RAIL INDUSTRY AWARDS
AUSTRALIA + NEW ZEALAND

MEDIA RELEASE

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Rail Industry Awards recognises Australia and New Zealand's best and brightest

More than 600 people gathered for the Rail Industry Awards Australia and New Zealand in Sydney on Wednesday, recognising the outstanding achievements of the industry in 2024-25.

The awards celebrated excellence and innovation across 16 individual and organisational categories, showcasing the people, projects and initiatives that are shaping the future of rail.

Awards Judging Chair and Australasian Railway Association (ARA) Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said this year's nominees set incredibly high standards.

"This year's winners represent the very best in our industry and demonstrate the incredible depth of talent we are privileged to have working in rail," Ms Wilkie said.

"The judges were impressed by the high standard of entries and outstanding commitment to excellence on display across all categories.

"From leading rail construction projects and technology initiatives to innovative sustainability and safety approaches, our 2025 winners have confirmed that the rail industry is continuing to raise the bar each and every year."

The awards recognised achievements in the areas of diversity and inclusion, sustainability, passenger, infrastructure, innovation, supply, customer experience, freight, signalling and systems engineering and safety.

Pilbara Rail Maintenance took out two awards, winning the Customer Service Excellence category for its work supporting Rio Tinto's rail network, and the Safety Excellence Award for its GPS-guided smart track laying system.

The Laing O'Rourke and Public Transport Authority of WA joint venture MELconnx won the Infrastructure Project Excellence Award for its delivery of the 21km METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Line, while Transport

for NSW won the Sustainability Excellence Award for Australian-first innovation delivered on as part of the Parramatta Light Rail (Stage 1) project.

A number of individual achievements were recognised, including:

- Sydney Trains Engineering Manager, Operational Technology Christopher Go (Signalling and Systems Engineering Excellence Award – supported by IRSE)
- Alstom EHS Trainee Robert Shearer (Emerging Rail Specialist Award – supported by RTAA)
- Queensland Rail Senior Project Signalling Engineer Shou Barrett (Young Rail Professional Award – supported by RTSA)
- John Holland Senior Project Engineer Thy Pham (Young Achiever Award – supported by PWI (NSW))

The Career Achievement Award went to Ingenium Advisory Executive Consultant Mike Hickey, recognising his 56-year contribution to the rail industry.

“Mike has been at the forefront of major infrastructure projects across his career, including playing a pivotal role in preparing the rail network for the 2000 Sydney Olympics,” Ms Wilkie said.

“In addition to his own career achievements, Mike has mentored countless engineers, managed graduate and apprenticeship programs and contributed to rail education to help build the skills of the next generation of rail professionals.

“We were pleased to celebrate Mike’s extensive career and reflect on his many achievements as part of the 2025 Rail Industry Awards.”

The Awards are supported by the Australasian Railway Association, Institution of Railway Signal Engineers, Railway Technical Society of Australia, Rail Track Association Australia, Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board and the Permanent Way Institution (NSW).

Please find the full list of winners attached.

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2025 Rail Industry Awards Australia and New Zealand winners

Award category	Winner
Signalling and Systems Engineering Excellence Award *Supported by IRSE*	**Christopher Go** **Engineering Manager, Operational Technology** **Sydney Trains** Chris has more than 20 years' experience in rail telecommunications. He played a key role in the rollout of the GSM-R network in New South Wales and now leads aspects of the transition to the FRMCS. His work has strengthened reliability, reduced risk, and shaped the future of rail operations.
Emerging Rail Specialist Award *Supported by RTAA*	**Robert Shearer** **EHS Trainee** **Alstom** Robert has led Safety Management System updates and international partnerships in his current role. Robert contributed to the Next Generation Train Project as a shunter - performing a full audit on an electrical switching procedure. Robert is a strong advocate for mental health and engages underprivileged youth in the rail industry.
Young Rail Professional Award *Supported by RTSA*	**Shou Barrett** **Senior Project Signalling Engineer** **Queensland Rail** Shou has made a significant impact at Queensland Rail through mentoring, professional development and industry engagement. As Lead Reviewer preparing Queensland Rail for ETCS, he helped update more than 30 standards to support a seamless transition to the new

	system. His commitment to standards, training and mentoring exemplifies the qualities of the next generation of rail professionals.
Young Achiever Award *Supported by PWI (NSW)*	**Thy Pham** **Senior Project Engineer** **John Holland** Thy played a key role on the Botany Rail Duplication - a complex brownfield project delivered while Botany Yard remained operational. She coordinated hour-by-hour delivery, accelerated the Cooks River Loop and consolidated Botany Yard commissioning, achieving program and cost savings and a safe, high-quality outcome.
Infrastructure Project Excellence Award *Supported by RTSA* *Sponsored by Andrew Engineering*	**MELConnx, an alliance between Laing O'Rourke and the Public Transport Authority of WA** **METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Line** The MELConnx joint venture delivered the METRONET Morley-Ellenbrook Line to boost connectivity, liveability and prosperity in Perth's north-eastern suburbs. The project included 21km of new rail, five new stations and major infrastructure, seamlessly integrated with existing transport networks to enhance accessibility.
Safety Excellence Award *Supported by RISSB*	**Pilbara Rail Maintenance** Pilbara Rail Maintenance's Safety Innovation Program engages the whole organisation to generate ideas that eliminate risks at the source. The program has delivered industry-leading solutions, including smart track laying, vacuum lifting systems and real-time driver monitoring, reducing human-machine interface risks and strengthening safety outcomes across the rail network.

Employee Engagement Excellence Award *Supported by the ARA* *Sponsored by Rio Tinto*	**Flex from the Start initiative** **John Holland** John Holland's 'Flex from the Start' initiative prioritises flexibility, inclusivity and health, creating a safer and more supportive workplace. By introducing structured rosters, fatigue management and flexible options, the program reduced stress, improved psychosocial safety and retention, and proved flexible work practices can succeed in rail construction environments.
Sustainability Excellence Award *Supported by the ARA* *Sponsored by Acciona Rail*	**Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1** **Transport for NSW** Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 opened in December 2024, delivering significant sustainability outcomes. The project features the adoption of an Australian-first rail boot that reduces noise and vibration, and achieved a 36 per cent carbon reduction in construction and operations. The project has demonstrated how innovative design can deliver measurable environmental benefits.
Customer Service Excellence Award *Supported by the ARA* *Sponsored by John Holland Group*	**Pilbara Rail Maintenance** Pilbara Rail Maintenance has delivered customer service excellence for more than six years, supporting Rio Tinto's Pilbara rail network. By tailoring operations to meet complex infrastructure needs and a demanding schedule, PRM has consistently demonstrated innovation, flexibility and quality, setting new standards for customer-focused delivery in rail maintenance.
Wellbeing in Rail – TrackSAFE *Supported by the TrackSAFE Foundation*	**Employee Wellbeing Framework** **Swietelsky Rail Australia** Swietelsky Rail Australia developed a comprehensive Employee Wellbeing Framework, embedding it into daily

	operations. Recognising that safety goes beyond physical protection, the framework supports mental, emotional, physical and psychosocial wellbeing. With a proactive, values-led approach, the program is driving a culture of care, flexibility and long-term employee support.
Rail Innovation of the Year Award *Supported by the ARA* *Sponsored by Project i-TRACE, powered by GS1 Australia*	**Autonomous robotic cleaners** **Downer Rail and Transit Systems** Downer Rail and Transit Systems, in partnership with Deakin University's Institute for Intelligent Systems Research and Innovation, has developed the world's first autonomous cleaning robots for passenger train interiors. These innovations, designed for both heavy and light rail, represent a major step forward in efficiency, safety and rail service quality.
Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Award *Supported by the ARA* *Sponsored by BHP*	**Southern Program Alliance, an alliance between Acciona, WSP, Metro Trains Melbourne and the Level Crossing Removal Project** Southern Program Alliance has introduced initiatives that remove barriers to employment and increase opportunities for people with disability. Over two years, these programs more than doubled the proportion of hours worked by people with disability, creating pathways through internships, work placements and partnerships with schools, NDIS providers and social enterprises.
Supplier Excellence Award *Supported by the ARA*	**JMD Railtech Engineering** JMD Railtech Engineering has built a capable workforce delivering complex re-signalling and remodelling projects across Australia and New Zealand. Underpinned by significant investment in training and competency management, and a customer-focused culture, JMDR is

	strengthening signalling capability while ensuring safe, high-quality outcomes across major brownfield rail projects.
Rail Freight Excellence Award *Supported by the ARA*	**Pacific National** Pacific National launched a new freight booking portal with a user-friendly design, real-time updates and self-service capability. Improving transparency, control and communication with customers and suppliers, the portal supports greater efficiency across the supply chain and is already receiving positive feedback following a seamless rollout and strong engagement.
Passenger Operations Excellence Award *Supported by the ARA*	**Metro Trains Sydney** Metro Trains Sydney has delivered the first passenger service for the Sydney Metro City Line, a 15.5km extension with eight new stations. The service has set new benchmarks in performance, customer experience, and agile service planning, while developing local expertise to support the next generation of world-class rail projects.
Career Achievement Award *Supported by the ARA* *Sponsored by Frauscher Sensor Technology*	**Mike Hickey** Mike Hickey has dedicated 56 years to the rail industry, holding senior roles across StateRail, CityRail, the Rail Infrastructure Corporation and Ingenium Advisory. He has led major infrastructure projects, introduced innovations in safety and operations, and played a pivotal role in preparing Sydney's rail network for the 2000 Olympics. Equally significant has been his commitment to people – mentoring countless young engineers and leading

graduate programs. His leadership and lifelong dedication leave an enduring legacy across Australia's rail industry.