

AYP Project - the IPWEA strategy for attracting young people to public works engineering

By **Warren Roberts, National President, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia**

We are all into that season where time is spent on the preparation of budgets, reviewing corporate/council plans, strategic planning, resource planning, and ensuring the delivery of the current projects.

It is a time when you will consider staffing levels, recruitment and selection, retention strategies and the methodology for project delivery. As such it is timely to remind you all of the importance of keeping abreast of the work being undertaken by the National Board on these important issues.

Over recent time it is apparent that the recruitment of young and experienced engineers into the public works industry is challenging, there are fewer applicants and the perception of engineering as a career is not attractive. As such the National Board has resolved to take positive action in the development of a strategic approach to attracting young people to a career in public works. The strategic overview incorporates a three level approach:

1. Strategic - 'Engineering as a Career'
2. Industry - 'Local Government/Public Works as a career'
3. Local - 'Your organisation' as an Employer.

The development of an industry response is critical when you consider that over the next 10-15 years up to 50% of Australia's engineers will be retiring, combined with the fact that in 2004 some 1,700 first year engineering places in university places were not filled despite the current shortage.

When you consider the context of the choice of careers and employment opportunities available for graduates and the increasing focus on issues including infrastructure, asset management, environment, and community advocacy, you would agree that the project is critical for our profession and communities. Therefore it is crucial for the IPWEA to establish and maintain strategic alliances with a broad range of industry partners to ensure that we are able to positively contribute and address the challenges of sustainable employment and professional staffing numbers for the future.

As such the National Board is convening a strategic forum in Sydney with two representatives from all State Divisions attending. Importantly one of the two representatives from each state will be a young engineer; in addition the Chief Executive of Engineers Australia



Warren Roberts, IPWEA President.

will be participating. The forum will ensure that the IPWEA approach will be relevant, effective and outcome focused with identified actions being developed. I look forward to providing an update on the meeting and the resultant action plan later.

National Emerging Leader Award Launched

Continuing on the 'young' theme, I am pleased to announce that the National Board resolved to establish and support an award for 'National Emerging Leaders'. The awards will be presented to each of the award winners at the upcoming International Conference in Adelaide. The aim of the award is to inspire excellence and dedication in public works by recognising outstanding achievements of public works professionals from both public and private sectors. Each State Division will be encouraged to make a nomination for the Emerging Leaders Award. This is an important way of recognising the ongoing contribution towards our industry and providing an opportunity to celebrate the successes in a positive way. I would encourage you all to nominate an Emerging Leader to your State Divisions.

I have raised the issue in previous months but again, in light of the current environment and in an endeavour to

New NAMS.AU Committee Chair

I am pleased to advise of the appointment of Mr Peter Way as the new Chair of NAMS, following Ross Moody's appointment as Executive Officer IPWEA National.

Peter has made a significant contribution to the National and Queensland IPWEA and public works industry over many years. He is a former President and Board member of IPWEA at a national and state level, and is the current Chair of the Queensland Foundation for Local Government Engineering. He was awarded the Public Service Medal in 1998 and has been very active in the



Peter Way

promotion of asset management. Peter is eminently qualified to Chair the NAMS.AU Committee.

maintain the importance of the issue of Young Public Works Professionals, I would, depending what is relevant to you, 'encourage', 'request', 'challenge' and for some tell you to do something about supporting your young staff. This can be achieved through inviting them to your state conferences, seminars, and networking meetings, providing the opportunity to participate in working groups, attend training and, over the next months, budgeting for them to attend the IPWEA International Public Works Conference in Adelaide. The issue warrants personal attention and intervention - don't leave it to someone else, or the risk is the opportunity is missed.

Consultants Roundtable Forum

The NAMS committee held a Consultants Roundtable Forum on Asset Management in Melbourne. The purpose of the forum was to provide an opportunity to engage and update consultants on the ongoing work of NAMS, provide an overview of current projects and invite feedback into the strategic program over the next five years. The forum was well attended with over 17 national companies represented

by 43 consultants. Mr Kevin Hannagan, CEO of Strathbogie Shire in Victoria, facilitated the forum. The discussion and contribution by all attendees was extremely valuable and will ensure that the role of NAMS in providing the ongoing focus for asset management on a national level. The success of the forum reflected the willing participation and commitment of the participants and also Kevin in his important role of facilitating and, on your behalf, I would like to recognise and thank them for attending.

Adelaide International Public Works Conference

The Adelaide International Public Works Conference - 21-25th August is shaping up to be an exciting and relevant event that will provide an excellent opportunity to learn from the experiences of public works professionals both from within Australia and internationally. The sessions are relevant and will provide current best practice material that will benefit your local communities and provide professional development and networking opportunities. I encourage you all to attend - bring your young professionals

and elected members to what will be a successful and memorable event.

National Board Changes

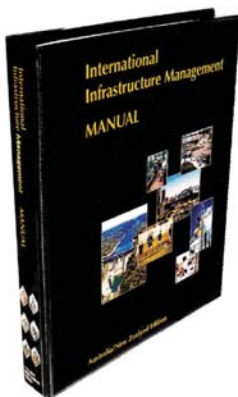
The National Board meeting was held in Sydney and I would like to take the opportunity to introduce two new National board members: Mr John Truman (NSW) and Mr Dawson Wilkie (QLD). The agenda was extensive and provided an opportunity for the Board to resolve on a number of key actions for the future.

In closing I would like to remind you that the achievements of IPWEA do not just happen, they are the result of hard work on the part of the National and State Board Members, Executive Officers, Conference Committee members and representatives of IPWEA on numerous panels and forums. I again ask for your support in promoting membership, participating in activities and taking the opportunity as it arises to become active in the Institute - with increasing membership we can continue to be a major advocate for public works issues. ▲

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Plant & Vehicle Management TRAINING

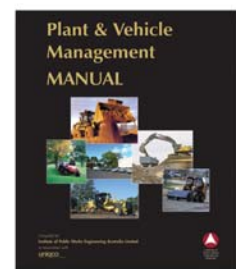
How To of Plant & Vehicle Management

2 day workshop

NSW
Sydney (14-15 Jun)

VIC
Melbourne (17-18 May)

QLD
Townsville (17-18 Oct)
Brisbane (18-19 July)



Mechanical Workshop Management

1 day workshop

NSW
Sydney (26 May)

QLD
Brisbane (16 Jun)

Register Online
www.ipwea.org.au/fleet