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This month we welcome our new IRSE President, Charles Page, Business Development Director of Siemens Rail Automation, Australia. He gave his inaugural Address at the AGM in London on 22 April, and you can read it elsewhere in this edition of IRSE NEWS. At the same meeting we acknowledged the significant contribution that Andrew Simmons has made as our President for the past year.

Every President brings his or her own focus and emphasis to their Presidential Year. But the President also provides continuity of purpose, and for Charles that is encapsulated in his support for our five-year Strategy (2015-2020). If you are not familiar with it, you can find it on the IRSE website, and you may have read a short summary of it in our Annual Report (2015) which was published last month. The Strategy and its supporting Implementation Plan address a number of key issues, including:

- Tackling the skills gap facing railway signal, control and communications engineering in many countries;
- Encouraging employers' support for IRSE activities to help ensure that the Institution's activities align with the needs of the wider industry;
- Enabling growth of the IRSE as a global Engineering Institution, so as to promote professional standards throughout the world.

These are worthy aims for the Institution as a whole, but for many IRSE members the more tangible benefit of being a member of the IRSE lies in belonging to a local Section, and in having access to a network of well-informed train control and communications engineers. Again, Charles recognises this in his Address, and he encourages us all to participate and contribute as fully as we can to the activities of local Sections. There is cause to be optimistic – in 2013 we started two new Sections (Indonesia and Malaysia), in 2014 the Irish Section was inaugurated, in 2015 the French Section was launched, in 2016 we have already started the Thailand Section (more about this in IRSE NEWS soon), and we may yet establish two more Sections this year, in China and in the United Arab Emirates. Finally, membership has reached 5,500 (just about!).

Francis How, Chief Executive



Front Cover: 2016 saw the formation of the IRSE Thailand Section. Here a Bangkok BTS Skytrain multiple unit weaves its way above the city. The railway features CBTC and a range of modern train control systems. *Photo Paul Harland.*

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