



"Working Together"



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**WORKING TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL AND STATE
UNIFORMITY IN DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION**

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IPWEAQ
2003 STATE CONFERENCE
MACKAY



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WORKING TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL AND STATE UNIFORMITY IN DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

"WORKING TOGETHER"

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Abstract

The scope of this paper is to present attendees with the journey taken by the regional approach to developing and implementing uniform standards associated with Engineering Works for planning, design and construction.

By coordinating and facilitating the process of bringing key staff from various Municipal organisations together and reviewing current processes, the opportunity of regional agreement to adopt and utilise standards has evolved into a realistic approach.

Rather than view the potential introduction of any standard in isolation, it was considered more appropriate to include colleagues from adjacent Councils in an attempt to gain the most from a regional implementation with economies of scale and assist the development industry with a uniform standard that covers the region.

To achieve consensus from these neighbouring Councils was both the challenge and incentive in for the representatives.

**Key Words: AusSpec #1B, ADAC – Asset Design & As Construction, IPWEAQ
Standard Drawings, economies of scale, standards, consensus, regional.**



Introduction

Primarily all local governments within Australia and around the world exist for similar if not the same fundamental requirements. That is to provide their community and ratepayers with appropriate services to the required levels suitable for supporting the environment, the community, asset management and sustainability.

In doing so and from past experience many Councils have travelled a path whereby processes and systems to handle these requirements have been developed in house and in isolation to neighbouring Councils.

The way forward to ease rising internal operational costs and to take the greatest

grip on economies of scale for both local governments and the development industry is to “Work Together” to achieve uniformity of standards that are common to each Municipality.

To have the same “Big Mac” in Cairns as it is in Brisbane in relation to core standards for construction and documentation should be the ultimate aim.

Innovative designs and ideas should still be developed and encouraged, however the quality of construction and levels of service for assets should consistently meet the agreed community’s requirements.

Collectively regionalisation of Councils standards has the ability to provide better

services to users. Savings in the production costs of documentation across a number of Municipalities is merely the first step to assist in providing a streamlined approach to development applications.

Consistency in regional planning schemes ensures a planned approach to community's needs that resided within a region and are not bounded by Municipal boundaries. They can allow for specific requirements that are distinct to that area and provide a consistent approach for the development industry.

As part of a view for the bigger picture the philosophy of "Think Big, Start Small and Implement Fast" was adopted.

The "bigger picture" considered the overall planning, design, construction and asset management approach.

The "start small" considered working on those issues that could be achieved in "bite size pieces" that when placed together completed the jigsaw puzzle for the bigger picture.

The "implement fast" focussed on once identified and a solution sourced then using the momentum and energy of the participants to "work together" to develop the working solution into a practical application.

Maroochy Shire Council as a member of the Northern Region, South East Queensland group of Councils that have joined forces to proactively investigate the benefits of implementing uniformity across the region, initially in relation to AusSpec, but also to consider other areas of standardisation that can assist with the issues and problems that face all Local Councils.

AusSpec



For those that may not know AusSpec is a series of specification documents produced in a joint venture with the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia, Sinclair Knight Merz and the Australian Local Government Association.

These documents are widely used by Local Governments in Victoria and New South

Wales with the intent of becoming a nationally recognised specification.

These Specifications cover areas such as: Development Design and Construction, Asset Owners Roadwork's, Standard Contract Documents, Road Reserve Maintenance, Parks and Recreation Area Maintenance, Buildings & Facilities Maintenance.

The initiative of LGA and IPWEA recognised the need to provide guidance and resources to the AusSpec production in the specification area that was impacting on Local Government operations.

These specifications provided the opportunity not to "reinvent the wheel", as these specifications were a substantial starting point.

Representatives from Pine Rivers Shire, Redcliffe City, Caboolture Shire, Caloundra City, Maroochy Shire, Noosa Council and Cooloolo Shire work together to achieve sign off of the documentation for AusSpec #1B Development Construction, enabling each Council to reference these documents in their planning schemes and provide a consistent approach for the development industry in the region.

ADAC – Asset Design & As Constructed



The outcome of this project is to produce a modular system software package to be utilised in the design and as constructed documentation stages, which will provide participating Councils with a uniform format of documentation for contributed assets. The Participating Councils involved in the ADAC process to date include Brisbane City, Caboolture Shire, Caloundra City, Maroochy Shire and Noosa Council. Other Councils interested in future participation include Pine Rivers Shire and Cooloolo Shire, however participation is open to any Local Council who wished to sign up and abide by the principles of the participation agreement.

The basis of the ADAC project commenced to investigate the prospects of a regional approach to the provision of as constructed

documentation to a regional participating group of Councils.

Initially the project was formed with representatives from the "SUNROC & CSC" group of Councils that included Caboolture Shire, Caloundra City, Maroochy Shire and Noosa Council.

The project saw representatives from the four neighbouring Councils commence discussions back in July 2001 on the potential to develop an interim (tactical) solution for the provision of as constructed documentation from developers to Council, as well as to assist with the internally constructed assets being documented appropriately.

The participating group was conscious of the Brisbane City Council and SEQROC "Request for Proposal Digital Lodgement Consultancy", and the group provided regular feedback to these consultants on the projects progress.

In May 2003 and from ongoing discussions between the participating group and Brisbane City Council representatives, an expansion of the alliance of the participating Councils was forged to include Brisbane City as the fifth member of the participating group.

Consensus on the ADAC data model between all five Councils was achieved with only some further enhancements to the product being required.

Consultation with development industry partners was established to provide feedback on the product and the process with beta data to enable fine-tuning of the operation of the ADAC routines.

The Project is in its final stages of piloting with relevant external partners and will be provided free of charge to consultants within the development industry.

IPWEAQ Standard Drawings

A joint venture, which has recently commenced is the review of current IPWEAQ Standard Drawings and update process.

Regional centres of Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Southeast Queensland, Southwest Queensland and Bundaberg/Wide Bay have been visited by representatives from Maroochy Shire Council on behalf of the IPWEAQ to investigate issues and ideas to move forward with core state standard drawings.

At these regional meetings surrounding Council representatives were invited and involved in an initial presentation and subsequent workshop to determine the current usage, issues and future requirements.

It is intended that the update process will take shape through the formation of a Working Reference Group, which is then accountable to the IPWEAQ Standard Drawing Committee. This reference group would consist of Regional Local Council representatives, who will incorporate requests and requirements from their regional councils together with representatives from the Development Industry.

Recognised benefits delivered through an integrated approach could include: cost, resource and knowledge sharing, consistency for Council and development construction works, improved Council networks, partnership opportunities and relationship building between Council's, the development industry and IPWEA.

This review will pave the way for an improved ongoing process for the maintenance and updating, with due ownership and responsibility being allocated to all participants.



Many attending Council representatives indicated their positive acceptance to the idea of providing relevant drafting resources and to manage a number of drawings on behalf of the wider group.

In addition a number of smaller Councils without the ability to provide drafting resources were keen to provide peer review and feedback be part of the distribution group.

Recommended Action Plan:

From the statewide presentations and investigation with the regional Councils, the following action plan has been developed:

Step 1 - Report to IPWEAQ (September 2003)

- Draft a report to all councils for comment prior to the IPWEAQ,
- Present report to the IPWEAQ,
- Report to highlight Councils requirements/expectations/wishes/outlined a preferred model for maintenance, updating and subscription,
- Summarise outcomes of the regional workshops,
- Make recommendations for a way forward,
- Propose timelines,
- Identify lead representatives and working members.

Step 2 - IPWEAQ Conference Mackay (October 2003)

- Complete paper and presentation,
- Present report and overview of the outcomes,
- An opportunity for increasing awareness.

Step 3 - IPWEAQ Support and Sign-off (October 2003)

- Gain Maroochy Shire Council Management approval to resource the coordination role,
- Gain agreement, sign off and backing from IPWEAQ for a preferred model.

Step 4 - Development of a Detailed Business Model (November 2003)

- Identify required processes and systems,
- Detail a proposed funding model,
- Identify resource requirements, a formal reporting structure and a communication strategy,
- Develop a staged approach, possible interim administration and coordination role,
- Develop a handover strategy.

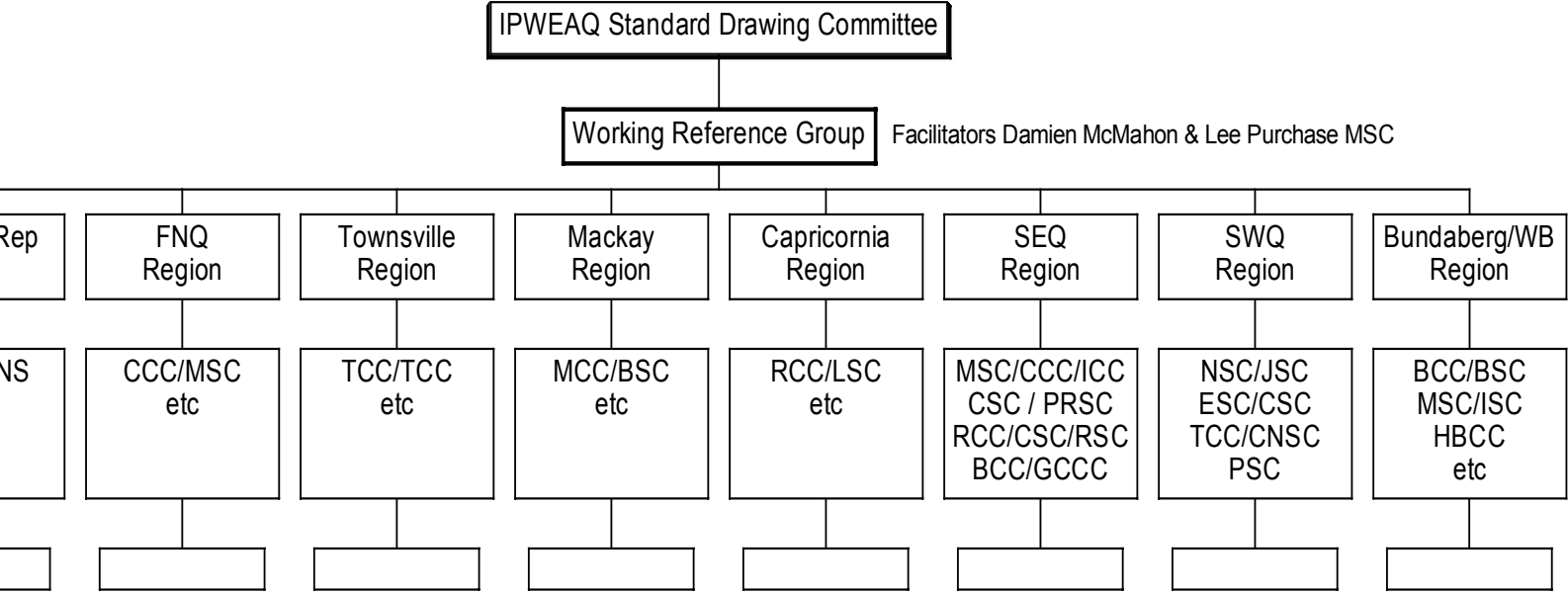
Step 5 - Formal Commitments from Queensland Councils

- Gain commitment at the relevant management level from Councils (January 2004),
- Identify any required budget allocations for 2004/05 financial year (March 2004),
- Determine timelines and milestones,
- Determine resource requirements,
- Ascertain positive cost benefit analysis.
- Notification to appropriate professional or government bodies who may assist in further raising of awareness and possible gaining any level of available support

Step 6 – Implement of Standard Drawing Review Process

- (May – July 2004)

Proposed Draft Reporting Structure



Obstacles Identified

Some of probable obstacles to overcome, which were identified during this process were:

- Distance required to travel and failure of attendance of representatives to planned meetings
- Time and resources to required review the current standard drawings
- Cultural changes required within each Council
- Agreement and consensus on any changes across all Councils
- Various timeframes for implementation eg IPA requirements
- Existing policies or procedures entrenched within Councils
- Potential non-acceptance by the development industry
- Funding/budget requirements for each Council
- Training for use internally & externally to Councils

Outcomes and Opportunities

Common themes for likely outcomes and expectations are summarised below:

- A uniform State-wide set of core drawings with regional localised variations,
- Public works best practice,
- Council and industry involvement with the ability to effect change,
- Commitment from all stakeholders
- Economies of scale,
- Minimal duplication, consistency, cross reference and complimenting of other standards,
- A timely outcome,
- Central point for coordination and management,
- Business model covering: administration, funding, processes, feedback and documentation,
- A sustainable process.

Conclusion

In conclusion steps 1 and 2 from the IPWEAQ Standard Drawings Action Plan are now complete, including part of step 3 being the commitment by Maroochy Shire Council to continue to provide facilitation support.

The IPWEAQ are required to formalise their decision and support of the recommendations from the report on the way forward.

However it is clear that the benefits of utilising shared knowledge, resources and recognition of common goals in regional and state approaches have provided an opportunity for all local Councils to assist each other in **"WORKING TOGETHER – REGIONS, PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNITIES, ALLIANCES"** towards and achieving solutions to a number of ongoing issues that currently exist for many.

Unless individual Councils have the luxury to set aside dedicated staff to undertake the implementation process of a project like this then it will be forever an ongoing problem for organisations in the Local Government environment of tight financial constraints to undertake.

The main obstacles are primarily cultural changes that needed to occur within the individual organisations. Staff time can be better utilised through this approach.

The interaction, support and extension of personal networks have further developed between staff from various Councils and also provided greater opportunity and confidence to consider other ventures on a regional basis.

Jointly and unified these issues can be overcome and better service to the community and development industry can be provided.

References

<http://aus-spec.skm.com.au/index.html>

<http://www.smecpms.com/adac/>

Author Biography



Lee currently works for Maroochy Shire Council as a Service Planner. He has previously worked for 4 other Local Authorities within Victoria and Queensland, including 2 State Authorities (State Electricity Commission and Vicroads).

Lee has an engineering design background that has also allowed him to operate his own business involved in computer aided design drafting support and teaching CADD at TAFE levels over a 3 year period.

Lee's current focus is forming alliances and working together to share knowledge and information to better improve the business operations and ultimately services to community.

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Damien currently works for Maroochy shire Council as a Service Planner. Similar to Lee, Damien also has an engineering design background, which has assisted his foundation and interest in the constant theme of engineering standards.

Damien's qualifications include a Bachelor of Engineering Technology (Civil), which he has supplemented with a Graduate Diploma in Engineering Technology (Environmental).

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