

The Infrastructure Engineering Standardisation Project is being facilitated by the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) on behalf of the growth area councils and Local Government Victoria (LGV). This project forms part of a series of improvement projects being undertaken by the Authority to streamline the planning and development process in growth areas.

This project is being jointly funded by the GAA and by LGV as part of the Councils reforming business project and the implementation of the Local Government Procurement Strategy. Partners and key stakeholders include growth area councils, state agencies and industry bodies.

Key objective of the Victorian Growth Area Infrastructure Engineering Standardisation project is to establish a consistent best practice approach to the provision of engineering infrastructure for subdivision development in Melbourne's growth areas.

This will be achieved through the development of a set of standardised, best practice documents that outline:

- approval processes
- design guidelines and standards
- construction specifications
- support processes for subdivision infrastructure

BACKGROUND

Objectives and standards that are outlined in Clause 56 of the Victorian Planning Provisions provide a performance framework for the approval and implementation of residential subdivision development.

In the absence of a central authority to oversee shared standards, individual councils have developed their own detailed sets of engineering standards to facilitate and communicate their requirements to the development industry in relation to Clause 56.

This approach has led to considerable and increasing diversity between councils in the requirements for the design and construction of infrastructure for subdivision development.

Such diversity of standards can lead to a significant cost and time burden for businesses, councils, and the community and can add to the cost and time taken for housing development.

Local government, developers and consultants have identified a shared belief that significant financial benefits and time savings can be achieved from the adoption of shared engineering infrastructure standards and specifications across Melbourne's growth areas.

A consistent approach to design standards and construction specifications will ensure that developers know what is expected of them, and will result in a more efficient process of approval, implementation and certification. Streamlining of this process will minimise costs to the industry and benefit the community through savings in the cost of housing.

Population projections outlined in the State government update of the Melbourne 2030 plan for managing Melbourne's growth and development, Melbourne @ 5 million indicate that over the next 20 years, an additional 600,000 dwellings will need to be accommodated in Melbourne, of which 316,000

dwellingings are anticipated in the established areas and 284,000 dwellingings are anticipated in the growth areas.

By focussing on the growth areas, this project has the potential for positive impact on a significant portion of future land development in Melbourne. However, it is also intended that outcomes of this project should be consistent with any uniform standards that could be applied through the whole of Victoria.

PROJECT CHALLENGES

Two primary challenges arise from this project:

1. Establish a common standard with accompanying benefits for the community, development sector and local government.
2. Establish a mechanism to periodically review the adopted standard to ensure it's currency as the science of engineering continues to develop and evolve.

Key barriers to sustainable improved practice have been the lack of a funded centralised party to take responsibility for formulating the standards and then the establishment of a governance structure or body to maintain and update the adopted standards over time.

KEY DRIVERS AND ISSUES

The key driver of the project is to achieve appropriate standards that are consistent across all growth areas as a means to significantly improve the efficiency of assessments by responsible and referral authorities for land development engineering infrastructure proposals.

Due to the high diversity and inconsistency of engineering standards across growth area councils, the development industry has indicated that it currently experiences difficulty in interpreting and responding

to the design and information requirements of the different councils, resulting in substantial delays during assessment and re-work to address different standards.

In addition, procedures applied by other relevant infrastructure and service agencies can vary considerably and often have different timelines.

Important issues to be considered during this project are:

- Ensuring that the guidelines, standards and specifications are achievable and also sufficiently flexible to encourage innovation and best practice, and take into account regional or localised conditions within the growth areas.
- Involvement of local governments and industry bodies in the development of the standards.
- Integration with current Victorian Standards for residential development contained in Clause 56 of the Victorian Planning Provisions.
- Implementation of the project supported by comprehensive training and support to ensure that the guidelines, standards and specifications are understood and accepted by all parties.
- Recognition of the differing procedures and timelines of the various infrastructure and service agencies to ensure that the proposed local government procedures and standards are not in conflict with them.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

Should you wish to discuss the project please contact

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PROJECT AIMS

1	Development and preparation of standardised, best practice documents and processes across the six growth area municipalities including: a) The approval process for the planning and design of subdivision infrastructure; b) Engineering Design Guidelines and Standards for land subdivision infrastructure c) Construction Specifications d) Supporting processes including: Inspection and Test Plans and Standard Developer – Council Memorandum of Understanding.
2	Development and preparation of these documents and processes in consultation with : a) Project Group involving engineering representatives from each growth area council industry bodies and; b) Reference Group involving representatives from state agencies and industry bodies.
3	Link activity in the growth areas with recent and current work being undertaken across the state to begin establishing a state-wide approach to the standardisation of infrastructure engineering

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

1	Establish and document agreed engineering standards for subdivision developments in growth areas including roads, traffic, drainage, landscaping in road reserves, location of services and open space development.
2	Establish agreed engineering standards and format for standard drawings.
3	Document approval stages reflecting good practice for the pre-detailed design phase
4	Formulate and document construction standards, including a standard inspection and test plan
5	Develop a memorandum of Understanding to clarify the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for subdivision works
6	Establish a training framework to build awareness and understanding of adopted standards and processes

PROJECT TIMELINES

MILESTONE	TIMELINE
Completion of Guidelines, standards and specifications	End 2009
Training and Support Program	2010