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Are your design briefs getting the most from Consultants?

The lowest bid generally wins the tender. But does lowest cost represent the best value to Government? There seems to be a growing concern about this issue in the stormwater industry and in related industries. **I've had numerous discussions** with many fellow consultants agreeing that some discussion on the topic would be beneficial. **So here goes... I will start the conversation** and hopefully others will join in with a view to better our industry. I must initially declare that I am a consultant and this is an opinion piece. However, our industry can only stand to benefit from some healthy discussion on this matter. This is a subject that service providers often grumble about and feel powerless to change industry practice. Although it may seem uncomfortable at first I encourage you to have your say; tell us about your experiences or thoughts on this subject.

Firstly, let's define value. Value for money is a term used to assess whether or not an organisation has obtained the maximum benefit from the services it acquires, within the resources available to it. Therefore, it is inherent in the definition that there needs to be a balancing of cost and quality. Cost is the easy thing to measure and rank. However, other elements may be subjective, difficult to measure, intangible and misunderstood. Judgement is therefore required when considering whether value for money has been satisfactorily achieved or not. It not only measures the cost of goods and services, but also takes account of the mix of quality, cost, resource use, fitness for purpose, timeliness, and convenience to judge whether or not, together, they constitute good value. It is the "judgement" applied to non-price factors that seems to be inconsistent. Sometimes judgement of non-price elements does not appear to be happening at all in selecting tenderers.

Why don't government officers always differentiate based on experience? How is it that a consultant with 10+ years experience in a particular field can be ranked the same as a consultant with a few years experience? I hear again and again that if consultants are invited to tender that they are all rated the same for experience. Is this really the case for our industry? I can understand why this happens. Government bodies, particularly councils, are usually

Chat Around The Traps

strapped for resources. **It may be that they don't have adequate supply of resources and are extremely busy or that they don't have particular expertise.** A quick cursory assessment where the primary distinction is based on price is certainly tempting.

Typical government in briefs state that they are not bound by the lowest bid.

However, the feedback that government is increasingly providing is that it is price that is the sole differentiator. This translates to more projects being compromised and either needing experienced practitioners brought in to bail out the floundering project, or worse that the project results in a poor outcome. Low bids limit experienced consultant input. Experienced (good) consultants are in demand and market forces drives their rates up to higher levels. The higher rates places stress on the tender values so there is pressure to use cheaper rates which are akin to more junior (inexperienced) staff. As a result the innovation **and "solution smarts" can readily be compromised in low bids.**

Low bids may also result in higher implementation costs. A low cost design may not give due consideration to construction costs which may roll into higher operational and maintenance costs. A well considered design will explore consequences of capital and operational costs within the initial design phase which is often referred to as value management. This may be as simple as having an experienced practitioner involved at key stages of design development instead of continually costing out particular scenarios.

Many projects involve several disciplines e.g. landscape, structural, cultural, planning, etc. It is the interfaces with these other disciplines where gaps in the scope can appear and pose risk to the project. An experienced practitioner can usually identify overall project risks at the interface early in the timeline, assist in managing them to minimize impact or avoiding them altogether. Continued on pg 3.

Stormwater Victoria's Biggest Day Out!

Our big day on August 10th, at the Royal Melbourne Golf Course, saw some great discussions and valuable presentations. The day was broken down into four main events, each drawing mixed and individual audiences.

The (crack of dawn) tour was enjoyed by all accounts. Hosted by Peter Gordon of Permeate Partners, and touring the implemented water & irrigation resolutions to the Golf Club's previous issues, the comments received from those who had attended were glowing, and indicated that it was well worth the walk around the golf course at 7.15am & 8 degrees!

The AGM breakfast saw some increased numbers, including committee members and SV friends. We managed to move through the official proceedings very quickly with a well received **President's Report (from the snow), Treasurer's Report,** and rules clause changes. We elected our new committee with a couple of last minute nominations, and the new committee members can be identified on our committee page of the website (as well as the back page of the newsletter!)

The Who Else Is Who Seminar, emceed by Andrew Allan, was attended by a mix of new and familiar industry friends, including our SIA National President Steve Frost. Our keynote speaker Mike Waller (Chairperson Living Melbourne, Living Victoria Ministerial Advisory Council) began the speakers with an overview of the **MAC's roadmap. It set the stage for a varied and interesting mix of presentations and conversations regarding current projects, perspectives and projections from the eight following industry representatives: Steve Dunn, Lucia Cade, Steve Copland, Geoff Glynn, Heidi Ryan, Emily Kaye, Scott Graham & Mark Babister.**

There were further discussions with questions and mingling over morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

Virginia Brown, Cameron McLennan and Dr. ChingHong Pu from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water,

Population and Communities flew in from Canberra just for the occasion. Virginia presented an overview of the **'National Urban & Desalination Plan'** - 3rd round funding grants and gave suggestions for completing project applications correctly and effectively. This was met with great interest from the attendees and the briefing was followed with many questions, answered by Cameron & Hong. Virginia commented afterwards that she was impressed at the level of interest in the program, and would be happy to return next year for our AGM/Seminar to present on the outcomes.

I think it's fair to say that we had a successful day, that was enjoyed by those who attended.

We will be making the presentations, photos and notes from the seminar and briefing available on the web, and

I'm happy to forward these to anyone who's interested.



Andrew Allan introducing a speaker: Who Else is Who Seminar

SA Stormwater Harvesting Knowledge Sharing Tour

The SA knowledge sharing tour of stormwater harvesting and waste water reuse projects in Adelaide on the 4th & 5th **August, was a great success with it's attendees finding it enjoyable, useful, and informative.** Now, that we are all back home and the dust has settled (with a help of a few rainy days) we would like to say thank you to those who attended the event (despite the foreign ash cloud invasion and associated delays!) and making this event a success. As a follow up from the event Iouri Vaisman, our special projects committee representative, prepared an article on the tour and would like to share it with you. To view the article, click on the link: www.stormwatervictoria.com.au We, would love to receive your feedback on the article (or the tour!) and any future interest in organising/attending similar knowledge sharing events in Victoria, in the years to come. Shall we make the knowledge sharing tour an annual event? What are the projects that we can/should showcase to our interstate colleagues?

We would like to hear from you on this and other topics related to the wider uptake of stormwater as a resource in Victoria. And, of course, as a member of Stormwater Victoria, we would like to invite you to join us in our quest to improving the management of stormwater, promoting and recognising industry best practice, building industry capacity to deliver sustainable urban water management solutions and raising the awareness of stormwater management within the wider community.

Please contact our office at Stormwater Victoria, with any comments or for further discussion.



TGAA Trade Day

Turf & Grounds Association of Australia Victoria is having a Seminar and Trade Day Event on November 23rd, at Wesley College in Glen Waverley. Upon request, Stormwater Victoria will be presenting on "Practical Tips for Planning Projects", "Linking Horticulture with Hydrology", & "Stormwater Background & Case Studies". The Event will take place at Wesley College, on Wednesday November 23rd.

For more information, please contact our office on 0409 978 453, or office@stormwatervictoria.com.au

Innovation in Water Management & Treatment Conference

SV's president Rod Wiese has been asked to speak at the upcoming 'Innovation in Urban Water Management & Treatment Conference', on November 22nd & 23rd at the Sebel Albert Park. This conference will analyse leading-edge engineering practices, technologies and strategies that support local governments and water authorities to implement sustainable and integrated water management systems in Australia's cities, suburbs and rural town centres. For more information about the conference visit its website www.watertreatmentconference.com.au

Dates for the Calendar

Oct 14th, 2011:
WSUD Tour - Stonnington & Port Phillip - limited places!!
(Clearwater)

Oct 28th, 2011:
Stormwater Harvesting
- Concept & Design - new!
(Clearwater)

Nov 23rd, 2011
TGAA
Seminar & Trade Day

Nov 22nd & 23rd, 2011:
Hallmark Editions:
Innovation in Water Management
& Treatment Conference

EVENTS

Are your design briefs getting the most from Consultants? . . . From pg 1

It is human nature to avoid difficult tasks and short cuts are attractive. I have observed many organisations reducing their workload by grouping a number of stages into one single tender document. **For example, a "design brief" may include MasterPlanning through to detailed design.** A lump sum fee is expected to be provided without a clear vision for the project. This imposes myriad risks for both government and the service provider. Ideally, briefs would be split into numerous stages to ensure the best outcome, however, this does mean a higher demand on government resources. A considered staging of design briefs allows proper consideration of all opportunities, **full exploration of government's vision** and appropriate resourcing from various practitioners commensurate with their expertise at the different stages. Without appropriate delineation of design briefs there is high risk on Government that they may end up with a sub-standard

project that may attract higher construction and operational costs. It also places considerable risk on the service provider **as there are many "unknowns" that they have to assume.** In compensating for this risk, the service provider must undertake some feasibility work or add a fee for the relevant risk being identified. Exclusions and qualifications can share some of this risk but I have noted a recent brief where exclusions and qualification were not allowed! This seems an unproductive assignment of risk. I advocate that we improve our industry design briefs and the subsequent assessment to fully consider the non-fee value that service providers can bring to a project. What do you think? There is a lot more that could be written on this subject but I would prefer some discussion at this stage. These are my thoughts from one side of the fence – let me know yours. Email us at office@stormwatervictoria.com.au

Stormwater Victoria Study tour scholarship

Stormwater Victoria would like to congratulate Ralph Pfliederer from the City of Melbourne as the worthy recipient of the 2011 Water Sensitive Cities study tour scholarship. the SV scholarship contributes \$5,000 towards travel and accommodation expenses as Ralph embarks on a journey of discovery looking at water management and sustainability in Australia and overseas. The study tour is best described as 'learning by doing.' Each tour group is responsible for setting their own itineraries, budgets and promotional activities and learn to work as a

team. This year the study tour will have up to 20 participants, drawn from across Australia, and representing Councils, consultants and water authorities. The current cohort of travelling scholars is the third tour group to embark on a journey of discovery, camaraderie and network building. Nationally, and particularly in Victoria study tour participants have moved on to play influential roles in the Association and industry. Bon Voyage Ralph, and looking forward to a tale or two when you return.

2011 Excellence Awards

We hosted our annual Excellence Awards this month at Crown Towers in Southbank, on September 7th.

The evening began to the beautiful "water" tunes of University of Melbourne's string quartet, who played a varied selection of relevant pieces, including Vivaldi's 'four seasons', Handel's water music, "Singing in the Rain" & "Rubber Ducky", during our cocktail hour, while guests arrived and mingled in reception area.

The evening was hosted and presented by our own committee member Andrew Clifton, of Rocla, who gave us a recap on the year past in stormwater, and entertained us with his comedic expertise.

We were very fortunate to be in the company of all of our finalists this year, who presented a very impressive and competitive collection of projects in the areas of Asset Management, Infrastructure, Strategic & Master Planning, and Research, Innovation, Policy & Education.

Our judges granted six awards - two merits and four winners, in the four categories (see pictures and blurbs below).

A great thank you is due to our judging panel, who put forward an enormous effort for this event - Esther Kay, Rod Wiese, Andrew Allan, Dr. Stewart Burn, Dr. Luis Newmann, Madeline Laursen and Pat Arundell.

And a special thanks to our sponsors for this event, Melbourne Water and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Acknowledging our Finalists ..



Acknowledging our Merit Winners ..



Congratulations Pipelines Alliance - Merit Award for



Congratulations CPG Australia - Merit Award for Excellence in Strategic & Master Planning

Acknowledging our Winners . .

Asset Management:

Winner: Moonee Valley City Council

Project: Moonee Valley Integrated Water Asset Management

The central premise to the Moonee Valley Asset Management Program is to have a strategic and holistic approach in place. This recognises that strong policy, data management, and staff engagement is as vital as having the maintenance procedures and costings in place.

Moonee Valley's Integrated Water Asset Management Program ensures upkeep, good operation, staff and community understanding of all stormwater assets that are built in the municipality. The design, construction and upkeep of these assets are developed to address the following stormwater issues quoted from the recently adopted Water Strategy 2011

Water Strategy 2011

Infrastructure:

Winner: Knox City Council, in conjunction with Monash University, The University of Melbourne, Contek Constructions Pty Ltd, and the Victorian Government - **Melbourne Water's**

healthy Waterways Program
Project: Protecting Dobsons Creek from Degradation - Wicks Reserve Bio-Infiltration System

The aim of the project is to provide a measurable ecological improvement to the creek (as measured by a range of ecological indicators). The project therefore goes beyond the normal load reduction targets, aiming to restore the quality, frequency, volume and timing of flows in Dobsons Creek to their natural level.. At the same time, a principal aim of the project is to demonstrate the integration of stormwater management into the landscape, to both reduce environmental impacts of stormwater, and to reduce the risk and consequence of flooding.

Strategic & Master Planning:

Winner: Parsons Brinckerhoff, in conjunction with Brimbank City Council and City West Water, with recognition to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities Department of Sustainability and Environment Vision for Werribee Plains

Project: Brimbank City Council Alternative Water Strategy
Utilization of alternative water sources is a key aspect of the Australian Government's Water for the Future plan which focuses on four key priorities: taking action on climate change, using water wisely, securing water supplies and supporting healthy rivers.

This investigation used an innovative multi-criteria analysis approach, combining social, environmental and economic criteria to determine the optimal non-potable water supply for each site involved. The non-potable water types assessed included sewer mining, groundwater extraction, stormwater harvesting and carting of recycled water. Based on this approach stormwater harvesting was found to be the most preferable alternative water source to service the identified sites.

Research, Innovation, Policy & Education:

Winner: City of Port Phillip, acknowledging **Melbourne Water's** Living Rivers Stormwater Program

Project: The City of Port Phillip Water Plan – Towards a Water Sensitive City

The Water Plan aims to articulate and respond to the needs of council's key partners and stakeholders. To this end the City of Port Phillip undertook extensive consultation on the Water Plan between December 2009 and April 2010 as part of the adoption process. This included key players in the water sector, such as Melbourne Water and South East Water, as well as the community, engaging with over 160 community members as part of council's Climate Conversations



Congratulations Moonee Valley City Council - Winner of Excellence in Asset Management



Congratulations Knox City Council - Winner of Excellence in Infrastructure



Congratulations Parsons Brinckerhoff - Winner of Excellence in Strategic & Master Planning



Congratulations City of Port Phillip - Winner of Excellence in Research, Innovation, Policy & Education:

Have Your Say!

The Stormwater Industry Association is currently beginning the preparations to **present it's bi-annual National Conference**. For the second time in a row, the Conference will be hosted by Victoria. With the pending release of notifications and marketing materials, the national and Victorian committees are looking to allocate an appropriate theme to the event. The committee is reaching out to Victorian members of Stormwater Victoria to make suggestions to the SV office by this Friday, September 30th. All submitted suggestions will be reviewed by the committee.

Please forward any suggestions to:
office@stormwatervictoria.com.au

For further information, please call Kate Dunn on 0409 978 453

IN THE OFFICE

Introducing the

2011-2012 Stormwater Victoria Committee

Our Annual General Meeting, held at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club, on August 10th, 2011 saw the election of our new office bearers and committee members.

We're very happy to announce the 2011-2012 Committee:

Office Bearers:

President	Rod Wiese (Storm Consulting)
Vice-President	Sheridan Blunt (Moonee Valley City Council)
Secretary	Damien D'Aspromonte (Parsons Brinckerhoff)
Treasurer	Andrew Allan (Manningham City Council)

Committee Members:

Iouri Vaisman - The Water & Carbon Group
Mandy Bolton - DSE
Andrew Clifton - Rocla
Peter Diprose - Humes
Leigh Holmes - CPG
Nathan Clements - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Tania Struzina - Clearwater
Justin Lewis - Melbourne Water
Michael Wicks - Stormwater 360
Scott Dunn - Engeny
Philip Joyce - GHD
Chris Beardshaw - Water Technology
John Chrispijn (TAS) - Derwent Estuary Program
John DeVries (TAS) - Derwent Estuary Program

We are very happy this year to extend a very warm welcome to our new Tasmanian representatives, John Chrispijn & John DeVries. It is a first for Stormwater Victoria **Committee, and we're very excited about growing the community in Tasmania.**

Thank You 2010-2011 Committee

The last year has seen many successes and achievements for Stormwater Victoria and this would not have been possible without the incredible work of our 2010-2011 Committee. Fortunately, many of our committee have joined us again for the **new year, (as listed above) and unfortunately we're saying good-bye to some.** We would like to acknowledge:

Peter Morison - Melbourne Water
Esther Kay - Environment and Land Management
David Howard - GHD
Emily Kaye - Clearwater
Ben Nguyen - Humes Water Solutions
Nina Barich - Melbourne Water
Sarah Law - Water Technology
Robert Sundblom - Monash City Council
Jamie Tainton - Storm Consulting