



MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING FOUNDATION VICTORIA

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT – 2020

I am pleased to provide my annual report which reflects on the challenges and opportunities of 2020 and more importantly provides an insight into 2021.

The past year has provided major challenges for the Foundation as it has for all Victorian, Australian and International communities. COVID19 resulted in major restrictions from both personal and professional perspectives that required significant adaption and innovation. We, like many Councils and Organisations made the decision to cease face to face meetings and instead utilised zoom meetings to allow the Trustees to communicate and continue to focus on the business and performance of the Foundation.

The Foundation were pleased to have received a significant number of applications for our 2020 Study Tour and following interviews had announced the successful awardees:

Michelle Dimitrovski – Civil Design Engineer, Hume City Council

Anthony Stratikopoulos _ Coordinator of Stormwater Engineering, Yarra Ranges Council

Edward Pocock – Manager Infrastructure and Delivery, Baw Baw Shire Council

Guy Wilson Browne – Director City Services, Greater Geelong City Council

The awardees had commenced the planning and development of their itinerary and were well advanced when the full impact of COVID19 and the nature of the global pandemic unfolded. As such we made the decision to defer the tour and to work with the awardees in planning an amended study to occur when the virus is under control and a vaccine is available.

This decision was further validated as evidenced by the decision of the APWA to cancel the New Orleans 2019 Congress as well as the Chicago Chapter of APWA deferring the 2020 Victorian Study tour to 2021. We are continuing to work collaboratively with our colleagues in Chicago and maintaining a strong international relationship and partnership.

On a more positive note I am pleased to advise that we are providing speakers for a webinar for the professional development of Chicago APWA members. The webinar has been rescheduled to early 2021. The speakers are Mark Varmalis MEFVic Trustee, Debbie Leeson-Rabi and Steven White and they will be sharing their insights into Public Works and the impact of COVID19. The webinar will be jointly moderated by Mr John P Mick (Tex) Chairman of the APWA Chicago International Affairs Committee and me as Chairman of the Foundation.

For the Foundation it also meant that a number of the other awards and support for the Public Works sector and IPWEA had to be modified to reflect the broader State and National issues resulting from lockdowns and restrictions. We continued to support the Victorian IPWEA programs and training programs.

From a financial perspective we have been focused on maintaining our financial base to ensure we are well placed to resume our full program of support for the professional and personal development of public works professionals in a COVID normal environment. This necessitated a review of our original 2020 budget to reflect the impact of COVID.

During the year we also reviewed the Foundation's Policy Statement and Business Plan and Trust Deed. It was determined that the Policy Statement and Business Plan was mainly focused on the financial operations of the Foundation and therefore a Financial Strategic Plan was developed to replace the existing document and is subject to review at the Annual General Meeting of the Foundation each year.

The ongoing delivery of awards and programs that support public works and Local Government requires sound financial management which is supported in a significant way by donations from Councils. As such I want to formally thank and recognise those Councils that were still able to make a financial donation to support the Foundation's work. This will enable us to continue to plan for and hopefully deliver a practical and focused program into the future.

I also wish to advise that Mr Claude Cullino has formally retired effective 31 December 2020. Claude was a trustee for 17 years and through that period has made a significant contribution to the Foundation. He worked tirelessly and was committed to Local Government and Public Works. On behalf of the sector and fellow Foundation Trustees I

want to record our collective thanks and formally acknowledge his contribution, focus, enthusiasm and dedication.

Financially the Foundation finished with a slight operating surplus reflecting the deferral of the 2020 study tour and we continue to maintain our focus on managing and maintaining our investments, revenues and expenditure in line with our relevant policy to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the Foundation. The 2021 Budget was adopted and provides for the ongoing financial sustainability of the Foundation.

However, it is important for the Foundation to be agile and resilient and as such we must plan for the future and be able to adapt to the changing local, national and international environments. This requires the Trustees to be focused, open to innovation and adaptable to ensure that we continue to deliver a strong legacy that benefits the next generation of leaders.

To our Secretary Merv Paton, on behalf of the Trustees, you are thanked for your continued commitment, professionalism and contribution to the Foundation, accounting and webpage management. Your support and guidance are greatly appreciated.

The Trustees have worked hard during the year to continue to ensure the aims and objectives of the Foundation have been met. Reviews of the needs of the local government engineering profession have been a constant consideration. Meetings of the Trustees have been held on a regular basis throughout the year.

I again extend my personal thanks to my fellow Trustees and Secretary for the way in which they have contributed to the continued success of the Foundation, and am looking forward to a more COVID normal 2021.

Warren Roberts
Chairman