



President's Report 2023/2024

I am pleased to present my 34th Presidential Report for the Light Railway Research Society of Australia, this one being for the year 2023-2024.

“LIGHT RAILWAYS” magazine, saw issues No.293 to No.299 published, all of which contained 48 pages. In total 288 pages of light railway history. Again, all the additional pages have been necessary to enable submitted articles to be published in a timely manner. I thank all authors for submitting their excellent articles for publication in LIGHT RAILWAYS.

“LIGHT RAILWAYS” Editor Richard Warwick and the editorial team have maintained a very high standard that regularly receives favourable comments. To Richard and his Associate Editors Mike McCarthy, Frank Stamford and Phil Rickard, Field Report's Editor Peter Evans, Industrial Railway News Editor Chris Hart, Research Editor Stuart Thyer and Heritage & Tourism Editor Andrew Webster, thank you for your efforts throughout the year. Thanks also to Bruce Belbin of Box Car Graphics for laying out LIGHT RAILWAYS for printing.

The cover price of “LIGHT RAILWAYS” again remains as it has been for the last decade, due to the competitive nature of the publishing business

At the end of the 2023-2024 financial year we had a total of 661 members, 13 less than at the same time last year.

Our mailing list shows that 661 copies of “LIGHT RAILWAYS” are sent to our members in both print and electronic versions, with some members taking both versions. “LIGHT RAILWAYS” remains available on the newsstands and other outlets and is also sent to a number of libraries and historical societies. The subscription rate for hard copies remains at \$48.00 and \$27.50 for electronic copies.

Our electronic membership system “Wild Apricot” has again functioned well during this past year. Thank you to Mike McCarthy for his maintenance of the system. Thank you also to Andrew Hennell for managing membership matters and his use of the electronic system.

The Light Railways of Australia Facebook Group, member numbers continue to grow with over 9000 members. Thank you to John Dennis, Mike McCarthy, Frank Stamford and John Browning the moderators of our Facebook Group.

During the 2023/24 year no new books were published, but there a number of books being worked, with some expected very soon.

I thank our Publications Officer Frank Stamford as well as all the people who carry out the various activities needed to publish a book.

Sales orders for the year was a meagre 281 orders compared to the previous years end total of 609. The total value of sales was \$18,078 compared to \$43,845 the previous year, that partly reflects the fact that we did not publish any new books for the year and the impact of economic pressures in general.

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 JLN Southern Award for the most outstanding article/s published in LIGHT RAILWAYS during 2023 was awarded to Phillip G Graham for his two-part article “Schoma tunnel locomotives that appeared in LR262 and LR290.

The 11th JLN Southern Award was judged by Dr Ruth Kerr, Roderick Smith and James Shugg. On behalf of the Council, thank very much for the time and effort, you have devoted to this task. The winner of the award for 2023 was announced prior to this AGM.

Our society at the end of the 2023/24 financial year is again in a very sound position. Whilst membership subscriptions cover the cost of producing LIGHT RAILWAYS and mail outs, our financial reserves are there to publish more books.

To date most of the work required to prepare a new book for printing is performed by volunteers, such as the drafting of maps and diagrams and the preparation of photos, work will have to be outsourced and that is when our cash reserves will be required.

I thank Colin Harvey our Treasurer, for managing the society's finances. Colin has held this position for well over thirty-five years.

Online Member's Entertainment Meeting have again been hugely successful. With presenters scheduled more than twelve months in advance. With plenty of presenters and their presentations available, extra member meetings have been scheduled in between the normal bi-monthly meetings. Thank you to Mike McCarthy for arranging these Zoom meetings and scheduling presenters.

In November 2023, Simon Moorhead and Mike McCarthy conducted a tour to Walhalla and Tyers Junction. Thank you, Simon and Mike for organising this well attended tour.

All Council meetings have been conducted online using Zoom conferencing, proving to be both a reliable and convenient way to conduct Society business.

The New South Wales Division Sydney meetings, have been organised by David Jehan. Thank you very much David for managing the Sydney meetings and other activities. Also thank Ross Mainwaring, the Treasurer of the NSW Division

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

In Western Australia thank you to our representative David Whiteford.

The committee often receives gratify comments about the quality of our publications, the LIGHT RAILWAYS magazine and all our other publications. The people make these publications all possible, have all been at it for many years. All of us were still working when we joined the Council, but now all of us are retirees and within the next few years most of us will be looking to step down. Last year I alluded to this matter and I say this again, unless we can recruit other members to replace us, to manage the society and to continue the publication of LIGHT RAILWAYS and other books, your society may not last much beyond 2030, if at all.

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

Thank you.

W.L.(Bill) Hanks
President LRRSA (November 2024)