

CITATION FOR Mr JOHN F. ROSS

On his being awarded the
JOHN MONASH MEDAL for 2004

John Francis Ross, AM, FIEAust, CPEng has made an outstanding contribution to the collection of artefacts and the recording of the history of radio broadcasting technology from the early days through to the present era.

“Jack”, as he is widely known, began his career in the Brisbane office of the Post master Generals Department in 1938. He retired 50 years later as the state broadcasting manager for South Australia. During his career, he participated in the tremendous national and international advances that were made in broadcast engineering.

Recognising that much of the material with which he has worked will be a mystery to future generations of engineers, he set about preserving this unique and volatile history. Most significantly for heritage engineering, he has recorded much of this knowledge and experience in the pages of seven books:

- ‘A History of Telecommunications on Stamps’, 1976-1978, 5 volume set where 1000 postage stamps issued in Australia and overseas are presented and explained.
- ‘A History of Radio in South Australia 1897-1977’.
- ‘Radio Broadcasting Technology: 75 years of Development in Australia 1923-1998’, 600 pages, 500 photographs.

Jack makes the point that until the 1960’s, Australian manufacturing companies met the entire needs of the nation in broadcasting, whereas today our requirements are substantially imported.

Through lectures, articles and on-air interviews, Jack Ross has taken radio technology to the community. He was editor of “The Broadcaster” for 10 years. He was instrumental in setting up a large display in the Adelaide Post office in 1973. He has been a guest speaker at several major broadcasting anniversaries. For the Telecommunications Museum of South Australia he acquired, restored, recorded and displayed hundreds of vintage artefacts. In 1989 he was awarded an AM for services to the media as a Radio Broadcasting Engineer.

It is through the unselfish efforts of visionaries like Jack Ross that future generations of engineers and researchers will be able to appreciate the conditions of times now passed. He has brought great credit on the profession and is a most worthy recipient of the Engineers Australia 2004 ‘John Monash Medal for Engineering Heritage’.