



Dear MPA Members,

As I write this in early Autumn, we have a (relatively) new Government, and an approaching major Spending Review. Uppermost in our minds is what the Government's approach to major projects will be and how we can encourage them to support this vital area of national activity.

By the time you read this, we will have held our Annual Conference with the theme: 'Opportunities for a new government'. We are much looking forward to hearing what the newly be-knighted Sir Danny Alexander has to say, reflecting on his time in the pivotal role of Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and

also to hearing the Treasury perspective from John Kingman, Second Permanent Secretary. This is an example of how we are trying to raise our profile amongst key decision makers across the sector – not in a hectoring, lobbying way but by injecting insight, practical experience and common sense into the public debate.

Meanwhile, in April this year we held a seminar on 'Determining and delivering the benefits of major projects'. Our thinking is that if we can identify more clearly and more consistently what the benefits of major projects are, it will be easier for Ministers to make decisions on them and easier to obtain financial backing.

The seminar itself was very useful, and the Association is continuing to pursue this theme through our Green Book+ initiative, working with Infrastructure UK, the Major Projects Authority and others in the Treasury. Last year's Annual Conference 'Making major projects bankable' tackled a related theme.

The reports of those and all our events are easily available on our website. Elsewhere in this newsletter we explain how we are making our reports and other communications more readable and readily accessible for members – one of our strategic themes for 2015–17.

Another strategic theme this year was providing support to leaders in major projects, and we have developed a mentoring scheme, about which I will soon be writing to Chairmen of member organisations. We anticipate that this will be a service that will only be needed occasionally, but which could bring real benefits in specific circumstances.

We have experimented with different formats for our events, responding to suggestions from members. Breakfast seminars and early evening events seem to have proved very popular, so we will repeat those, and we will continue to experiment with new arrangements, welcoming feedback on these as always.

In early 2014 we set a target of reaching a hundred member organisations by 2017, carefully targeting potential members to ensure that breadth, balance and quality is at least maintained if not enhanced. As

you will see elsewhere in the newsletter, we have welcomed some excellent new members, and numbers are now in the low nineties – well on track to meet our target.

I would like to pay tribute to the exceptional quality of our speakers and seminar chairs, led by our Prestige Lecturer, Sir Peter Hendy (formerly Transport for London, now Chairman of Network Rail). Sir Peter gave us an outstanding 'Tour d'Horizon' of transport issues for London and other major cities, looking ahead to the coming decades. That evening perhaps epitomises the point that if you want to stay connected with the latest thinking on major projects and related issues, you need to book your place early at the Association's events. I would like to add my warmest thanks to all those who have given up so much of their time and energy to help organise, speak at and chair our events this year.

Our professional development activity continues apace – specifically tailored to what you, our members, say you need. It is covered in detail in the following pages.

We have a terrific programme of events coming up over the next few months – details are in this newsletter and on our now much improved website. I much look forward to seeing as many of our members as possible at the events coming up.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Tim Laurence KCVO, CB, ADC
Chairman
Major Projects Association