



SUBJECT: Austroads Asset Task Force Meeting February 2007 – Chris Parkman

Purpose

1. To provide feedback on key issues of relevance to Transit New Zealand from the recent Austroads Asset Task Force meeting held in Sydney, 13th and 14th February 2007 and to seek Zone Managers confirmation/thoughts on Transit representation.

Overview

2. This was the first meeting chaired by Bruce Van Emery of VicRoads, who is the newly appointed Program Manager for the Assets Programme. A fair amount of the meeting is usually fairly bureaucratic with regard to reporting progress on Austroads business and ARRB research projects. Bruce seems keen, on the prompting of some of us sitting around the table, to make the meetings become more useful to members. Specific changes agreed were:

- To programme for a slot each meeting for members to debate a current topic of concern, which will be circulated in advance to enable useful participation;
- To improve the current ARRB Austroads project reporting so that members have a clearer understanding on actions required and genuine project progress, to enable more focused direction to be given from the group.

3. One of the mornings was spent attending the ARRB roadshow to RTA NSW, which is a bi-annual opportunity for attendees to hear progress on various research initiatives. Most of the discussion revolved around the current changes in Australia to performance based loading standards (PBS) legislation being introduced.

4. On the 15th February I managed a workshop promoted by ourselves under Austroads on performance based contracts and the use of performance measures in such contracts. Gerrit Van Blerk and Richard Green also attended. The workshop identified some useful experiences and the need for longer term collaboration on best practice in the use of measures. A separate report will be available from the workshop in due course.

5. Key issues from the ATF meeting of interest are highlighted below.

Skid resistance

6. There was discussion on how to manage inter agency differences and reach consensus regarding the management of skid resistance. This was prompted by an action paper submitted by ourselves. Given the Austroads objective to complete a revamp of its asset management publications by end of 2007/2008, it was agreed that:

- A draft scope of the revamped skid resistance and texture publications will be mapped from the current 'Guidelines for the Management of Road Surface Skid Resistance' by ARRB and circulated for review by June 2007;
- A workshop will probably then be required to discuss the draft, given the possibilities for contention. Transit will manage the workshop, which will be the first activity under the new project AT1131 (Management of Skid Resistance). The aim will be to agree the draft, so that writing the guide can commence, and to confirm initiatives/research required to resolve any contention. It will be important that Transit has good input in this project.

Key Projects and Transit Representation

7. Much of the current focus and research is on the PBS issues. I will discuss this aspect with Rudolph Kotze to make sure there are no issues of concern/relevance for Transit.

8. A full list of current projects and working groups is attached. Given their status and focus, I believe the following may be of interest/impact to Transit and should have our representation:

- AT1064 – Long Term Performance Monitoring. On-going monitoring and analysis of long term performance data – I am currently a corresponding member and keep a watching brief to ensure we maximise the benefits of our own LTPP data.
- AT1169 – Service Life of Pavements. The meeting agreed to appoint a new Project Manager from VicRoads. This project was originally designed to address the issue of pavement life and consumption, although it has slightly lost focus in my view. It is important Transit has good representation to steer the outputs to something useful for us. I suggest potential Transit representatives could be Dave Alabaster, Dave Robertson or Gerhard Van Blerk.
- AT1170. Management of Road Surface Characteristics. Mark Owen is our current representative. It is important we continue this since it has some overlap with skid resistance issues.
- AT1211. Probability Models for Project Level Decision Making. Only just started and seeking steering on direction. I recommend Transit offer representation as it will provide a low cost means of identifying if there are any aspects here of benefit to us. I suggest Gordon Hart as the Transit representative.
- AS1007. WIM Class Correlation. A brief extension to an existing project, to identify how WIM data might be used to more accurately assess/monitor traffic loading. I have confirmed that Neil Beckett will continue as our representative.

New projects for 2007/08

8. Most of the available finance for new projects in 2007/08 will be spent on the PBS developments. Subject to confirmation after budget reviews, two other small projects are likely to be funded:

- Future Availability and Costs of Bitumen. A scoping study to see if there would be any benefit to collaborate to promote a reliable supply of bitumen. I suggest we propose Joanna Towler as corresponding representative until we appoint the Surfacing Engineer.
- National Performance Measures. Whilst there was no strong support for this Council initiative from most members, I believe this is very worthwhile and that Transit should have good representation. I suggest I cover as corresponding representative until we are clearer on the project scope/direction.

dTIMS User Group

9. Many Australian states are users of dTIMS in a substantially less rigorous or integrated way than Transit New Zealand. There is some desire to seek national Australian collaboration and learn from various experiences, and New Zealand input is being sought. A reasonable debate with regard to the how such a group would function concluded that there might be a need for two groups:

- A hands-on dTIMS users group, which seems to be what most states are seeking. I suggested there would be little benefit to Transit of our own staff attending such a group but that various New Zealand suppliers may be interested.
- A higher level Pavement Management Systems group, which would seek to address how such systems are used in organisations and what the overall analysis methodologies should be. I promoted the need for this based on our current experience, and would see benefit, if such a group emerged, of our having representation. The first step to explore this further will be to include this as our 'Topic for Concern' (see 2) at the next meeting.

Chris Parkman
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