

PRESENTATION TO UAE Delegation – 12 May 2011

Ollie Hedberg
Chair, Victorian Spatial Council

- Good afternoon [ladies and] gentlemen.
- It is a pleasure to be here today.
- I would like to spend my few minutes to introduce the policy environment which supports the development of spatial information in this State.

Introduction

- Victoria has a strong spatial information community.
- One of the reasons for this is the close collaboration between the government, industry, academic and professional sectors that comprise it.
- This is most visible in the Victorian Spatial Council, of which I have had the pleasure of being Chair since its inception in late 2004.
- The Council was set up to, and I quote,
 - *support the advancement of Victoria's social, economic and environmental goals through the provision and application of spatial information.*
- It does this by providing a community-wide approach to developing policy and strategy, to developing and managing spatial information, and to facilitating opportunities for partnerships and collaboration.
- Council members represent the major sectoral peak bodies active in Victoria.

- These are:
 - The Spatial Industries Business Association
 - The Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute
 - The Association of Consulting Surveyors Victoria
 - The Municipal Association of Victoria
 - The Local Government Spatial Reference Group
 - The Geospatial Information and Technology Association
 - The Victorian Government Spatial Group, and
 - The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials
 - As well as academia, the emergency services, land administration and the Australian Government
- All sectors of the spatial community therefore have a say in how the community develops and help shape its strategic direction.

Victorian Spatial Information Strategies

- This direction is set out in the three-yearly Victorian Spatial Information Strategies.
- These Strategies provide a framework for
 - addressing the requirements for managing spatial information and making it available,

- for collaboration and partnerships, and
- for being responsive to the changing policy and technology environment in which we are all operating.
- During this year, 2011, the Council is developing its second Strategy.
- It will continue our focus on the importance of the whole spatial information community working together, or being ‘engaged’, to achieve a ‘spatially enabled Victoria’.
- That is, applying spatial information to the delivery of services or the development of solutions to problems.
- Through this engagement, we all work together to
 - develop new products or services,
 - devise solutions to problems, and
 - create modern and relevant policies and legal and regulatory frameworks
- In the current strategy we are using this engagement to respond to the need to
 - Keep pace with rapid change
 - Encourage the release of data to support creativity and innovation
 - Encourage partnerships
 - Manage spatial information so that it can be used and exchanged
 - Find new ways to broaden the spatial information skills base, and

- Maintain a governance model based on participation and collaboration
- One of the strengths of Victoria's approach to engagement is the clear definition of the roles of all the sectors.
- In broad terms, we have defined these as follows.
- Government's role is to establish policies and standards, manage and provide fundamental data, and support new product development by the private sector.
- The private sector develops value added products and services, undertakes R&D, and manages its own data according to the community-wide standards.
- And academia provides education and undertakes R&D.
- The Council itself is the enabler.
- It builds the framework – or policies and rules – that encourages others' innovation and creativity and delivers on our goal of a spatially enabled Victoria.
- It is designing an environment in which the outcomes will evolve through the separate and collective actions of everyone.
- In doing this, it is creating the foundations others can build on.
- It provides the starting point that becomes the catalyst for action by the other members of the community.

Developing the spatial information community through collaboration and partnerships

- The certainty created by this approach provides opportunities for collaboration between and within the sectors.
- Through the Strategy, the Council is challenging the spatial information community to develop through greater collaboration and partnerships to capitalise on the strengths of the individual members and to share expertise.
- The community is being tested by
 - the entry of large corporations into the market and their growing dominance
 - the trend towards acquisition of specialist spatial information providers and developers by these corporations
 - the challenge to attract and retain skilled employees, and
 - the rapid expansion of technology requiring ever larger investments
- In response, the Strategy challenges the members to
 - Enter into alliances and joint ventures outside the traditional spatial industry, and to
 - Create clusters and networks to build on individual strengths and share technologies.
- There is a body of evidence that demonstrates that collaborative partnerships have a positive impact.

- They can stimulate innovation, exports, investment, high-quality jobs and new business opportunities.
- Collaboration can also provide opportunities for widening the pool of resources that can be applied to new developments.
- The Council also challenges Government to support the industry by providing access to its spatial data and support commercialisation of new products and services by the private sector.

Other activities of the VSC

- The Council is also involved in a range of other activities.
- It conducts a number of public forums each year so that key issues can be discussed and to inform the development of the Victorian Spatial Information Strategy.
- It participates debates and activities that set government direction.
- In recent years it has made a number of submissions to major government inquiries, task forces, discussion papers and policy developments.
- We present at conferences – such as this one – and to stakeholder groups throughout Victoria and interstate.
- Three times a year, we publish our industry magazine – Landmark – which is an important vehicle for communicating to the community and the wider public.
- And, we are also participating in setting a research agenda for spatial information with the Cooperative Research Centre for Spatial Information.

- Through all these activities, we play a major role in shaping and supporting the development of spatial information in Victoria.

Concluding remarks

- To conclude, the Victorian Spatial Council believes spatial information is a critical enabling infrastructure.
- It has significant potential to build society's capacity to deal with the many challenges it is facing.
- I am pleased to have had the opportunity to outline how the Victorian Spatial Council is encouraging the whole spatial information community to work together.
- I also have the pleasure of being involved on a range of boards and committees around Australia and am able to say that Victoria is well ahead in its governance approach and is setting the pace with innovative ways of managing and using spatial information.
- I encourage you to look at our web site to find out more about our activities.
- And I welcome the opportunity now to answer any questions you may have.
- Thank you.