

# **IPENZ TRANSPORTATION GROUP**

## **Annual Report 2004/05**

### **Introduction**

The Christchurch-based Management Committee (MC) has completed the second year of its three-year term managing the affairs of the Transportation Group, as described below.

The five Branches have continued, with the aid of a small annual grant each, to provide services for members within their areas, as described in the attached Branch reports.

### **Group Structure**

The Group continues as a Technical Interest Group (TIG) of IPENZ, as agreed at the 2004 AGM, after a careful analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of becoming an Incorporated Society and Collaborating Technical Society (CTS). There has not been any event during the past year that has given the MC cause to regret the decision to remain a TIG.

As a TIG, we are part of IPENZ and are bound by the IPENZ Rules. It was intended that a thorough review of the Group's Rules be undertaken during the last year, to harmonise them with the IPENZ Rules. This has not been done yet, as we are awaiting a template for TIG Rules apparently being prepared by IPENZ staff. It is intended to pursue this during the next year and to prepare a revised set of Rules for consideration at a Special General Meeting held in conjunction with the 2006 Annual General Meeting.

The 2003 AGM considered a proposal that the MC not continue to rotate between Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, and resolved that the incoming MC establish a working party to consider the issues and bring recommendations to the 2004 AGM. Stuart Woods prepared a report which was circulated to Branches before the 2004 AGM, and a revised report has subsequently been made available to all members. The report discusses the advantages and disadvantages of three options:

- the MC rotating between Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch for three year periods;
- the MC being permanently based in Wellington, with representatives from around the country;
- the MC rotating between Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, for three year periods.

The report recommends the third option be adopted, on the understanding that Branches could opt out of taking their turn.

Three Special Focus Groups (SFGs), the Traffic Signals Focus Group (SNUG), the Integrated Transportation Planning Focus Group, plus the Trips and Parking Database Bureau, continue to operate and meet the needs of members for contact with others with specialist knowledge and experience. Mike Blyleven has been responsible for liaising with these SFGs, for which reports are attached.

A review of Group Branch names and boundaries has been undertaken, resulting in Group Branch boundaries consistent with IPENZ Branch boundaries. The agreed Group Branch names are for the time being Auckland/Northland, Waikato/Bay of Plenty, Central, Canterbury/Westland and Southern.

### **Recruitment**

According to IPENZ, the current number of members is 760, which is about 14% greater than the number at the same time last year. The numbers of full, retired and student members are 730, 17 and 13, respectively. Of the full members, 435 (or 60%) are members of IPENZ. The number of unemployed members (zero) is not surprising, given the high demand that exists for transportation engineering staff. The gain in membership is largely due to a membership campaign during the period April-June 2005, organised by Andrew Macbeth (Membership Secretary).

It was agreed at the 2004 AGM to change the following membership classes; full, unemployed, retired and student. Our current membership comprises 710 full, 2 unemployed, 17 retired and

It should be noted that the Group's Rules relating to membership provide for Members, Associate Members, and Affiliated Members. The review of Group Rules (as foreshadowed above) will include those relating to membership, to ensure they are consistent with our new membership classes.

## **Submissions**

The MC, through Wayne Osmer, has in the past year made submissions on:

- National Rail Strategy (Ministry of Transport);
- Draft Pedestrian Networks Planning and Facilities Design Guide (Land Transport NZ);
- Proposed NZ Vehicle Emissions Screening Programme (Ministry of Transport);
- National Road Tolling System (Transit NZ);
- Land Transport Rule: Omnibus Amendment (Land Transport NZ);
- Urban Design Protocol (Ministry for the Environment);
- Review of Issues Affecting Utilities in Road, Rail and Motorway Corridors (Ministry of Economic Development);
- Implementing a Carbon Tax (Inland Revenue Department).

The MC has continued to make ex gratia payments to members with appropriate expertise, to prepare draft submissions for MC discussion and circulation to TG members, and to revise the submissions taking account of the comments received. This has greatly assisted the preparation of submissions.

The timeframe for making submissions is sometimes quite short, and the time available for obtaining comments on draft submissions has consequently been shorter than we would like. This has meant that some members' comments have occasionally been received too late for taking into account when finalising submissions. It would help if members with comments on draft submissions passed those comments to the Wayne Osmer and/or the person preparing the submission promptly.

Some of the matters upon which submissions have been made have been rather contentious, and there is consequently a range of views among members. The MC does not believe it is necessary to have the unanimous agreement of members, because this would preclude our making a submission on many matters. We feel it is important that when there is a view held by a clear majority of members, then it should be made known to decision-makers.

Around the time of the 2004 AGM, the MC was approached by a number of members who expressed considerable concern regarding the Government decision not to proceed with intersection priority rule changes. A number of options were discussed at the 2004 AGM and the MC subsequently decided to avoid action which might be construed as being politically motivated. Discussion with the NZ Automobile Association led to an article being prepared for publication in the AA Directions magazine, in an effort to make the public aware of the substantial net benefit expected to arise from changing the priority rules. The possibility of surveying AA was considered, but was not pursued because of the cost involved. It is planned to have the article published in the November 2005 issue, to arouse public awareness and get the matter onto the agenda of the new Government.

Andrew Macbeth and I joined Andrew Cleland (IPENZ CEO) for a meeting with the Land Transport NZ CEO (Wayne Donnelly), to discuss matters of mutual concern. The issues were the implementation of the NZ Land Transport Strategy, vehicle certification procedures, the development and maintenance of standards and guidelines, the crash reduction monitoring system, and a national road classification system. The meeting went very well.

## **Professional Development**

The Traffic Management Workshop has been renamed as the Transportation Conference, to

recognise the broad range of issues addressed there. The format is expected to continue to involve workshop sessions dealing with short remits, as well as sessions for the presentation and discussion of more substantial papers describing research or developments in engineering practice. The MC expects the Transportation Conference to continue to be one of the Group's main professional development activities, as well as a substantial source of funds. Thanks are due to Tony Francis for his work liaising with the conference organisers.

The numerous Branch meetings continue to provide plenty of opportunities for members to develop professionally, with meetings often involving speakers from overseas or other areas of NZ. The MC is keen to facilitate meetings with overseas visitors with relevant expertise, and members aware of such opportunities are encouraged to advise the MC.

The 2004 AGM received a report prepared by Tony Spowart on using the Group's financial reserves to increase its services to members. The MC has made grants to members to attend various conferences and workshops (e.g. the AITPM Annual Conference), and report to the Group via articles in Roundabout. We have also advertised study awards, and funded overseas experts to make presentations to Branches, but our financial reserves have remained much the same. Although our Group is viewed favourably within IPENZ as being very active already in providing services to members, we would like to do more.

Discussions were held with representatives of the REAAA, Ingenium and ACENZ (Transportation) groups, to explore the needs of pavement and road asset management engineers and the scope for the Transportation Group to assist in meeting those needs. The MC believes the interface between pavement and traffic engineering needs more attention, and would be facilitated by greater interaction between pavement and traffic engineers. Opportunities for greater cooperation with these groups will be further explored during the next 12 months.

High priority has been given to participating in the implementation of the Urban Design Protocol, in an effort to ensure that the important role of transportation engineering design in achieving a high level of urban amenity is recognised and given appropriate weighting during implementation of the protocol. The MC, on behalf of the Group, was a foundation signatory to the protocol and Andrew Macbeth was nominated as the 'contact person'. The MC became aware that the Planning Institute was concerned that the role of planning was also not getting appropriate attention, and an approach to them has resulted in our agreeing to cooperate in emphasising the role of both planning and transportation engineering in improving urban design.

We are pleased that 3M New Zealand has agreed to continue sponsorship of the annual award, and for the award to be re-modelled from the "3M Traffic Engineer of the Year" award to become the "3M Traffic Safety Innovation Award". Thanks are due to Susan Cambridge and Don McKenzie for their efforts in achieving this change, which the MC believes will facilitate group entries.

## **Standards and Guidelines**

The MC continues to be concerned about the lack of appropriate Standards and Guidelines for use in NZ. We have contacted the RCA Forum, which has recently been given responsibility for developing and maintaining standards and guidelines, and expressed our concern. At the above-mentioned meeting with Land Transport NZ, the need for urgency was stressed. It was argued that standards and guidelines need to allow for the wide variations in circumstances between State Highways, urban streets and low-volume rural roads (i.e. a 'one-size fits all' approach is not appropriate). We also stressed that the process for developing and maintaining standards and guidelines should include provision for involving the considerable expertise outside the RCA sector at an early stage, rather than simply consulting at the final stages, when it is difficult and expensive to make changes.

Land Transport NZ appears to appreciate the need for action in addressing the problem, and I am hopeful that we will see substantial progress over the next 12 months. The MC will continue to monitor the situation closely, as this matter is clearly of great importance to many of our members.

With the MC-role shifting at three year intervals, the MC believes it is important to ensure a high level of continuity, and have embarked upon preparation of a 'policy register', incorporating policy decisions of successive MCs. Wayne Osmer has done a lot of work in preparing a draft policy register, which we hope to finalise before we pass the baton to the next MC in 12 months. We have also formally adopted a Media Policy, after consultation with all Branches.

## **Promotion**

Don McKenzie and I participated in the IPENZ Forum in Wellington in April 2005. One of the main topics of discussion was promotion of the profession, and the need to attract under-represented sectors of the population into engineering. IPENZ is receiving substantial Government funding for its "Futureintech" initiative, which is aimed at increasing enrolments in tertiary study in technology, science and engineering, and ensuring that teachers and career advisors have the right information and resources to inform high school students and inspire them to pursue careers in technology, engineering and science professions.

The promotion of Transportation Engineering is included in our 'services to members' activities. However, we need to coordinate our activities in this area with those of others (especially IPENZ and Tertiary Education Institutions), to maximise the effect of our activities. It is also important to note that high schools are approached by many organisations wishing to recruit students, and promotion activities must be targeted carefully, to avoid increasing the resistance to such activities.

I am especially pleased to advise that we have managed to get IPENZ to propose to the APEC Engineering Council that Transportation be a recognised "practice field", and that the APEC Engineering Council has recently approved the proposal. Members are encouraged to indicate Transportation when completing forms relating to your technical competence.

It is pleasing to see that six of our members were recently promoted to Fellows of IPENZ, and that Roger Dunn (our nominee) received the "IPENZ Professional Commitment Award". The MC is seeking to establish a register of members and their contributions to the profession, to ensure that deserving members are recognised in a timely manner.

## **Publications**

Four issues of the Group's main publication (Roundabout) have been produced in December 2004, March 2005, June 2005 and August 2005. Each issue contained about 40 pages of news items and technical articles, plus the traditional humorous items. Thanks are due to Yvonne Warnaar, who has developed and implemented a new format, which the MC believes improves the appearance of Roundabout considerably.

The perennial problem of extracting and presenting information about Group activities around the country (as well as relevant developments overseas) remains. It would be appreciated if each Branch would send material for publication to Yvonne, preferably via a designated contact person.

The MC has been considering producing Roundabout in electronic form, for sending to Group members and the AITPM, for circulation to its members, but a final decision has not been made. The MC has also been considering producing a more frequent (fortnightly, say) electronic newsletter, to ensure that Group members get news in a timely manner, but progress has not been possible because of a lack of a person willing and able to edit such a publication.

The Group webpage is now on the IPENZ website, and has been upgraded substantially, with the addition of more material (including copies of papers presented at the Group's Technical Conference). The work of Matt Ensor and Glen Koorey in maintaining the website is much appreciated.

## **Financial Report**

A statement of the Group's financial situation is attached. It shows that we continue to be in a very sound position, with reserves of about \$148,000. Thanks are due to Axel Wilke for his careful and thorough management of our finances.

As signalled at the 2004 AGM, the MC has instituted an honorarium for the Group Administrator (Don McKenzie), in recognition of the effort involved in dealing promptly with the large volume of work associated with the position.

The MC has decided that the preparation of a history of the Group deserves greater priority, especially with the recent deaths of Alan Williman and Mike Gadd, two founding members of the group from which we appear to have evolved. We have increased the funding allocation to this project and are looking forward to its being completed soon.

## **Conclusion**

I believe the Group is in good shape and well placed to grow in strength in the future. We have an important and challenging role to play, given the increasing recognition of the important contribution of transportation to economic well-being, the quality of life, the consumption of non-renewable fuel, and the emission of greenhouse gases and various pollutants.

I thank the Branch Committees, the Special Focus Group organisers, the organisers of the 2005 Transportation Conference, and my colleagues on the Management Committee (especially our Group Administrator, Don McKenzie) for their contribution to the well-being of the Group.

Alan Nicholson  
(Chair, Transportation Group Management Committee)

September 2005