President's Report 2024/2025

I am pleased to present my 36th Presidential Report for the Light Railway Research Society of Australia, this one being for the year 2025-2026.

"LIGHT RAILWAYS" magazine, saw issues No.304 to No.310 published, all of which contained 48 pages, for a total of 288 pages of light railway history. Once again, all the additional pages have been necessary to enable submitted articles to be published in a timely manner. Thank you very much to 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 receives many favourable comments. To Richard and the Associate Editors Mike McCarthy, Frank Stamford and Phil Rickard, Field Report's Editor Peter Evans, Industrial Railway News Editor Chris Hart, Research Editor Phil Rickard and Heritage & Tourism Editor James Shugg, 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 unchanged.

At the end of the 2025-2026 financial year, we had a total of 615 members, 25 fewer than at the same time last year. Sadly, a some of those who have not renewed, have passed away. For a number of years now, our membership has been steadily declining.

Our mailing list at the end of June 2026, shows that 633 copies of "LIGHT RAILWAYS" are sent to our members in print or electronic versions, with some members taking both. "LIGHT RAILWAYS" remains available on the newsstands, commercial outlets, 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.

The Light Railways of Australia Facebook Group, member numbers continue to grow with over 14,000 members. Thank you to John Dennis, Mike McCarthy, Frank Stamford and John Browning the moderators of our Facebook Group.

During the 2025/26 year we published two new book, "Peninsula Tramways" by Tristan Verhoeff and "Tramways to Timboon" by Peter Evans. There are a number of new publications In various stages of their production and are expected to be released in the next year or so.

I again thank our Publications Officer Frank Stamford as well as all the people who toil away behind the scenes to publish a book.

Sales orders for the year was weaker at 343 orders compared to the previous years end total of 517. The total value of sales was $23,430 compared to $34,923 the previous year. This decrease in sales compared to 2024-25 is disappointing, but is most likely due to the timing of new book releases.

Thank you to John Dennis for maintaining both the website and the online shop, with Bill Hanks handing 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 2024 was awarded to John Browning for his two-part article "Carmilla Tramway" that appeared in LR297 and LR299.

The 12th 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.

At the end of the 2025/26 financial year our Society is again in a 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 many years.

Online Member's Entertainment Meeting have again been hugely successful. Presenters are scheduled more than twelve months in advance. Additional member meetings have been scheduled in between the normal bi-monthly meetings in an attempt to reduce the time presenters have to wait for their moment in the spotlight. Thank you to Mike McCarthy for arranging these Zoom meetings and scheduling presenters.

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

In South Australia, John Meredith convenes the meetings of a small but active group. Thank-you John.

In Western Australia thank you to our representative David Whiteford.

At the July Committee meeting, Nick Sheridan resigned from the position of Secretary and from the Committee. We thank Nick for his contribution to the society. With Nick's departure, Phil Pottage quickly volunteered to take up the role of Secretary. Thank-you Phil, for taking on this important role.

In some of my past, I have mentioned my concern about the future of the LRRSA, because we are all getting older and many of the people on Committee have been there for many years. In time we all move on. To make it easier for those who may follow on, keeping the Society alive, a Resilience Plan has been completed by Mike McCarthy, that lays out the structure of the Society and its activities and part of is to have a central repository of our records and documentation that is all in the one place. Those who come after us, should be able to pick things up, where we have left off.

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

Thank you.

W.L.(Bill) Hanks
President LRRSA (August 2026)