

Spatially Enabled Policy and Strategy – Victorian Experience

Presentation to Beyond Spatial Enablement – 07 October 2011

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Introduction

- Good morning ladies and gentlemen.
- It is a pleasure to be here today and to formally launch the Council's new Spatial Information Strategy, setting the direction for Victoria's spatial information community to 2014.

This is a particularly welcome opportunity because the objective of our Strategy is to bring about a spatially enabled Victoria.

We have been working to achieve this goal since 2008.

Being 'spatially enabled' recognises the central role 'location' and 'place' have in delivering social, economic and environmental benefits to everyone.

It is the outcome of applying spatial information to the decisions we make about what kind of services are delivered or how we solve problems.

Achieving spatial enablement involves:

- Putting in place an **enabling platform**, ie accessible information and the technology to deliver it, standards, and opportunities for

collaboration and partnering

- **Governance** to bind together the technology, organisations and information that will comprise the enabling platform.
- And, the **engagement** of the whole spatial information community to build the platform and raise awareness about the capability of spatial information.

Our Strategy aims to provide the environment in which these three conditions can be delivered.

Before I say more about the Strategy, I'd like to say a few words about the VSC.

One of the reasons that Victoria has a strong spatial information community is the close collaboration between the government, industry, academic and professional sectors that comprise it.

This is most visible in the 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.

Through its activities, the VSC acts as an enabler for action by the whole Victorian spatial information community.

It does this through building the frameworks that allow others to act.

It is designing an environment in which the outcomes will evolve through the separate and collective actions of everyone.

The Council manages the framework to encourage innovation and creativity.

The fundamental requirements of this framework are good data, maintaining its supply and quality, providing access to it and enabling shared decision making.

The institutional environment for implementing the framework will balance the needs of information managers and providers with those who want data for creating new products and services.

For the VSC, this environment must be based on collaboration and sharing.

And as a result it should be easier to make information available, to collaborate between the sectors and to foster innovative use of information, including new technology.

We are attempting to set the agenda, through creating such an environment.

But at the same time we cannot ignore the changes that are making information more available and accessible.

We have identified that delivering spatial enablement in 2011-14 will be influenced by

- The increasing demand for open, mobile and continuous access to information.
- The proliferation of personal location information, complementing spatial data as we have traditionally understood it.
- The internet becoming a major driver of government, business and

personal activity, and making the search for information easier.

- The potential of the cloud to make spatial data more accessible and storage more affordable.

However, we must also address the lag between these demands and developments in technology, and the policy responses to them.

To help shape our response to these influences, our Strategy sets out the challenges to be addressed in the next three years.

How are we responding to these challenges?

To create a spatial enablement, I've already remarked that a strong institutional environment is needed.

Such an environment should give custodians the confidence to release their data to wider use and re-use, and that sharing their data has benefits to them as well as users.

We define 'institutional environment' quite broadly.

It is more than just the bodies making decisions and policy.

It also encompasses:

- a framework for managing information,
- decision making by and for the whole spatial information community, and

- collaboration and partnerships to develop new products and services, including adoption of new technology

In doing this, the environment should:

- Give custodians tools to manage their information and meet the growing demand for it
- Enable information to be made available, accessible and shared
- Define roles so that all sectors have confidence, and
- Improve data management practices.

One of the strengths of Victoria's approach is the clear definition of the roles of all the sectors.

In broad terms, we have defined these as follows.

- Government establishes policies and standards, manages and provides fundamental data, and supports development of new products by the private sector.
- The private sector develops value added products and services, and markets for them, undertakes R&D, and manages its own data according to the community-wide standards.
- And academia provides education and undertakes R&D.

Supporting these sectors, the Council plays the role of communicator, advocate, educator, facilitator, and supporter or sponsor of initiatives that show off the potential for spatial enablement.

The certainty and trust created by defining these roles provides opportunities for collaboration between and within the sectors of the spatial information community.

It is by drawing on the expertise of this community, and from the wider community more generally, that we will continue to meet our goal of facilitating access to and use of spatial information.

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
- Maintain a governance model based on participation and collaboration, and
- Raise awareness of the value of appropriate use of and investment in spatial information

Strategic directions

The Strategy is providing the Victorian spatial community with the tools to meet these challenges.

It incorporates four integrated **strategic directions**.

The first is **Creating a framework in which the use of spatial information can flourish**.

This framework incorporates

- standards
- clear articulation of the roles of all sectors
- a whole of Government approach to data management, delivery, sharing and access, and
- the necessary ‘rules framework’ relating to creation, provision, management and use of spatial information

Secondly, **Adopting an inclusive approach to the management of spatial information** ie, engaging others in improving the quality and currency of information.

The third direction is **Developing the spatial information community through collaboration and partnerships** by encouraging

- Creation of clusters and networks to build additional capacity, and
- Entering into alliances outside the traditional spatial information industry

Finally, we aim to **Maintain the foundations for spatial information management by articulating and promoting standard principles for data management**.

Conclusion

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 to create a spatially enabled Victoria.

And to show how our policy and strategic framework are shaping and supporting those efforts.

I encourage you to look at our web site to find out more about how we are doing this, and to access a copy of the Strategy.

And I welcome the opportunity now to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you