



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Welcome to ITEANZ's final Newsletter for 2007.

It has been another successful year for ITEANZ, particularly with the co-branding of many seminars between ourselves and Engineers Australia Victorian Transport Branch.

As a result of this cooperation we have seen an increase in the number of people attending our Victorian seminars. Feedback received indicates that many believe the topics, quality of presenters and presentations has also improved. So far it appears that this co-branding model is seeing win-win outcomes for both organisations and their members.

The next challenge for the ITEANZ Executive Board is to see if a similar model of co-branding can work in other states and New Zealand, so members located across Australia and NZ can also see improved benefits from their membership.

However, the Executive Board will not be able to do this alone, and I am calling for interested members located around Australia and NZ, who would be willing to assist us to develop appropriate networks and suggest how we may be able to host or support relevant local events. If you are interested in assisting please contact us at secretary@ite.org.au

Other highlights for the year include, as mentioned in the previous newsletter, the appointment of Peter McCombs to replace the retiring Peter Daly as ITE

District 8 Director at the end of this year. The board wishes to express its gratitude to Peter Daly for the support he has provided to our section during his time as District 8 Director, and looks forward to working with Peter McCombs during his tenure.

- Additionally, we have launched two new awards this year, which will be presented at the President's dinner. These include: a new Student Prize, which is discussed in more detail below; and
- a Young Transportation Engineer Award.

Both of these awards will be in addition to our established awards of:

- Contribution to the Transportation Profession;
- Outstanding service to the ITE, and
- The Past President Award.

This brings me to my final point - The President's Dinner. To continue the success of our cooperation with Engineers Australia (EA), we have decided to invite EA members along at the same reduced cost that ITE members receive. This is our way of recognising the support that EA have provided to us throughout the year.

More details regarding this wonderful social event can be found below. I encourage everyone to come along and enjoy the superb food in a fantastic setting at great price.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Daniel Przychodzki

ITEANZ PRESIDENT'S DINNER 2007

Due to the outstanding success of last year's President's Dinner, we have decided to do it all again!

Date: Tuesday, 27 November, 2007

Venue: Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club

Speaker: Incoming ITE District 8 Director, Peter McCombs

Topic: Auckland's Travel Demand Project – Lessons, Challenges & Tales

Auckland, with a population of 1.2 million and "Harbours and Hills" topography, relies heavily on its Motorway network to provide local as well as regional transport for its citizens. Currently the local and National authorities are working together to implement a number of innovative methods to deal with congestion by making the most of the existing Motorway and arterial road networks. Some of the tools used include installing traffic signals on the ramps to motorways, creating dedicated bus lanes and installing HOV lanes on arterial roads.



Peter McCombs

Peter McCombs, incoming ITE District 8 Director on the International Board of Direction and Chairman of Traffic Design Group, is also Transit NZ's Project Director for the Auckland TDM Project, which is designing and implementing many of these initiatives. One of the major challenges of Peter's role has been to manage conflicts that arise between local and regional user needs around Motorway interchanges.

Please join us at this year's ITEANZ President's Dinner to catch up with your friends from the profession in a relaxed setting and hear from Peter about his interesting experiences.

For more information, please go to www.ite.org.au/Documents/Presidents_Dinner/2007_P_residents_Dinner.pdf.

ITE NEW ZEALAND DINNER

The IPENZ Transportation Conference was recently held in Tauranga, New Zealand and included an ITE Dinner on Tuesday 9 October 2007. The dining venue was the Wharf Street Restaurant, just a short stroll from the conference venue and hotels.



ITE New Zealand Dinner during IPENZ Transportation Conference – Full Glasses

It was a most enjoyable event continuing the established tradition for NZ ITE members of meeting and getting together over dinner while at the annual Transportation Conference this year held in Tauranga, and this year hosted by the newly appointed District 8 Director, Peter McCombs.

18 people attended the dinner, including long-time ITE stalwarts John and Maureen Toomath who were earlier honoured by being made Life Members of the IPENZ Transportation Group.



ITE New Zealand Dinner during IPENZ Transportation Conference – Empty Glasses; Many Smiles

ITEANZ INAUGURAL STUDENT PRIZES

University Level Winners Announced

For the first time, the ITEANZ has awarded student prizes for work done as part of an undergraduate course. The student prizes are awarded in two rounds: firstly one to each submitting University and secondly an overall winner.



The four inaugural winners of the \$200 prize at each submitting University were:

- ▣ Daniel Longey – **The University of Tasmania** – *Hobart in 2025, the key traffic and transportation issues and how these can be addressed*
- ▣ Damien Scutt – **Queensland University of Technology** – *Test Driving the New SIDRA Intersection Analysis Program*
- ▣ Anh Tuyet Vu – **University of New South Wales** – *Design of a Taxi Rank for a Railway Interchange*
- ▣ Christopher Arnott – **Monash University** – *Reviewing public transport web based passenger information systems: Melbourne's Metlink vs International Practice*

The overall winner will be announced at the ITEANZ President's Dinner on November 27.

RESPONSE TO EDITORIAL IN "TRAFFIC & PARKING"

Parking Association of Australia

In the recent publication (vol 2, 2007) of *Traffic & Parking: The Official Journal of the Parking Association of Australia*, the editorial raised many issues relevant to the profession(s) of traffic engineering, transport planning and road safety. (See www.ite.org.au/Documents/Newsletters/TP_Editorial

[Q4 2007.pdf](#) for the full article) While the commentary is particularly directed at Australia and its current resource-related economic boom, many of the issues discussed are relevant to New Zealand as well.

To give credit to the author of the editorial for challenging the profession generally and its representative bodies, we would like to address each of the main issues raised.

We generally agree that the current level of demand for traffic engineering services exceeding the resources available in the profession, although we would point out that most branches of engineering are operating under similar conditions at present.

We also agree that there are a limited number of traffic engineering graduates attracted into the profession each year, although it appears that Civil Engineering numbers are down generally and many of them are attracted into the other civil engineering disciplines of structural, geotechnical, hydraulic, and project management. A second pathway (via an environmental engineering degree) for traffic engineers and transport planners to be introduced to the profession has arisen in recent times. The potential benefit from the secondary pathway does not appear to be being realised at present but it does seem to offer a good opportunity.

The editorial opines that the pathway to traffic engineering is often haphazard. We agree. The

pathway from civil/environmental engineering can be heavily influenced by a number of factors including:

- ▣ The ability of individual lecturers at each University to attract students and provide a broad and interesting program with limited resources and under heavy competition from the other civil engineering disciplines;
- ▣ Few high school students graduate with a burning desire to become a traffic engineer; and
- ▣ The first exposure that many university courses provide students to traffic engineering is during final year, by which time the student has already chosen their speciality. Under this arrangement, only a student uninterested in any of the numerous alternative options for a civil or environmental engineering would even be exposed to the basics of traffic engineering.

These factors hardly make the current pathway to traffic engineering a recipe for an overflowing talent pool.

The distinction between traffic engineering and transport planning drawn by the editorial is highly arguable and in our opinion artificial. A traffic engineer who lacks a sound grasp of transportation planning risks designing or operating facilities that are not suitable for long-term use because no sensible commentary on the sensitivity of the predicted future conditions to changes in land use or mode choice



could be made. Likewise, a transport planner without a sound knowledge of traffic engineering risks erroneous assumptions as to how effective their planning proposals will be in meeting the needs of the community because they lack sufficient understanding of the operational detail of what they recommend. Indeed, the editorial seems to concede this point when it suggests that “*a traffic engineer’s real role is to **plan and design** for the movement of all forms of ‘traffic’* “. The third factor in this issue is road safety, which was not addressed at all in the editorial. Road safety is needed to inform good decision-making in both of the other two areas of the transportation professional activity. For example, the planning of new residential subdivisions should understand that safety is the reason 4-way intersections are not recommended unless controlled by a roundabout (or signals). Further, the sound operation of a set of traffic signals requires a good understanding of potential safety issues that arise from different methods of operating the signals.

ITEANZ would completely agree with the editorial that traffic engineering is not just about road traffic movement and properly covers any and all users of the road environment.

The lack of “Traffic Engineers” category in the Yellow Pages or other similar phone/internet directories is noted in the editorial as a sign of our professions’ lack of penetration into the consciousness of the public. Such a category would be most useful, particularly to

independent consultants, however we would suggest that it should be “Traffic Engineers, Transportation Planners, Road Safety Professionals”. Further, the listing format should allow each organisation or individual to indicate, which of these categories they cover.

The editorial makes significant criticisms of the Transportation Branch of Engineers Australia (EA) and a lack of activism on their part as perceived by the author. While EA can respond to these comments on their own, it is worth noting that EA acts almost as the default “peak body” for traffic engineering because it has a monitoring role of professional engineer qualifications of all types in Australia, including traffic engineers.

The structure of EA is largely state-oriented in the specialised subgroups within EA such as the Transportation Group. The Victorian Branch of the Transportation Group does have an active professional outreach program through its seminar series which has been extensively co-branded and jointly organised with the ITEANZ program this year in Victoria.

The editorial encourages EA members to leave the organization en-masse to find a more assertive representative body. Given that the broader role of EA as the organization that certifies both University courses and professional “Chartered Engineers” is unlikely to disappear, it is probably more useful that its members seek to promote their branch (and our

profession) more effectively within EA. It would be difficult to promote our collective interests without any members. While it might be possible for organizations such as AITPM to establish a competing certification system for traffic engineers in a similar way to the Certified Transport Planner concept that has emerged in recent times, whether this qualification could achieve broader recognition with the imprimatur of EA is open to question.

In terms of direct action by ITE on developing a certification specifically to recognise skill and experience in traffic engineering, the Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE) certification has been developed by ITE. While this qualification was originally oriented towards the North American market due to ITE’s membership numbers in that region, District 8 representatives from Australia and New Zealand have assisted in “internationalising” the test so that it is fully relevant and applicable to ITEANZ members. Similar certifications are also available for transport planners and operations technicians. To date, the actual test has only been held at various locations in North America, meaning Australian and New Zealand engineers have had to travel to take the test. One action that ITEANZ could take to make these certifications more accessible could be to arrange for testing to be undertaken locally on a periodic basis.

The editorial criticizes the ITEANZ for “effectively downgrading the profession by not declaring itself as a traffic engineering body, despite its membership”.



Interestingly, we have been criticised in the past because the name “Institute of Transportation Engineers” does not directly recognise the important contributions made by its members who are road safety and transport planning professionals. However, we were previously named the “Institute of Traffic Engineers” but this was changed to reflect the both the membership base and the broader role of the transportation professional.

One of the key points made in the editorial is that because there is relatively few traffic engineers spread across several organizations, we must pick one and make it work. While there is some merit in the concept of concentrated effort, the distinctly different emphases and histories of EA, ITE, and AITPM in Australia mean that loss of any of them would be most unhelpful to professionals for whom that organization best meets their needs. A direct merger of these organizations may have some merit but the detail of how to convert the existing bodies into a structure suitable to everyone’s needs would be extremely complex.

We would suggest that prior to such a radical step, a serious co-ordination of efforts be undertaken by the organizations themselves to assist each other in promoting the interests of the traffic engineering, transport planning, and road safety professions with government, business, academia, and the community. The first steps in such an effort have already been taken with the pooling of resources between EA’s Victorian Transport Branch and ITEANZ to maximise

the quality of locally held seminars. The increased attendance at these seminars in 2007 indicates that the strategy has some merit.

ITEANZ would like to thank the author of the editorial for his though-provoking contribution to the debate as to how the best interests of our profession can be served.

ITE MEMBER AWARDED IPENZ LIFE MEMBERSHIP

John Battersby Toomath - Citation for Life Membership of the IPENZ Transportation Group, October 2007

In October 2007, the IPENZ Transportation Group bestowed Life Membership on John Toomath in recognition of his contributions to the Group, to the wider transport profession and to society. ITEANZ would like to congratulate John on be awarding this honour.

John began his career in January 1957 as a Traffic Engineering Cadet in the New Zealand Government Transport Department. After graduating BSc at Canterbury University, he completed his M Eng Sc at the University of New South Wales. He then worked as the Department’s and later the Ministry of Transport’s resident Traffic Engineer in various locations including Christchurch, New Plymouth, Hamilton and Auckland.

During this time he headed a Transportation Study in New Plymouth, which is still remembered in the area

for its professionalism. He also took a leading part in the safety city project in Palmerton North, his home city.

In 1973 he became Senior Traffic Engineer (Research) in the Road Transport Division of the Ministry’s head office. He held this position until he was promoted to Chief of Traffic Research in the late 1970’s; a position he held until he became Assistant Director of Road Transport in 1982. During these years John was instrumental in much positive legislative change most notably the graduated driving licence system.

With further restructuring John occupied a number of important Managerial positions in the Land Transport Division of the Ministry and finally the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA). He was the Director’s Road Safety Advisor at the time of his retirement from the LTSA in 1996. Through the late 1980s and 1990s, major achievements in which John was involved included:

- ▣ The introduction of speed cameras, compulsory breath testing and a lower alcohol limit for teenagers;
- ▣ Compulsory cycle helmet wearing;
- ▣ The New Zealand Travel Survey;
- ▣ The expansion of speed, seat-belt, cycle helmet use, and restraint use surveys; and
- f The introduction of motor vehicle safety standards.



NEWSLETTER

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INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND SECTION INC

John has won numerous awards. Instrumental in bringing road safety experts to New Zealand and spent time as an Australasian College of Road Safety Fellow in the early 1990's

John has served the IPENZ Transportation Group unreservedly since its official inception in 1973. John convened the Technical Conference of the Transportation Group for many years. He was a member of the initial National Committee and the initial joint Editor of the Group's Newsletter (now Roundabout) until 1977.