

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF NOVO RAIL

ISSUE 4

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The February commissioning of Sulphide Junction is critical to ensuring that the new Waratah carriages can be more easily transported from the port at Newcastle to the Downer EDI manufacturing plant at Cardiff for fit-out and testing: this is the first major, critical electrical commissioning and signalling challenge for the Novo Rail RDP team.



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A look at one of the unsung hero areas of Novo Rail. With the power loading a critical part of the equation when the new Waratahs are introduced, so the Overhead Wiring packages Novo Rail is working on become increasingly critical.



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Novo Rail Project Manager Raquel Rubalcaba has registered as one of 100 Australian women to participate in Habitat for Humanity's 'Hand in Hand Nepal Build 2011' next year.



# TAKE SAFETY PERSONALLY THIS FESTIVE SEASON



**novo safe**  
TAKE SAFETY PERSONALLY

The end of a calendar year is always a great opportunity to reflect on the year's work and our safety performance. During 2010, Novo Rail site employees have collectively put in some 500,000+ man hours and I'm pleased to report, our Injury Frequency Rates have been better than the industry averages. That said, our stretch goal is to have no safety incidents or accidents and the Novo Safe 2011 strategy will continue the proactive focus on prevention through lessons learnt, as well as continuous improvement in risk management.

We faced some difficult challenges in 2010, including contamination and potential hazardous substance exposure issues on various work sites, buried service strikes, even the cancellation of some works on possession weekends due to safety concerns specific to those projects. All this on top of the ongoing issues related to working in complex 'live' brown-field rail environments.

The pleasing aspect, from a Novo Rail viewpoint, is that through our proactivity and professionalism, we have met the majority of challenges head on and all parts of our business have played a key role in applying pragmatic and well planned solutions that embrace the safety of our staff, the public, as well as the operational rail network.

Christmas and New Year will see a well-earned break for many of you, whilst others will doubtless be engaged in project work during all-important possession weekends.

Either way, the 'Take Safety Personally' message is one that should be front-of-mind.

If you are on-site, please be mindful that the risks and pressures normally faced during possession weekends are taken to a whole new level as this is arguably the busiest period in the RailCorp calendar. You should always maintain a planned and positive approach to your work and ensure that the end-goal of returning to your families safe is your number one priority.

For those of you taking a holiday, please be equally vigilant when it comes to taking safety personally at home too: people's homes tend to hide a raft of potential safety hazards, not to mention the statistics around increases in road incidents and accidents during the holiday season.

Next year will bring its own set of challenges, with a number of new projects in the pipeline. But Novo Rail HSEQ is anxious to apply what we have learnt in 2010 in order to raise the bar even higher, with a view to becoming the industry leader in 2011.

On behalf of the Novo Rail HSEQ Team, I hope that all of you look to Take Safety Personally this festive season and I would also like to thank you all for your continued support in developing supporting and embracing Novo Safe, our safety culture.

#### Bill Plakias

HSEQ Safety Manager, Novo Rail

*All safety feedback is welcome, including your positive safety stories and ideas: please send an email to [safety@novorail.com.au](mailto:safety@novorail.com.au) and remember the Bill Plakias motto: 'when it comes to safety, the standard that you walk past is the standard that you set'.*

# FOREWORD

The phrase 'future proofing' describes the exclusive process of trying to anticipate **future developments**, so that action can be taken to seize opportunities and minimise any possible negative consequences.



Tanya Johnstone, Novo Rail Alliance General Manager

Two years into the alliance and, as this issue of inNOVO will show, we are now well and truly focused on project delivery. To date, we have been given the opportunity to find our project performance baseline and we will now be judged on our ability to improve on these performance levels.

Our ability to improve performance has grown from an expectation to an absolute requirement and is something we constantly need to be driving in order to future proof the alliance.

In a recent Novo Rail briefing, Nigel Howlett, chairman of the NRAB and GM RailCorp Projects Division, outlined three imperatives for how he believes we might 'future proof' the alliance:

- deliver on our promises – 'do what we say we will';
- ensure no unexpected project budget or timeline surprises;
- 'sell' the alliance by talking to our peers about the detail and complexity of some of the jobs we are working on and the unique challenges of the alliance.

In the interest of using my foreword to help 'sell' the alliance, I thought I would use it as an opportunity to share with you some of the exciting things that we are currently involved in.

For example, the Novo Rail RDP team is continuing to make great progress with their establishment of RailCorp authorisation competency pathways and their focus on developing the critical resources necessary for the crucial February commissioning of Sulphide Junction. This work is attracting support from the highest levels at RailCorp, including two of their Rail Signalling authority experts, Paul Szacsavay (Principal Engineer Signalling Technology) and Mark Albrecht (Principal Engineer Signalling Competency), who are working at Novo Rail as part of the team.

Another area of furious activity that also demonstrates strong interaction with and support from RailCorp is the work of our ATP team, who are now close to finalising the work methodologies and mobilising the construction team who will embark on fitting out the 71 ATP locations on the track between Berowra and Wyong - some of which are only accessible by boat! This unique project is demonstrating everything that the alliance was set up to do and its success is co-dependent on forging strong links with the RailCorp District and discipline heads, as well as the RailCorp ATP program team.

More on both of these key areas of collaboration inside the magazine. But before I go I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank the entire Novo Rail team and our extended team at RailCorp, as well as other stakeholders who continue to support the work of the alliance.

Last week we took some time out to reflect on what was a big year for the alliance, focusing on our achievements over the past 12 months and areas for attention in the new year. All 250+ of us gathered in the Grand Ballroom at the Sydney Masonic Centre where a drum and a hollow tube or tambourine had been laid out in front of us. The guys from Human Rhythms initially set the beat and the pace, but it was soon clear that we – working in unison together – were actually starting to take control of the rhythmic beat and pace as one.

A powerful lesson and a great metaphor for the work of the alliance as the noise we make together starts to get stronger and to turn more heads. I am extremely proud of the people who represent our alliance and am extremely confident in our ability to work in harmony and rhythm with each other and our stakeholders in 2011.

**Tanya Johnstone,**  
Novo Rail Alliance General Manager

**YOUR OPINION AND FEEDBACK  
IS IMPORTANT TO US**

If you have any article ideas you would like to be included for consideration in future issues or spot any of our deliberate errors in this issue, we would love to hear from you. Please send an e-mail to [communications@novorail.com.au](mailto:communications@novorail.com.au)

# NOVO RAIL BRIDGES DESIGN GAP



**The expanded replacement bridge was jointly funded by RailCorp and Auburn City Council (who contributed over \$3.35m to the \$8m+ project) and will bring significant benefits to the Auburn community given that it replaces an old two lane structure with unprotected walkways. In addition, the light central trestle pier located between the main lines has been removed, significantly enhancing the safety of the upgraded crossing.**

The Novo Rail design team and construction crew interfaced throughout the project development and implementation stages and the design and construction sequence included the placement of two outer girders in May of this year during a single weekend rail possession. The heaviest of these units weighed just less than 100 tonne and comprised steel trough girders onto which a concrete deck slab had previously been constructed. The remaining six girders, comprising only the steel trough units were placed in a separate weekend track possession in July 2010, together with precast permanent formwork slabs spanning between them.

In subsequent weeks, and with the mainline open to rail traffic, the

reinforcement and concrete forming the roadway were placed. A significant design and construction challenge was to accurately determine and account for the deflection differentials between the outer and inner girders. Novo Rail Structural Designer for Auburn's Station Road Bridge, Clements Soosapilla, noted: 'Whilst the outer girders were, using design terminology, designed and constructed as 'propped' units, the inner girders were designed and constructed as 'un-propped' units. The deflection characteristics of the two are very different. The inner units deflected some 140mm when the placement of the concrete top slab took place, while the outer girders remained in their original position. The successful linking of these girders is a testament to a great team effort.'

## **PROJECT TEAM SHOWS STEEL**

The steel of choice for the girders used was XLERPLATE® steel Grade 350 L15, a grade which is frequently used in bridge construction because it provides a very consistent material and a good range of mill ordering sizes to help keep fabrication costs down.

The 230 tonne of steel was assembled into webs-top and bottom flanges, then fabricated into eight box girders, all especially ordered to extra long size and different widths, to suit the special shape of the 34 metre long box girder sections, since these girders have very specific height constraints for compliance with existing rail and road height parameters.

At 4.45am on Friday 1st October, local Auburn resident Laurie Gordon, became the first person to drive across the impressive new Novo Rail designed, combined 4-lane road and 2-way pedestrian walkway Auburn Station Road bridge. The bridge replacement project proved to be a triumph not only of design engineering but with regards multiple stakeholder management.



The net result of all this is that the work completed here shows Novo Rail and my project team in its best light and this is a **milestone for Novo Rail** of which we should be fiercely proud in years to come

Ordering longer than normal plates helped the project as it resulted in less joining, which reduced the need for extra butt welds, which in turn saves time and money.

#### **COMMUNITY GOLD**

Project Manager, Raquel Rubalcaba, noted: 'We also took a very conscious approach to proactive Community Relations with regards this project and worked closely with the businesses closest to the bridge works, as well as with the local Mosque whose large congregation relied on access across the bridge on Friday afternoons but had to walk further via the train station underpass, whilst the work was being undertaken.'

'For the duration of the construction work, we maintained a high level of communication with all who might be affected, including notification leaflet drops – in multiple languages to accommodate the Mosque congregation – appropriate signage and even, on the occasions it was merited, through direct personal consultation.'

Raquel continues: 'The 1800 project information line run by Novo Rail received less than 20 calls, which were mainly related to unavoidable traffic congestion. A couple of the calls were even from people interested in working for us!'

'The net result of all this is that the work completed here shows Novo Rail and my project team in its best light and this is a milestone for Novo Rail of which we should be fiercely

proud in years to come as it is also the first Novo Rail designed project to be commissioned.'

**Photo Caption:** On Tuesday 12th October, Minister for Transport John Robertson joined Member for Auburn Barbara Perry and Auburn City Council Mayor Ronney Oueik in a ribbon-cutting event, recognising the importance of the new bridge both to local community and NSW government. The Minister for Transport told local media that: 'While the bridge has been expanded with Auburn's future development in mind, rail travellers will generally benefit from the upgrade of the Lidcombe to Granville rail corridor, which is one of the busiest and most important sections of the Sydney rail network.'



# SPOTLIGHT ON RDP

‘Until recently, our structure was more akin to a traditional training department model, with the main focus on curriculum design and training delivery,’ explains Novo Rail RDP Manager, Kylie Duggan. ‘We have now shifted our focus to the establishment of clear competency pathways for individuals that better enable us to meet the specific and critical requirements of Novo Rail and RailCorp’.

Kylie continues: ‘The old model made authorisation outcomes difficult to achieve, so we have now re-aligned the RDP program and team by discipline, separating out Electrical and Signalling.’

‘After working closely with RailCorp, we have also now been able to put a plan in place that allows for clearer accountability with regards the identification of competency requirements, trainee selection and development of appropriate learning strategies.’

‘The new model also better aligns us with the technical expertise that sits within RailCorp, as well as enabling us to more easily build the necessary internal expertise at Novo Rail across the relevant engineering discipline and associated development pathways.’

## BLENDLED LEARNING

At the core of this new RDP plan is a blended learning strategy, which includes more knowledge-based learning, utilising a variety of learning platforms, such as webinars, remote training, e-learning, job rotation and greater definition around coaching and mentoring programs. ‘Instructor or expert led classroom training will still have its place,’ adds Kylie, ‘but the blended learning strategy will give us more flexibility.’

‘The new model also sees centralised management of the RDP trainees, which makes us better able to ensure that their classroom training either reinforces or adds to their experiential training and vice versa.’

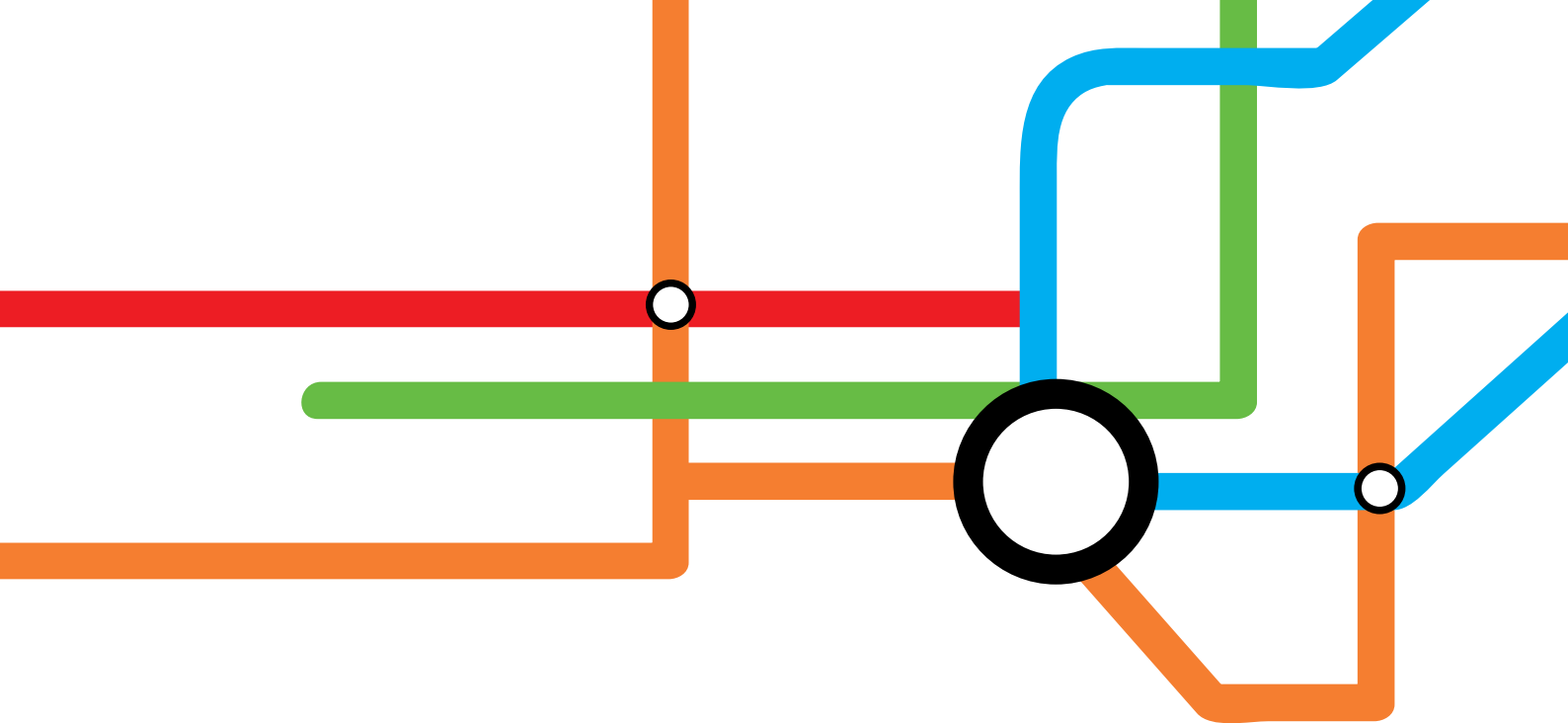
## A CRITICAL TEST

Whilst the new model is being bedded down, the collaboration required to safely expedite the critical

commissioning of Sulphide Junction in February is the most critical test to-date in the ability of the joint Novo Rail / RailCorp team to facilitate appropriate change in the existing RailCorp authorisation process.

This requirement has even seen RailCorp’s Rail Signalling authority experts, Paul Szacsavay (Principal Engineer Signalling Technology) and Mark Albrecht (Principal Engineer Signalling Competency), join the Novo Rail team temporarily to work as part of a joint project team put in place to drive these requisite changes.

Project Team Manager for this challenge, Phil Baker, explains: ‘This really is ground-breaking stuff! We are essentially re-defining the current RailCorp competency management system so that Novo Rail can safely deploy non-RailCorp Signal Installers to perform installation work in live locations and non-RailCorp Certifiers



Nigel Howlett

Kylie Duggan

Phil Baker

Our success will ultimately be measured by the list of individuals employed through the alliance, who are authorised to work on RailCorp infrastructure across a wide range of activities and disciplines unsupervised by RailCorp.

and Testers to certify track circuits at Sulphide Junction, without the direct supervision of RailCorp.'

But as the GM RailCorp Projects Division and Chairman of the Novo Rail Alliance Board, Nigel Howlett, points out: 'The February commissioning of Sulphide Junction is not only critical to the imminent introduction of the new Waratah carriages, it is also the first large signal commissioning for Novo Rail and as such is extremely important in further internal promotion of the 'Novo' brand.'

'The next few years will see an increasing number of this type of project, which is at the heart of why RailCorp engaged Novo Rail with the mandate of 'Developing Critical Resources for Industry'.

Nigel continues: 'Their success – or rather OUR success in this regard – will ultimately be measured by the

list of individuals employed through the alliance, who are authorised to work on RailCorp infrastructure across a wide range of activities and disciplines unsupervised by RailCorp. The longer the list, the greater this success, especially if this list includes authorised Substation and Signalling Testing and Commissioning resources.'

**ACCELERATED LEARNING**

For the RDP area to achieve this sort of success, both RailCorp and Novo Rail now agree that it needs to do things differently and to adopt a completely unique approach to the more traditional training and development methods previously relied on, with the onus on accelerated learning, albeit without compromising standards around safety imperatives.

Kylie concludes: 'This means the development of competency frameworks that allow for structured

accelerated learning and competency based progression, as well as development of the new standards and processes that are necessary to authorise critical resources to work on the RailCorp network.'

**Kylie Duggan**

Resources Development Program Manager

Prior to joining Novo Rail, Kylie worked closely with RailCorp on aspects of its change management and business transformation process. This role saw her actively involved in the various models aimed at addressing the rail industry's critical resource shortage challenges, and she is now ultimately charged with the development of appropriate strategies, frameworks and processes to achieve just that.

# WIRED FOR SUCCESS



It may lack the glamour and budgetary muscle of some of Novo Rail's junction upgrade projects or construction of an all-new stabling yard, but the Overhead Wiring (OHW) sub-program is every bit as critical to the now imminent introduction of the new air-conditioned Waratah carriages.

**Novo Rail has been charged with responsibility for a series of overhead wiring upgrades across the Sydney rail network, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the network to handle increased power loading resulting from the operation of the new fleet of Waratah trains. The characteristics of these new trains, such as re-generative braking, air-conditioning and enhanced acceleration, all serve to impose higher heating loads on the overhead wiring system. Similarly, the build-up of 4-car and 6-car sets into 8-car sets and greater network utilisation - more trains - further increases the load profile and power requirements on the OHW network.**

'That's why this is such an important sub-program of work,' confirms Novo Rail TSU Program Director, James Rutter, 'and the requisite delivery timelines - whether they be to capitalise on a precious possession weekend window of opportunity, or to fit in with a specific power commissioning date, are every bit as critical both in terms of Novo Rail's reputation and success.'

## OVERHEAD ALIGNMENT

Novo Rail OHW Sub Program Manager, Les Cate, explains: 'One of the largest OHW projects we have on is on the Parramatta to Penrith line. Work on this line is due to commence in early March 2011 and will see us rebuild the overhead wiring with new catenary and twin contact wire on the 12km+ of line between Parramatta and Seven Hills. We will also be creating overlaps and new fixed mid-points to 8 sections over 7km+ of line between Seven Hills and Penrith, inclusive of 50 foundations.'

Les continues: 'It is good that we will be able to go into this project with some of the learnings from the Bankstown work and development.'

## STRONG TEAM APPROACH

'What has struck me about the OHW sub-program team and the TSU team in general,' adds James, 'is their drive to make a difference, which comes with an enthusiasm and determination to achieve and drive the program, as well as a patience with and understanding of our key stakeholders and their constraints.'

The stakeholders he refers to are across RailCorp and the Districts, as well as working with SRO on detailed construction methodologies and resource planning.

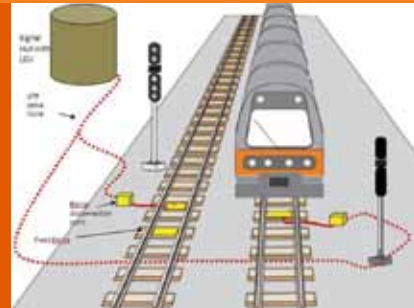
'Across all the TSU projects, including OHW work, we are starting to move from a reactive to proactive stance, through more accurate project and resource planning and a clearer view of our project pipeline.'

James continues: 'This is helping us to streamline our TOC development process - which is particularly important for the TSU area as we have a number of lower dollar value projects, for which a full TOC process is often too cumbersome.'

'We now need to maintain a strong focus on commercial rigour, to include risk and change management, as well as cost management to bring projects in on time and budget.'

'It's not about how we start today but how we are going to make it end: it's all our responsibility to make a difference.'

# MAKING SAFETY AN 'AUTOMATIC' FOCUS



Novo Rail's Automatic Train Protection (ATP) installation team is fast pulling together the final strands of their plans to fit out 71 ATP locations on the track between Berowra and Wyong - some of which are only accessible by boat! AGM, Tanya Johnstone, notes: **'This unique project is demonstrating everything that the alliance was set up to do**, by tapping into the expertise of each of the alliance partners and working closely with RailCorp District and discipline heads, as well as the RailCorp ATP program team.'

Tanya continues: 'One of the main advantages of being part of an alliance like Novo Rail is that we can draw on the diverse experience and knowledge of a wide range of skilled and highly capable rail industry professionals.'

## ATP FOR DUMMIES

Automatic Train Protection is a generic name to describe trackside and train borne safety systems designed to automatically prevent a train from over-speeding or travelling beyond the end of its permitted movement authority, by providing warnings to the driver or automatically slowing the train if the warnings are not acted upon.

Four specific functions of an ATP system are to:

- enforce track speed limits;
- give drivers advance notice about the track ahead (including signals at STOP);
- prevent trains from approaching a signal at STOP at too great a speed;
- prevent trains from passing the overlaps beyond signals at STOP.

A major difference between an ATP system and existing driver safety systems is that it is proactive rather than reactive.

Novo Rail ATP Project Manager, Alistair Underwood, explains: 'RailCorp will be using the European Train Control System, which is a mature system with a proven safety record and one which is already used extensively in Europe. Starting with ETCS Level1, there is also a pre-defined future upgrade path to Levels 2 and 3.'

He adds: 'The other advantage is that ATP trackside and on-board equipment is available 'off the shelf' from a number of suppliers and the equipment is largely compatible so can readily be overlaid on RailCorp's existing signalling system.'

## READY FOR THE CHALLENGE

Alistair continues: 'The site investigation work we have undertaken on a 60km stretch of the Main North line, between Berowra and Wyong, threw up a raft of challenges, leading

us to explore different options to find the optimum Balise installation methodology and appropriate cable route construction and layout, both of which can vary significantly depending on the site.'

To ensure that the team accurately captured all of the detail related to the different types of installation challenges they faced, as well as differing DSS requirements, a 100-question site investigation checklist was developed to gather information on design, construction, safety and environment. 'This information has been captured in a 'site and asset' database for ongoing information management, to help minimise the number of related site visits required in the future,' explains Alistair.

'This is a hugely exciting project,' he concludes, 'and one which will go a long way towards engendering deeper credibility and trust for Novo Rail across several different areas of RailCorp.'

# PROJECT UPDATE

2011 could see as many as 23 Novo Rail construction and upgrade projects underway, many of which will be undertaken in 'live' brownfield 'rail environments. With the bulk of the work on these projects carried out during precious RailCorp possession weekends, the associated challenges are significant and demand strong, disciplined project management and meticulous planning.

## STABLING PROGRAM

At the time of writing, there are clearly some challenges to overcome in relation to the proposed construction of a stabling yard at Emu Plains. This aside, with the tight time-frame of the Wollongong down yard stabling facility, the continuation of site investigation work by the ATP team (see page 9) and the fact that Glenfield Junction responsibility is currently part of the Stabling Program portfolio, 2011 promises to be a busy year for all concerned.



### WOLLONGONG

Whilst RailCorp has put on hold a proposal for a new up yard stabling facility on the western side of the rail line, site preparation began in December for the upgrade of the existing down yard stabling facility next to Wollongong train station. This project includes installation of a decant plant (train sewerage treatment facility) which means passenger trains do not have to make the extended trip south to Kiama to have on-board toilets unloaded. It also involves sleeper, rail and ballast replacement, modifications to the existing overhead wiring and structures, construction of a staff amenities building, new pathways and car-park for train crews, installation of lighting and perimeter security fencing and excavation of trenches for new services. The project is scheduled for completion in July 2011.

### AUTOMATIC TRAIN PROTECTION

Site investigations on over 60km of rail line between Berowra and Warnervale are now complete and the intention is

for RailCorp's first ATP technology to be installed on the Main Northern Line during the course of next year and to be operational by 2013 (more details on page 9).

### GLENFIELD JUNCTION

Currently sitting under the Stabling Program banner for project consistency – John Newton was the Glenfield Junction Project Manager but is now Program Director, Stabling - construction work at Glenfield Junction continues at a steady pace. Work involves troughing and excavations for signalling installation, OHW and high voltage relocation and installation of masts and portals. Managing the complex stakeholder interface with Transport Construction Authority (TCA), Glenfield Junction Alliance, ARTC and RailCorp contractors continues to be a primary focus, helped by Novo Rail representation, through staff seconded to RailCorp, to assist in the establishment and implementation of the Glenfield Project Control team.

### EMU PLAINS

The realignment of high voltage lines and other services on the southern side of the rail line is currently underway and expected to be completed in April 2011. This involves moving the lines from the north of the rail line to the south. Meanwhile an extensive 10-month report of environmental assessments comprising 10 studies – the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) - into the proposed construction of a passenger train stabling yard facility at Emu Plains, has been on public display and the construction project is now being duly assessed by RailCorp.

## JUNCTIONS PROGRAM

Following the official opening of Auburn Bridge to traffic on 1st October 2010 [see pages 4/5], the next significant milestone for the Junctions team is the scheduled February commissioning at Sulphide Junction. As work on and plans for LGCUP begin to move into a whole new phase, 2011 promises to see the Junctions teams full steam ahead on project delivery.



### SULPHIDE JUNCTION

Construction of a rail crossover and associated signalling works to facilitate the easy access of the new Waratah carriages to and from the Downer EDI Manufacturing Centre at Cardiff is nearing completion. The main crossover and underline crossings have been installed as have overhead wiring structure footings, construction of the main cable route, correlation works for design confirmation and preparation of signalling stage works. The critical component of this project now is for the Microlok II interlocking to be commissioned during Novo Rail's

February 2011 project commissioning (more detail in the RDP article on pages 10/11).

### CLYBURN JUNCTION

As with the work on Sulphide Junction, construction of rail crossovers and associated signalling works at Clyburn Junction is critical to enable planned maintenance of the new Waratah carriages at the Auburn Maintenance Centre. All works continue on schedule at this busy project site in Sydney's west, with one eye firmly set on a critical October 2011 commissioning date.

### LIDCOMBE TO GRANVILLE CORRIDOR UPGRADE (LGCUP)

This highly complex rail corridor upgrade on the Main Western Line from Lidcombe to Granville involves the construction of crossovers, underline crossings, signal works, as well as the decommissioning of some signal equipment and overhead wiring works. The project will be delivered in stages, with key locations being Clyburn and Clyde junctions, Carmelia and critical interfaces with the Auburn Stabling yard. The project team is currently completing required REF reports and compiling the TOC.

## TSU PROGRAM

With the completion of West Ryde substation due in the first quarter of 2011, valuable lessons learnt from this project have been taken into other substation construction projects to ensure that best practice processes and procedures are adopted and that Novo Rail becomes increasingly efficient in its construction delivery.



### ART GALLERY SUBSTATION

In spite of a constrained site and challenging work area, the new Art Gallery Substation came into service as a section hut during September, following a construction period of just 9 months. All Novo Rail scope was completed one week earlier than the 1 Dec Practical Completion date, earning the project team 'breakthrough' status for KRA measurements related to 'time'.

### YAGOONA SUBSTATION

Yagoona is a challenging project site, largely because of its proximity to a residential area. In a Novo Rail first, an on-site water tank, with a capacity of 3100 litres, will be used for dust suppression and grey water.

### TOONGABBIE SUBSTATION

The well-managed and well-executed, Toongabbie project site is in the process of being temporarily demobilised following 365 days LTI free and an initial inspection showing only eight minor defects. Prior to construction completion, Novo Rail also identified an opportunity for RailCorp to save money and gain efficiencies through the installation of an additional 33KV switchboard. The DC commissioning is now to be undertaken in March 2011 following a request from RailCorp to remove constraints on critical commissioning resources. The AC commissioning will follow in April, pending the installation of some aerial earth wire.

### OHV PROJECTS

A series of upgrades to overhead wiring (OHV) across the Sydney rail network is also being undertaken by Novo Rail (see page 8), to ensure that the additional electrical loads drawn by more air conditioned train services do not cause unacceptable temperature increases on existing overhead cables.

Novo Rail OHV project work currently includes upgrade works in the following areas

- Parramatta to Penrith;
- Bankstown;
- Strathfield;
- Hornsby to Woy Woy;
- North Shore

# COMMUNITY INTERACTION

## A QUESTION OF REPUTATION

Susan Allton, Project Communications Manager, Novo Rail

Whilst the main measures of Novo Rail project performance success (Key Performance Indicators) are appropriately attributed to timely project execution and delivery, an increasing amount of recognition is directed to early project stakeholder engagement as a means of reputation management and enhancement.

In its simplest form, positive stakeholder engagement and management is a means of building credibility and trust and goes some way to ensuring there are no unforeseen project execution 'surprises' for our primary stakeholder, RailCorp.

### ACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Many projects referred to Novo Rail sit very close to local communities where the construction impacts in particular can be significant. In most cases, Novo Rail and RailCorp will aim to actively engage with the local community long before the first shovel hits the ground.

This community engagement process, which in some cases can be ongoing for a number of years – is very much a 2-way virtuous circle if handled correctly and with due sensitivity. As well as ensuring locals feel consulted and giving them a platform to air any concerns they might have, the process also provides the project team with invaluable feedback about what aspects of the construction work the public sees as most significant or having the most impact. This can often differ from those issues that the design and

construction team might speculate would have been the most sensitive ones and in some cases action can be taken to address a specific resident concern so that it never even becomes an issue.

One small, but significant, example of this from Novo Rail's Toongabbie substation construction project last year, where a local resident voiced his concern about two jacaranda trees that looked as though they might be a casualty of site development. Due consultation and proactive community engagement saw a few tweaks to the original site plans and the jacarandas in question duly saved; instantly changing the nature of the relationship between local residents and the site project team...a prime example of community gold.

### FORE-WARNED IS FORE-ARMED

The whole process of community engagement gives Novo Rail and RailCorp the opportunity to pre-empt impacts likely to be of concern and to outline mitigation measures, which can go a long way to smoothing the way to a less combative relationship between local residents and site employees.

Another area where a firm but sensitive approach to local community engagement has been adopted by the Novo Rail project team is for the imminent construction work to upgrade the down yard stabling facility near Wollongong station.

For years, some residents whose back fences abut the rail corridor on the eastern side have encroached the somewhat grassy corridor area with sundry 'lean-to' sheds; vegetable gardens; chook, turkey and rabbit runs; and even grazing sheep.

A careful and personal process of persuasion by the Novo Rail project team coupled with targeted 'please vacate' letters from RailCorp, has seen the area gradually cleaned up of 'squatting' livestock and vegetation, with minimum fuss and without incident or negative publicity.

The moral of this and other community engagement tales being that a little fore-thought and a modicum of effort go a long way to demonstrating Novo Rail's commitment to minimising impacts and maximising the chances of building good relationships with our closest neighbours.

# SEEKING NATURAL HABITAT



Alison Doak, Communications Coordinator, Novo Rail



**When Raquel Rubalcaba, Novo Rail Project Manager, attended the National Association of Women in Construction dinner earlier this year, a spark of philanthropic inspiration drove her to register as one of 100 Australian women to participate in Habitat for Humanity's 'Hand in Hand Nepal Build 2011'.**

Leaving their families and creature comforts behind, 100 women from around Australia will participate in this charitable project. Each donating \$5,000 of their own money, they will travel to Nepal to help build homes for impoverished female-headed families. The project aims to raise \$500,000 in total with the intention of significantly improving the health and education of children and providing more employment opportunities for women there.

Bricks, mortar and physical labour will substitute lilos and sunscreen when Raquel takes her annual leave next March to mark the milestone of turning 40. 'No, not a mid-life crisis, just the chance to join other women in making a real difference. This is an opportunity

to give something back and be hands on with a charity I feel has a genuine track record for helping people,' Raquel enthuses.

Habitat for Humanity is an international charity raising funds to build and renovate houses for low income families in over 94 countries.

Interestingly, whilst this charity raises funds for less fortunate communities all over the globe, the Australian contingent of Habitat for Humanity also prides itself on building 'Homes at Home'. This program sees under privileged families in Australia receive access to low interest home loans and contribute to 500 hours of what's called 'sweat equity'. This means building their own home and exposure to training in basic living skills such as

managing finances. So far, 94 homes have been built nationally with another 40 projects in the pipeline.

Raquel muses, 'As parents we know and understand the desire to have a respectable environment for our children. The thought of reaching out to these families in need is really rewarding and I'm looking forward to the adventure. It's just one week out of my life but the difference it will make to their lives could positively affect generations.'

If you are keen to support Habitat for Humanity in Nepal or their more domestic initiatives, you can donate direct or sponsor Raquel's exciting and challenging journey. Visit [www.habitat.org.au/nepal-raquel](http://www.habitat.org.au/nepal-raquel) for more detail.

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU

John Newton, Program Director Stabling



**If you could be blessed with bi lingual talents, what language would you speak, why?**

Turkish, so I'd be only one language behind my tri-lingual girlfriend.

**Your most embarrassing moment at primary school?**

Forgetting my abacus. There were no calculators.

**Recommend to us your favourite literary masterpiece?**

Mortgrave of the Marshes, John Peel's (the DJ) autobiography.

**What smell brings you the strongest link to a memory**

Crushed wild thyme in the mountains

across Europe or mushy peas and mint sauce at Meadow Lane football ground (some memories of supporting Notts County are good, though more often infuriating!).

**Do you believe in luck?**

Luck is a convenient explanation if you don't want to look too hard for a reason.

**What subject did you excel at in high school?**

History, believe it or not.

**In life, what 'get's your goat?**

Negativity.

**Who or what makes you belly laugh?**

Paul Merton, Jeremy Hardy, "Outnumbered", Billy Connolly.

**Join the debate... Republic or Monarchy for Australia?**

Republic.

**Tell us about a childhood accident?**

I was discovered unconscious at the bottom of a swimming pool. Life saving works. I'm still not overly confident in the water.

**Your most valuable and prized possession?**

A 35m tree but I had to leave it in the UK - for obvious reasons!

## THE DESCENDERS LOOKED GOOD FOR IT!



**Sunday 7th November / Red Bull FlugTag event / Mrs. Macquarie's Point, Sydney Harbour / The Descenders were a 4-strong outfit comprising Novo Rail's Richy Egan (the pilot), Scott Forbes, Michael Fresch and SRO's Chris Bolzenius.**

**Handy cams and camera phones fully charged and at the ready, supporters of The Descenders scrambled to Mrs. Macquarie's Point for the ultimate view of the infamous launch into Sydney Harbour for Red Bull Flugtag 2010.**

A tempered spring day provided the perfect waiting room for the eagerly awaited moment where pilot, Richy 'whiplash' Egan flew the team to a 4th place position with a score of 9.5 and an equally impressive 14.5m result.

Scott 'ground crew' Forbes reflects on the whole experience. 'Aside from all the fun stuff, it's actually been a real achievement. Looking back on the journey, it's amazing to think that Michael 'Fresch™' Fresch's

design diagram was selected from 250 applications to make the final 40. There was a lot that went on behind the scenes to bring us to this runway.'

Scott adds. 'There were plenty of memorable moments, like training for our 20 second pre take-off booty shake with hoola hoops, but the funniest one for me was convincing the guys to pick up supplies from Bunnings Warehouse, which resulted in missing a special visit from the Red Bull Girls to check on our progress. I've not yet lived that down!'

The eNOVO colleague call-out proved successful and The Descenders would like to thank everyone who took the time to come along. A special thanks to Nadine Youssef whose special status of Novo Rail Buddy somehow earned her the task of providing a storage solution

for the victorious flying machine. 'I'm still trying to remove the blue spray paint from my pot plants,' Nadine laughs.

Clear winners in the category of 'Best Looking Team' (we would mention who took podium places but we don't really care), inNOVO magazine and readers are all very proud of Novo Rail's representative foursome.... an excellent example of team work let alone a true engineering accomplishment.

**Photo:** L to R Chris Bolzenius, Scott Forbes, Michael Fresch, Richard Egan (classy flying suits supplied by Laing O'Rourke)

# MUD RUN

Following on from their participation in the Tough Bloke Challenge earlier this year, a handful of Novo Rail employees threw themselves into December's Mud Run!

The next challenge in this trilogy of events: the aptly named Warrior Dash on 12th February out at Glenworth Valley. Check out [www.warriordash.com/index.php](http://www.warriordash.com/index.php) if you feel up to the challenge and contact Novo Warrior Tammy Scollo via [tscollo@novorail.com.au](mailto:tscollo@novorail.com.au)



# BACK OF THE NET!

A proud and passionate Novo Rail team took out the Hays 5-a-side mixed soccer tournament back in September.

Beating 15 other various Engineering, Architecture, Rail and Construction teams to the punch. The event saw over \$10k raised for Camp Quality with tournament organisers, Hays recruitment chipping in half the tally.



# LIVE YOUR IDEAS

Aurecon recently extended the invitation to Novo Rail employees to join them at a free seminar and networking event presented by Anders Sorman-Nilsson.

Anders is one of only 20 accredited Thought Leader Mentors in the world and author of 'Thinque Funky: Upgrade Your Thinking', a book which explores and explains how to get ideas out of your head, engage the hearts and minds of an audience and deliver your thought leadership to others. Novo Rail now has a handful of Funky Thinquers in the house, courtesy of Anders and Aurecon.



# A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

'Last week I attended Novo Rail's end-of year Company Briefing, which included a look back at all we have achieved in 2010 and a look ahead at the challenges for 2011.

What struck me is that when you are in the moment and living your progress, it is so easy to overlook what has been achieved.

As Communications Manager, I hear and see much in the way of planning, executing and the inevitable analysis after the fact. As a group, my observations tell me that we are not always good at celebrating our successes. Partly perhaps because the engineering nature of much of our work attracts perfectionists, for whom success can often be elusive; and partly, I'd suggest, because such is the pace of Novo Rail, that there is little opportunity to take a breath and acknowledge what has just been achieved.

What was beautiful about the end-of year briefing was that we did – as one – sit back to take a retrospective look at our achievements and successes to date. It felt good...no, it felt GREAT!

Novo Rail has come a long way and still has far to go. But surely we will get to our destinations quicker if, every now and then, we all pause to reflect on the positive stuff that is happening around the business. And it shouldn't always take 250 drums beating in unison to demonstrate that working together, in one common direction – with RailCorp – is the key to continued success.

### Nigel Cottingham

Novo Rail Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Manager



IF YOU PLAN ON PLAYING  
SANTA THIS CHRISTMAS...

**novo safe**  
TAKE SAFETY PERSONALLY



**SANTA CLAUS**  
**Next 5 km**

Last Christmas holiday season, road deaths in NSW were  
double that of the year before.

**TAKE SAFETY PERSONALLY.**