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In February the UK rail industry launched its strategy for the growth in the supply chain, titled 'Fast Track for the Future' (<http://bit.ly/20M1Zq8>). With key themes such as innovation, cost-effectiveness, and investing in people and skills, it addresses issues important not only to the success of Britain's railways but to railways around the world.

Within the Strategy a number of key technology areas are identified as priorities for greater innovation. They include advanced control systems, energy management, customer experience and whole-life asset management. In all of these areas, engineers involved in train control systems, railway communications and data management have key roles to play. Expertise is needed in a wide variety of fields — signalling and train control systems, traffic management, systems engineering, cybersecurity, data collection and analysis, communications networks and applications, ... the list is long.

One thing is clear. Whilst the need for traditional railway signalling expertise will continue for some time to come, where railways are investing in technology areas that I refer to above, we also need many new skills. So it is natural to turn to the upcoming generation of school children and university students, seeking to attract them into the rail industry, and into our profession in particular.

Whilst the next generation of train control and communications engineers has a major contribution to make to satisfy the needs of the world's railways and their customers, we will not be able to meet the need by this means alone. We all have a responsibility to acquire new knowledge and expertise, regardless of where we are in our career, so that we can continue to play our part. In this edition of IRSE NEWS you can read the first of a series of articles by Elaine Clark, the IRSE's Professional Development Manager, on the subject of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Another way of describing CPD is 'Lifelong Learning'. For me that accurately conveys the essential message, namely that we learn throughout our lives, not just when we are young. But that doesn't happen by accident. Each of us has to plan and take active steps to make sure that we do continue learning throughout our careers. Are you doing that, and could you prove it if you were asked?

Francis How, Chief Executive



Front Cover: Multi-aspect signalling at Bundaberg station on the North Coast line in Queensland, Australia. The picture was taken looking south from platform 1 during a visit as part of the IRSE International Convention in early June, 2015.
Photo Ian James Allison.

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