

## **President's Report 2019/2020**

I am pleased to be able to present my 30th Presidential Report for the Light Railway Research Society of Australia, this one being for the year 2019-2020.

“LIGHT RAILWAYS” our flagship publication, saw issues No.268 to No.273 published, containing 272 pages in total. Two issues contained 40 pages and four issues had 48 pages. The additional pages in those four issues were to help clear a backlog of articles sent in by the various authors.

“LIGHT RAILWAYS” Editor Richard Warwick and the editorial team have maintained the very high standard they strive for. To Richard and his Associate Editors Mike McCarthy, Frank Stamford and Phil Rickard, Field Reports Editor Peter Evans, Industrial Railway News Editor Chris Hart, Research Editor Stuart Thyer and Heritage & Tourism Editor Andrew Webster, I thank you all for your efforts throughout the year.

The cover price of “LIGHT RAILWAYS” has again remained unchanged due to low inflation and very competitive printing costs. With four issues containing an extra eight pages, it represents very good value for our members.

At the end of the 2019-2020 financial year we had a total of 663 members, ten more than last year. Our mailing list shows that 693 copies of “LIGHT RAILWAYS” are sent to 662 members, 12 Honorary Members and 19 libraries or exchanges.

The subscription rate for hard copies remains at \$48.00, and \$27.50 for electronic copies. Thank you to Andrew Hennell for managing the membership records.

The former LRRSA Yahoo Discussion Group has evolved into Groups.io, but has largely been superseded by the Light Railways of Australia Facebook page, which currently has 1866 members. Thank you to John Dennis, Mike McCarthy, Frank Stamford and John Browning, the moderators of our Facebook page.

During the year we published two new books, the revamped Rails to Rubicon by Peter Evans and Beneath the Peak of Lyell by Ross Mainwaring. There are currently 17 new books in various stages of production. I thank our Publications Officer Frank Stamford for his efforts during the year as well as the other people who carry out the proof reading, scrutinising and other activities required to publish books.

Book sales for the year was 678 orders valued at \$38200, more than twice the number of last year and nearly three times the value. One reason for this increase was the publication of two new books. Then there was the COVID19 restrictions that came into force on 23 March 2020, which greatly increased the orders for April, May and June.

Thank you to John Dennis for maintaining both the website and the online shop, with Bill Hanks managing the storage of sales stock, packing and dispatch of orders.

The seventh JLN Southern Award for the most outstanding article/s published in LIGHT RAILWAYS during 2019 was again judged by Dr Ruth Kerr, Roderick Smith and David Whiteford. On behalf of the Council I thank them all very much for the time and effort, to complete this task. The winner of the award for 2019 will be announced at the AGM.

Our society at the end of the financial year is again in a financially sound. This situation allows us to continue producing publications well into the future.

I thank our Secretary Phil Rickard for handling the society's correspondence and the ongoing analysis of membership trends.

Thank you to our Treasurer Colin Harvey for managing the many aspect of the society's finances.

Public Liability Insurance has been increased to \$20M, and insurance for all our sales stock is very similar.

During November 2019, Simon Moorhead conducted a tour of the Castlemaine and Maldon area that was well attended. Thank you Simon for your efforts.

Towards the end of 2019 we first heard about The Corona Virus, that arrived in Australia during the first few months of 2020. With the implementation of restrictions, its impact on the LRRSA meant that we could not hold Council meeting or members meetings. Fortunately we soon learnt about Zoom conferencing, which allowed Council meetings to still be held. In June we we able to hold a members Online Zoom meeting for the first, that was attended by 48 members from a wide area of Australia including one for the United Kingdom. This meeting was considered a success and there are plans to hold. Ore in the future.

Thank you to Bob Gough for organising the Southeast Queensland meetings.

Thank you to Jeff Moonie for organising New South Wales Division meetings. also thank you to Ross Mainwaring the Treasurer.

Thank you to Les Howard in South Australia for convening meetings in Adelaide.

In Western Australia thank you to our representative David Whiteford and thank you to Ken Milbourne our representative in Tasmania.

Finally thank you to Mike McCarthy, Phil Rickard, Colin Harvey, Frank Stamford, Richard Warwick, Peter Evans and John Dennis for for all they have contributed to the success of our society through the year.

The impact of COVID19 on the way we all go about our daily lives will effect us all for some months to come, maybe years. During the lockdown periods here in Victoria and varying restrictions in other states, the LRRSA has continued to conduct most of its activities, without too much trouble. Our online shop recently had its best month ever, not just because we published a few new books, but because of the uptake of online shopping in general. I feel that the LRRSA will continue to prosper into the foreseeable future.

Thank you.

W.L.(Bill) Hanks  
President LRRSA (October 2020)