held to fill the places in the 2014/15 Committee. A nomination form accompanies this Newsletter (as the last page) and is also available on the NSW section of the RTSA website. Instructions for nomination are included with the form.

I plan to continue having involvement in the committee as the immediate past chair and look forward to catching up with most people at the NSW Annual dinner to be held on the 23rd of October 2014 at the Sydney Harbour Marriott. Registrations and ticket sales are available on our website at RTSA.com.au

As always we are looking for suitable sponsorship for this and similar events to continue making these functions accessible to all our members. If you are interested in sponsoring an event such as the annual dinner or even a technical presentation, please send an email to nsw-chair@rtsa.com.au. The continued support of our members and industry supports is always greatly appreciated.

RTSA NSW CHAPTER – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As noted above the RTSA NSW Chapter AGM will be held prior to the technical meeting in August (i.e. at 12.00 on 25th August). The business to be conducted will be brief but will involve elections for office bearer positions on the Committee, nominations for which are now open. A nomination form is appended as the last page of this Newsletter. Nominations must follow the guide lines on the form and should be in the hands of the

Returning Officer, Alex Stoney, by close of business next Monday 28th July (note that nominations can be submitted at the general meeting on that day). Anyone wishing to nominate but without a proposer should contact the Chapter Chair, Steve Muscat, at the address on the second last page, or speak to any committee person at next Monday's meeting.

POINT OF VIEW – MAX MICHELL

Despite a concerted campaign to have the North West Rail Link tunnels built to 'standard' Sydney rail dimensions (regardless of what sort of train runs in them) the Government persevered with its perverse alternative course while stoically avoiding offering any real justification other than a bucket load of spin. No doubt the NWRL will work and do

a useful job but whether it is the best solution remains to be seen. Now rather remarkably the same thing has happened again – a contentious decision has been taken without any real justification apart from more dollops of spin, some locally generated this time but obviously backed by the government. The last three km of the



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Newcastle line is to be chopped off and replaced by a four km tram line at the publicly announced cost of around \$400 million.

Some of this rather large sum is to be used to build a new terminal to replace the existing and entirely adequate current terminal, while the rest will presumably be used to destroy the existing infrastructure (in good shape and largely renewed in the last few years) and replace it with tram infrastructure. In my view there are two questions which have thus far gone unanswered in regard to this somewhat tangential project -

- Why haven't the people and organisations which stand to gain financially from this project been required to (substantially) fund the project?
- Would alternative rail projects be able to produce a better outcome for the city and its people with the same \$400 million that is being squandered on the project at hand?

In each case it would appear that the answer would be yes, they should and yes, there are far better uses for public money than spending almost half a billion dollars to replace a short piece of rail line with a ... lighter rail line.

The Newcastle railway links the largest city in Australia with the largest regional city in NSW via the now large domiciliary *terroir* of the Central Coast. The combined population of the Newcastle and Central coast regions is now around 750,000 yet we have a major rail link that has only marginally been upgraded in the last 100 years.

Electrification made a difference but the usual penny pinching mentality that pervades this state missed the opportunity to upgrade the railway as a whole rather than just deal the 'locomotion'. Train times are similar to those of steam days and somewhat worse than those of 30 years ago. Train frequency on weekdays is now similar to some suburban lines but beyond that and some tinkering at stations there have been no substantial

improvements in a long time. Rumours suggest that there are stirrings in the bowels of NSW Trains that if followed through would improve the alignment and consequently the train timing, with a possible collateral benefit of a reduction in numbers of train sets required to run the service.

So on one hand we have, apparently, some possibly progressive ideas coming from within the organisation (which after all now is a child of TfNSW) and on the other hand the frittering of a valuable quantum of public money on a project that will be of limited benefit to anyone other than the developers and land owners in a narrow section of the northern city. If the NSW Government had a bit more statesmanship and a lot less populist knee jerk reactionary stuff they might have burdened the developers with their share of the cost of rail removal and retained a handsome sum of hundreds of millions of public dollars to do something useful that would benefit all rail travellers on the Newcastle line.

Quite apart from new trains (which will have to happen in either case, but in larger numbers if cutting back 3 km of line is the only major line improvement) there are numerous relatively low cost projects that would improve train running, reduce maintenance costs and if properly done increase the numbers of users on the line.

One only has to look at the Melbourne to Ballarat line which now has trains covering the 115 km journey in between 67 and 85 minutes depending on stopping conditions. Only 40 years ago any journey, over a slightly longer route, took 120 minutes or longer. The difference has come from a concerted effort to improve the trains, realign the worst bits of track and make the most of every opportunity to improve the total rail package on this route. The imminent completion of the Regional Rail Link (a 46 km double track dedicated regional rail link into the heart of Melbourne serving Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo line trains) is an extension of this progressive improvement management approach.



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There is no such holistic approach here so new trains are acquired in isolation from the track or service possibilities (or even, recently, the power supply), while projects such as the Hornsby 5th platform are done as an isolated add on (relief road) rather than a holistic rearrangement of the main line which has simply served to pass the buck to the next conflict point in the northern network.

Prior to ARTC the then RIC had all sorts of localised plans to improve bits of the Hunter Valley coal network but absolutely no idea of the section by section capacity of the system. ARTC took a different approach which involved looking at capacity progressively along the whole coal

network which highlighted not only the immediate constraints but also the sequential priority of works required to be undertaken in line with coal traffic growth. Something similar needs to be applied to the Newcastle line. If it was, it is absolutely certain that wasting public money to chop a perfectly good and functioning section of railway ahead of some decent of high value works elsewhere on the line would never get a look in. If the self serving interests who have pushed the Newcastle rail cut back were to be required to put their money where there altogether too large mouths are we might have a much better and more economically and socially useful expenditure of public money. Be deprived, very deprived while the ghost of the Rum Corps continues to influence the course of events.

JUNE MEMBERS MEETING REPORT - MALCOLM CLUETT

As you will be aware the June meeting had to be cancelled at short notice, so Malcolm has had a freedom pass this issue. Rumours are that he

spent it down south attempting to compact the abundant snow that seems to have blessed the Alps this winter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND OTHER TITBITS

In a bit of fortunate synchronicity this letter was received the day before we were to go to press, on the same general theme that the Editor has penned in the Op-Ed in this Newsletter. The letter has been edited to take out duplication (with the Op-Ed) and minimise the chances of the bailiffs turning up at the writer's front door while retaining the issues raised by the writer.

There are some strange things afoot. Not only is the North West Rail to be constructed with tunnels too small to take standard Sydney double deck cars, the scheme to cut back the Newcastle line to Wickham is to proceed.

Where else in the developed, or for that matter the undeveloped world, could you find an existing relatively high standard railway being removed from the CBD of a large city? The track has only recently been re-laid with concrete sleepers,

stations platforms rebuilt and signalling modified, yet now it to be all ripped up – for what? It appears the main beneficiaries of this project will be the developers but equally it would seem that they are contributing nothing to this very high cost project. Some of the protagonists have recently seen fit to talk to ICAC on other matters, while a major player in the past simply plundered specialty shops in the Newcastle CBD to their own advantage. It seems that the majority of Novocastrians will get no financial and limited if any social benefit from this project despite suggestions to the contrary by vested interests.

The sale of the Port of Newcastle has given the government the money to spend, so they have chosen to do so on the conversion to light rail. If the money, which after all belongs to the taxpayers



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of NSW, is to benefit the citizens of Newcastle, surely it could be better spent improving the existing arrangements, rather than a rather expensive rearrangement of the deck chairs.

There are improvements that could be made to the Newcastle - Sydney line that are crying out for funding. There is the long talked about Fassifern – Teralba direct line, which would not only reduce transit times for local commuters but also freight and passenger services to the North Coast and North West of the state. There are small projects with significant benefit such as re-alignment of turn outs at West Ryde, Hornsby and Berowra where 50

km/h train speeds are applied to non-stopping services by the inverse arrangement of the turnouts. Additional freight capacity (hopefully at lower cost than the astronomically expensive Gosford loops) could be provided by following the European approach of regular strategically placed overtaking facilities (including bi-di on double track) so that slower trains can be stepped forward in between faster trains. There is so much to do yet our masters seem to think that a \$400 million project to cut the last 3 km into Newcastle's CBD is the highest priority.

Geoff Smith / Koolewong

EVENTS AND GENERAL INTEREST

PWI NSW COUNTRY- HEXHAM MEETING, July 23rd

The PWI is having a meeting at Hexham to look at and hear about the ARTC Hexham relief roads project. These roads, which are well under way, will allow re-sequencing of loaded coal trains to better coordinate with unloaders at Kooragang and Pt Waratah.

Participants need to RSVP aconway@artc.com.au The meeting will start at 12.30pm at the Hexham Bowling Club, 290 Old Maitland Road, Hexham. Any interested participants should respond straight away.

ELECTRIC RAIL – BUILDING AUCKLAND'S FUTURE – AUCKLAND, Oct 3rd and 4th

A joint initiative of RTSA, IPENZ and IRSE is a two day conference on the Auckland electrification which is being commissioned over the next year or so. As with Perth the Auckland suburban rail system had declined to a point where it either had to be significantly improved or shut down. Local and national government showed some vision and combined to do a very considerable makeover, with a new city station (a most striking place), track upgrading and duplication, two new branch lines, new trains and of course electrification.

Friday 3rd of Oct will be a conference day while Saturday 4th will involve a tour of most of the key facilities and locations by electric train. For those wishing to get additional benefit from the event an Automatic Train Protection seminar is being run by IRSE on Thursday 2nd Oct.

Full details and registration (which is now open) can be accessed at www.aucklandrailconference2014.org.nz. Early bird registrations have been extended to July 31st.



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RTSA NSW CHAPTER ANNUAL DINNER – SYDNEY, OCT 23rd

An excellent sponsorship opportunity exists to support our Annual Dinner to be held on the 23rd of October, 2014. With rapidly expanding opportunities in the NSW rail industry, and some new exciting rail projects about to proceed, the dinner will allow attendees to socialise, network and gain insight into wider aspects of the rail sector as presented by our guest speaker Howard Collins, CEO of Sydney Trains. This high profile event gives companies an invaluable opportunity to raise their profile in the rail industry.

This year's Dinner will be held on Thursday the 23rd of October at the Sydney Harbour Marriot, Circular

AusRAIL – PERTH, Nov 11th and 12th

This annual conference will head to the far western side of the continent late this year. The program hasn't yet been published but it might be

Quay. The format is intended to remain the same with pre-dinner drinks and a presentation on the night. The cost will remain \$80 per person all-inclusive for members and partners, and \$120 for non members. Numbers for this event will be limited to 120 so get in quick.

All bookings for this event will be via online services at <http://www.rtsa.com.au> and phone bookings to Stephanie McMullen on 02-6270 6584. A flyer will be emailed to all members with specifics in the near future

worthwhile noting the dates in your diary in anticipation



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FUTURE RTSA MEETINGS AND EVENTS

DATE AND TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
Monday 28 th JULY 2014	Automated Track Inspection Saverio Ditroilo	Bradfield Meeting Room Central Station Concourse Sydney
Monday 25 th AUGUST 2014	North Strathfield Rail Underpass Tania Harper	Bradfield Meeting Room Central Station Concourse Sydney
Monday 22 nd SEPTEMBER 2014	TBA	Bradfield Meeting Room Central Station Concourse Sydney
Monday 27 th OCTOBER 2014	TBA	Bradfield Meeting Room Central Station Concourse Sydney
Monday 24 th NOVEMBER 2014	North West Rail Link – Rapid Transit Project	Bradfield Meeting Room Central Station Concourse Sydney
Monday 22 nd DECEMBER 2014	NO MEETING	
Monday 24 th FEBRUARY 2015	TBA	Bradfield Meeting Room Central Station Concourse Sydney

For 2014 RTSA Meetings will be on the **FOURTH MONDAY** of each month from February to November. All meetings will be in the **Bradfield Room** off Sydney Central station main concourse. Any changes will be advised in the Newsletter, or if too late for the Newsletter then by special Flyer.

Presentations in **black are confirmed** those in **red are provisional** at the time of publication.

We seem to be getting into a situation where the calendar is going faster than our capacity to find meeting topics. Any reader with an interesting topic to present or suggestions for a presentation that is topical and relates to the overall objectives of RTSA should contact David Caldwell at DaCaldwell@pb.com.au at the earliest. David would appreciate having far too many topics to manage rather than too few.



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RTSA CONTACT AND SOCIETY DETAILS

The committee for 2013/14 comprises

OFFICE HOLDERS			
Steve Muscat	Chair	nsw-chair@rtsa.com.au	
David Caldwell	Deputy Chair	DaCaldwell@pb.com.au	
Malcolm Cluett	Secretary	nsw@rtsa.com.au	
Max Michell	Newsletter Editor	max412@gmail.com	02 4975 4310
Anushka Govalupillay	Assistant Editor	anushka.govalupillay@arup.com.au	
Andrew Mackay	Treasurer		
David Caldwell	Meeting Coordinator	DaCaldwell@pb.com.au	
COMMITTEE			
Andy Chiem	Bill Laidlaw	Siam Syed	John Watsford

For matters directly related to the running of RTSA please contact the appropriate office holder as listed above. For general matters or membership enquiries you should contact:
RTSA NSW Chapter, Engineers Australia, 11 National Circuit, Barton, ACT, 2600

The easiest way to submit contributions for the Newsletter is by e-mail to the Editor at max412@gmail.com AND the Assistant Editor at alternatively to the address shown above.

Engineers Australia members are reminded that attendance at RTSA technical meetings and events contributes towards CPD requirements. Each RTSA technical meeting generally has a value of 1 CPD point.

This Newsletter is published by the NSW Chapter of RTSA. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Institution, Society, Chapter or Editor.

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NOMINATION FOR RTSA COMMITTEE 2014/15

Forward completed form to the Returning Officer, Alex Stoney, at the following address by CoB Mon 28th July.

Returning Officer RTSA-NSW
5 Romford Road
EPPING, NSW, 2121

Email: astoney@ozemail.com.au : Phone: 02 9876 3243, Mobile: 0421 392 560

Being a Financial Member of RTSA NSW Division, I nominate the following RTSA Member/s for the position/s listed: (Please note you are required to obtain written acceptance of the nomination from the nominee.)

Chair _____ Acceptance _____

Deputy Chair _____ Acceptance _____

Secretary _____ Acceptance _____

Treasurer _____ Acceptance _____

Newsletter Editor _____ Acceptance _____

Deputy Newsletter Editor _____ Acceptance _____

Meeting Co-ordinator _____ Acceptance _____

Committee Member _____ Acceptance _____

Committee Member _____ Acceptance _____

Committee Member _____ Acceptance _____

Proposers Name _____ **Signature** _____ **Date:** ____/____/____



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