



Cadastral Surveying Career Promotion Task Force

There is a crisis facing the surveying profession today, and the Surveyors Registration Board of Victoria has decided to do something about it.

The increasingly animated talk about retirement plans at industry meetings has already heralded the fact that the vast majority of surveyors will soon be gracefully exiting the profession. The crisis is that their number far outweighs that of the younger surveyors poised to carry the baton or even the undergraduates coming through, a situation compounded by the ongoing scarcity of both female and regional surveyors. If left unchecked, this promises a dramatic shortage of licensed surveyors in a few years' time.

With numbers limited to begin with, no crystal ball is needed to see that the future of the profession would be bleak, with university programmes abandoned, offices forced to close, and industry history and continuity lost. The Surveyors Registration Board of Victoria felt strongly that now was the time for action, lest surveyors join wainwrights and fletchers on the pages of history books.

A major contributor to the problem is the lack of public profile of surveying as a profession, coupled with a lack of focus with regard to recruitment.

Surveying is truly a "noble" profession with ties to both history and 21st C technological innovation, and offering a unique and appealing combination of office and outdoor work. Yet it often doesn't sound a "blip" on the radar of students contemplating their future, and despite the recent property boom, even many adults are unaware of the vital functions surveyors perform.

It became obvious to the Board that there was an urgent need to promote and market cadastral surveying in a coordinated, professional and industry-wide manner. With this in mind, the Board established a Task Force with the dual aim of improving surveying's profile through the promotion of cadastral surveying, and of increasing the number of licensed surveyors coming out of the Victorian educational/registration system (rather than by encouraging the registration of surveyors from overseas).

To benefit from the combined knowledge, efforts and resources of all stakeholders, the Task Force was assembled from members of the Board, professional and industry bodies (The Institution of Surveyors, Victoria, Association of Consulting Surveyors Victoria and Spatial Sciences Institute), and representatives and student leaders from the University of Melbourne and RMIT University. A need for concrete, achievable short and long term goals and strong industry participation was recognised.

At its inaugural meeting held on 9 August 2007, the Task Force determined that its objectives are to:

- Increase the attractiveness of cadastral surveying as a profession;
- Encourage more students at both secondary and tertiary levels to undertake tertiary studies in surveying/geomatics;
- Encourage the regional distribution of surveyors.

As internal marketing techniques used by stakeholders to date were deemed largely unsuccessful, the Task Force agreed to engage an external marketing consultant, MEXT, to develop a strategy to actively promote and brand the cadastral surveying profession, including the proposal of specific initiatives to implement that strategy.

Some interesting insights have been revealed as a result of the internal stakeholder research MEXT has conducted to date. The research included interviews with surveyors of various levels of experience - from graduate to senior - and those representing academia as well as both public and private sectors (small and large enterprises).

The intention of the research is to understand the career of Cadastral Surveying from a range of different perspectives, then to extract and distil the "essence" of surveying. MEXT will develop a strong concept and image which will be Surveying's face to the world and to those we wish to attract to our ranks, serving to enhance our professional identity and confidence as well.

MEXT's work will continue over the new few weeks, with completion

[continued on Page 4]

Patron
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