



## Chair's Report for 2015

This report covers the calendar year 2015, corresponding to the period covered by the finance report and accounts. During 2015 the Transport Economists' Group (TEG) provided a valuable forum for sharing, discussing and debating the latest research and ideas in transport economics, as it has done since its founding in 1973.

### Monthly Meetings

Our monthly meetings continue to be held in the Arup headquarters in Fitzroy Street, London. We are very grateful to Arup for making a room and refreshments available to us and to Margot Finley for her support with meeting arrangements.

During 2015 the TEG held nine monthly meetings where experts spoke on a range of topics. Our talks during 2015 were more focused on questions of theory rather than major transport projects, with appraisal in particular being a recurring topic. This perhaps reflected ongoing debates about the relevance of 'traditional' cost-benefit analysis as policymakers increasingly look to investment in transport to generate stronger economic growth. The specific schemes that were presented during the year are examples of this, with both Crossrail 2 and the Roads Investment Strategy being promoted on the strength of their positive effects on "UK plc".

- January: **Pedro Abrantes**, Senior Economist at the Passenger Transport Executive Group (since renamed the Urban Transport Group) - *Transport and the limits to urban growth*
- February: **John Preston** of the University of Southampton - *Bus deregulation: 30 years on*
- March: **Scott Clyne** of PwC - *Funding and financing of Crossrail 2*
- April: **Neil Shorten, Jon Vickers and Margot Shatz** of the Department for Transport - *Analysis for the Roads Investment Strategy*
- May: **Amanda Rowlatt** of the Department for Transport - *DfT Transport Analysis: developments and challenges*
- June: **Tom Worsley** of the University of Leeds - *Transport policy, appraisal and decision-making: is the process at a crossroads?*
- September: **Rachel Aldred** of the University of Westminster - *Is transport appraisal failing cycling?*
- October: **David Metz** of University College London - *Travel in the twenty-first century: reconsidering appraisal and forecasting methodologies*
- November: **Daniel Hanson and Jonathan Gillham** of PwC - *Total appraisal in practice – the story of the Airports Commission and the Lower Thames Crossing*

Average attendance at meetings during 2015 was 36, up significantly on 2014 (31), although the 2015 average was skewed by the best-attended meeting of the year in January, with 60 attendees. Over the year the number of attendees ranged from 28 to 60.

### Publications

*The Transport Economist*, journal of the TEG, continued to be edited by Committee member Peter Gordon. Three editions of the journal were published for 2015, containing reports of the monthly TEG meetings as well as reviews of books of interest to transport economists.

As has been our convention for some time, copies of the slides used by speakers during their presentations were circulated by email to members after each meeting. We are grateful to our speakers for allowing us to share their material with members in this way.

### **Membership and Finance**

Our Treasurer and Membership Secretary has written a separate finance report, which shows that the Group is in a strong financial position and that membership numbers are being maintained.

### **Publicity**

The Committee continues to make efforts to publicise the TEG and our events, using:

- Our website ([www.transecongroup.org](http://www.transecongroup.org)) which is updated each month with details of forthcoming talks.
- Monthly emails to members advising of the next talk and the forward programme. This is an effective marketing tool as many members forward this email on to other people in their networks, resulting in a wide distribution beyond the membership.
- A flyer for each talk sent out with the monthly email, intended to be suitable for posting on office notice boards.
- A Twitter account (@TransEconGroup) which is used to alert followers of forthcoming talks - this now has 640 followers.
- A LinkedIn group for TEG used for discussions and for notices on the monthly talks - this now has 705 members.

### **Committee**

All members of the Committee made significant contributions to the running of the TEG during 2015. Many thanks must go to Dick Dunmore (Secretary and Webmaster), Gregory Marchant (Treasurer and Membership Secretary) and Peter Gordon (Editor of *The Transport Economist*) for the important responsibilities they have each taken on to manage the ongoing activities of the TEG. Sincere thanks also go to other Committee members without portfolio, particularly Tom Worsley and Margot Finley, who have provided good suggestions for speakers and have also variously convened the monthly meetings or written reports for the journal. I would also like to thank Melanie Buchan for her excellent work as our Group Administrator.

### **Final Remarks**

The purpose of the Transport Economists' Group is to provide a forum for economists and others interested in transport to meet regularly, discuss topical subjects and keep up-to-date with current developments in transport economics. Expert presentations on various topics are enhanced by the lively debate and discussion that invariably follows. It is only thanks to this contribution from our members that TEG is such a valuable place for the exchange of ideas.

I joined the TEG committee in 2012, taking a place left open by the resignation of William Wingate, my colleague at Arup when I worked there. It was with great sadness that I learnt of William's death in July of 2015. William taught me much when I was starting out on a career in transport and, as a long-time member of the TEG, he will be fondly remembered but sadly missed by the many members who knew him.

Looking ahead, I have taken the decision not to put myself forward again for membership of the TEG committee in the coming year. I have valued greatly my two years as chair of the TEG, which in the now long history of the Group seems like a very short time indeed. It has been my privilege to help to organise meetings that have touched on some of the most important transport issues facing our country and to meet interesting people in doing so. With the support of the membership, and in the safe hands of my successors, I am certain that the TEG will continue to play its vital role in 2016 and beyond.

*Scott Clyne, Chair, 16 February 2016*