



Municipal Engineering Foundation Victoria

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2017 Overseas Study Tour Briefing Paper

Study Tour Overview

The 2017 Municipal Engineering Foundation Victoria (MEFV) overseas study tour involves four Australian Local Government Public Works Officers, from the State of Victoria, travelling as a group with the aim of visiting and learning from local authorities and related organisations in the United States and Canada.

As part of our tour throughout the month of August 2017, we will be visiting the cities of Toronto, Chicago, Portland and Denver and will also attend the 2017 APWA International Public Works Congress & Exhibition (PWX) in Orlando, Florida.

Our group is particularly keen to gain an understanding and see examples based around the following themes:

- **Complete Streets and Place-making** – through the theme of retrofitting suburbia to better utilise and activate existing streetscapes and car parks;
- **Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM)** – including flood management, stormwater reuse, harvesting and best practice water quality treatment and innovation;
- **Participative engagement for effectual policy development** – matters such as service planning and delivery, effective asset management and funding models, long-term financial sustainability and improved community relationships are topics of interest.

Who We Are

The four tour participants – Geoff, Emma, Matt and Frank – are a mix of public works officers with engineering, planning and management backgrounds representing four (4) different municipalities (local government) throughout the state of Victoria and the City of Melbourne.

The state of Victoria is one of the eight state/territories of Australia and second most populous in terms of population (6.1 million) and economic significance. The city of Melbourne is the capital with a population of 4.7 million and the fastest growing city in Australia. At 92,000 square miles, the State of Victoria is comparable in size to the US state of Oregon.



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Our Visit

We have generally allowed two (2) full days to visit and meet with local authorities and organisations in each city we are visiting.

The group would be pleased to learn and share experiences and knowledge with your city. As such we would appreciate the opportunity to visit your organisation and meet with the appropriate members of staff to provide us your experiences and knowledge related to our relevant study topics. In addition, and where appropriate, we would welcome the opportunity to undertake specific site visits and explore the physical works and projects undertaken out in the field.

The tour group will be organising all their own private travel and accommodation requirements.

Issues that we would appreciate discussing:

- Overview of your organisation to allow an understanding of the relative size/complexity of services, assets, budgets and issues compared to our Councils and the Victorian sector.
- Responsibility of the organisation relating to infrastructure assets, shared responsibilities between other levels of government and other relevant authorities.
- Trends and any contextual issues (eg restructuring, reforms, legislation, industry and demographic pressures).
- Specific issues in place for asset management and lifecycle issues, managing infrastructure and drainage assets, mitigating impact of climate change and environmental challenges.
- Management of long-term financial planning, works procurement, project budgetary matters and project governance and policy development.
- Issues around sustainability and infrastructure that supports active transport and good urban design and planning.
- Impact growing communities have on existing infrastructure.
- Innovative maintenance practices particularly in busy activity areas.
- Lessons worth sharing (successful or complex experiences).
- Community engagement and participation.
- Examples, case studies or site visits of any relevant projects undertaken.

These general issues will have specific interest and be further explored by individual tour members relevant to their specific topics.

The following is a summary of the selected study topics and further information on each of the four (4) tour participants:



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Emma Dalton

***Infrastructure Services General Manager
Shire of Campaspe***

Study Topic: Participative engagement for effectual policy development

STUDY TOPIC DETAILS:

Local Government Authorities (LGA's) have significant asset bases. Capped rates and election-dependent government grants, places LGA's in greater uncertainty regarding long-term financial sustainability and the capacity to manage and maintain infrastructure.

LGA's have been slow to adapt appropriate asset management principles and funding models to support infrastructure renewal and upgrade.

Community expectations are changing. Traditional policy development and decision making, based on a one-size-fits-all approach of LGA's, is increasingly unpalatable.

Participative engagement is the future for effectual policy development. The outcomes provide LGA's with consistency in service management but flexibility to meet changing community needs.

The links between successful collaborative engagement and:

- service planning and delivery;
- asset management;
- long-term financial sustainability; and
- improved relationships between community and Council.

ABOUT THE SHIRE OF CAMPASPE:

The Shire of Campaspe is located 115 miles north of Melbourne in regional Victoria and has a population of 37,000. The Shire is approximately 1,740 square miles in size (about the same size as the US state of Delaware). It is predominantly a rural farming and agricultural region with a number of small towns. Its largest town of Echuca (pop: 14,000) is situated along the mighty Murray River – Australia's longest and most significant river.

The key issues for the Shire are supporting the key economic sectors of agriculture, food processing and tourism. Our advocacy priorities are water security and pricing for agricultural purposes, infrastructure and transport linkages that support economic growth and investment and improved telecommunications to enable all residents and businesses access to high speed broadband (internet) connections.

For more information on the Shire, please visit www.campaspe.vic.gov.au



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Frank Vassilacos

***Strategic Land Use and Transport Planner
City of Manningham***

***Study Topic: Retrofitting suburbia – How to better utilise
and activate existing streetscapes***

STUDY TOPIC DETAILS:

This topic seeks to investigate opportunities to better utilise existing public street infrastructure and car parking spaces to create functional, accessible, visually attractive and sustainable streetscapes.

It is ideally aimed at embracing the concepts of 'place making' and 'complete streets' to encourage more active public spaces for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly within activity centres and along commercial, retail and eatery streets.

The key focus is to encourage urban renewal in a manner that activates streetscapes to encourage pedestrian activity, social interaction and foster active surveillance in traditional car-based environments. It also seeks to draw on opportunities to incorporate other complimentary features such as water-sensitive urban design and the provision of 'greener' public spaces.

Implementation should involve planning and contribution from the local community, traders and other users, with the ability to implement changes as either a temporary or a permanent basis.

By utilising examples from North America, this topic seeks to apply methods in which to plan, deliver and ultimately maintain and enhance the use of existing and under-utilised public assets, particularly where Local Government has the primary influence in achieving the desired outcome to retrofit its own existing infrastructure and public realm.

ABOUT THE CITY OF MANNINGHAM:

The City of Manningham is one of the 31 municipalities that make up the metropolitan area of Melbourne. With a population of 119,000 and 44 square miles in area (about twice the size of Manhattan), it is located 10 miles east of downtown Melbourne. It is predominantly an established suburban (residential) area and is bounded by the Yarra River and a semi-rural environmentally significant area.

The key issues for the City are managing localised population growth and suburban in-fill development, a lack of adequate public transport, traffic congestion and conservation of the environmentally significant landscape and open space.

For more information on the City, please visit www.manningham.vic.gov.au



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Matthew Varcoe

***Unit Leader, Development Engineering
City of Whittlesea***

***Study Topic: Innovation and implementation of World's
Best Practice in Integrated Water Cycle Management
(IWCN) for Growing Cities***

STUDY TOPIC DETAILS:

This topic seeks to investigate the impact that population growth has on existing infrastructure with a particular emphasis on Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCN).

IWCN is a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach used to promote the sustainable use of all available water resources including stormwater, potable water and non-drinking water. Whilst IWCN encapsulates a number of sustainable water initiatives broadly mentioned above, I wish to concentrate more on the water quality and flood protection aspects of IWCN particularly in regards to world's best practice design, construction and maintenance.

This is a very relevant topic for the City of Whittlesea and the broader engineering industry given the rapid growth we are currently experiencing. There is a strong push to promote the use of water quality assets with Whittlesea which is further supported by the development of an IWCN policy which will enable Council to negotiate and seek favourable IWCN/WSUD outcomes.

Whittlesea has undergone a lot of trial and error over the years in this regard and understanding how the rest of the world manages their stormwater would be extremely beneficial for our community.

ABOUT THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA:

The City of Whittlesea is one of the 31 municipalities that make up the metropolitan area of Melbourne. It is located 10 miles north of downtown Melbourne and is 190 square miles in area (about twice the size of Washington DC). The population of 209,000 is expected to double over the next 30 years as the city has become one of the fastest growing suburban areas in Australia.

The key issues for the City are managing rapid population growth and suburban Greenfield development, a lack of adequate public transport, significant traffic congestion, stormwater management and the timely provision of necessary civil and civic infrastructure to support new communities as once rural open space on the fringe of Melbourne is developed into residential subdivisions.

For more information on the City, please visit www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au



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Geoff Glynn

***Director, Assets and Infrastructure
City of Banyule***

***Study Tour Mentor and Municipal Engineering Foundation
Victoria Trustee***

ABOUT GEOFF:

Geoff is currently the Director of Assets and Infrastructure at Banyule City Council. As a qualified civil engineer with further post graduate qualifications in business management and municipal engineering, Geoff has over 25 years' experience working in the local government industry across a broad variety of engineering functions.

Geoff has a keen interest in improving industry collaboration and in improving professional development of public works engineering across the sector.

Geoff will be mentoring the study group to provide guidance and support while also taking the opportunity to learn from the examples explored throughout North America.

ABOUT THE CITY OF BANYULE:

The City of Banyule is one of the 31 municipalities that make up the metropolitan area of Melbourne. It is located 5 miles northeast of downtown Melbourne and is 24 square miles in area (about the size of Manhattan, New York). With a population of 130,000, it is predominantly an established suburban (residential) area and is bounded by the Yarra River and a semi-rural region along the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne.

The key issues for the City is population growth in a predominately established suburban area. This creates pressure on the existing aging infrastructure, increased congestion and increases demands on Council services in an income constrained environment. The other challenge is the management of the expectations and needs of existing residents in a changing city landscape.

For more information on the City, please visit www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Home



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MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING FOUNDATION VICTORIA

The Foundation has been in existence since 1966 and was established for the express purpose of providing opportunities for public works officers working in local government in Victoria (Australia) to enhance their technical and managerial skills. This is achieved by annually allocating scholarship awards to research a wide range of internal and overseas study topics. Further details of recent awardees and reports are detailed on our website at www.mefvic.org.au

A major focus of the Study awards is a group attendance at the American Public Works Association Annual Congress followed by individual study tours within the USA and Canada.

At the conclusion of the study tour, the awardees will prepare a detailed report on learnings and experiences from the study tour on their return to Australia that will be shared with Victorian Local Government and Public Works professionals.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

Australia has a three-tiered system of Government:

Australian Federal Government

Responsible for matters such as defence, immigration and nationally significant roads linking capital cities, health. Raises income via taxes on private and company incomes, import/export duties, fuel excise and a 10% Goods and Services Tax (GST).

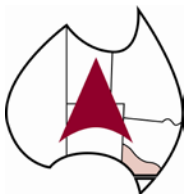
State and Territory Governments (Victoria is one of eight)

Responsible for matters such as health, education, police and significant state roads linking population centres. Raises income via sales tax/stamp duties on property sales and fees for various services. The Federal Government allocates funds to State Departments some of which is apportioned to Local Governments.

Most State-owned income generating businesses (electricity, gas) were privatised or corporatised (water supply) in the 1990s.

Local Government (Victoria has 79 Local Government Councils – 31 which form Metropolitan Melbourne)

Responsible for matters such as aged and child care, local land use planning, building regulation, local infrastructure and local roads, parks and recreation, waste and environmental management, economic and cultural development and community facilities. Income is via property rates, fees for service, grants and funding allocation from other levels of government.



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OUR CONTACT DETAILS:

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