



Terms of Reference

for the

Victorian Spatial Council

The Victorian Spatial Information Strategy is a whole-of-government strategy concerned with all aspects of Victoria's spatial information industry. It considers roles and requirements of the public and private sectors and academia in advancing Victoria's social, economic and environmental goals through the provision and application of spatial information.



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Charter for the Victorian Spatial Council (VSC)

1. Purpose of the VSC

To provide a coordinated whole of industry approach to spatial information policy and development, management and utilisation in Victoria, by undertaking a spatial information management role, and acting as a mechanism for cross-sectoral consultation and liaison.

2. Relationship to the Victorian Government Spatial Committee (VGSC)

A Victorian Government Spatial Committee (VGSC) will be established in conjunction with the VSC to provide a coordinated government approach to spatial information policy development and decision making and to address the requirements for coordination within the Victorian public sector.

The VGSC will take its requirements and decisions to the VSC, as will the other members representing their spatial sectors.

3. Relationship to other bodies

VSC will liaise with peak bodies in the spatial sector, through its membership.

4. Objective

The VSC has the following objectives:

- To facilitate implementation of VSIS and the establishment of spatial data infrastructure through cooperation between Victorian spatial sector organisations.
- To promote spatial initiatives and provide a forum for examining spatial information issues.
- To develop and assist others develop a variety of educational programs and materials through a variety of media to enhance and promote discussion of ideas regarding spatial information management and integration.
- To establish effective channels of communication across the spatial sector, including promoting interaction among Council members, federal, state and local governments, professional associations, and public and private sector groups.
- To build networks of people and technology to share spatial information and to continually improve its usefulness and accessibility, to facilitate maximum advantage of the capability to share and integrate data, and to secure the maximum return from public investments in spatial data.
- To promote the development of best practice and standards for Spatial Information Management.

Department of Sustainability and Environment

5. Terms of Reference

- To initiate and develop policy for the Victorian spatial information industry.
- To develop strategies for financing, maintaining and developing spatial information and resources.
- To drive the application of spatial information and resources to achieve Triple Bottom Line benefits.
- To develop spatial information strategies for the future.
- To promote the use of spatial information and educate the community, business and Government of the importance and value of spatial information.

6. Structure

The Chair of the Council will be independent, and appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

6.1 Membership

The Council will have a maximum of 13 members, and will be drawn from all areas of the spatial information industry.

- Independent Chair
- State Government Representatives x 3
- Local Government Representatives x 2
- Federal Government Representative x 1
- Academia Representative x 2
- Professional Representative x 2
- Private Sector Representative x 2

Members shall be selected to ensure that the Council has an appropriate balance of competencies and experiences to meet its objectives.

The following provisions apply to the membership of the Council -

- (a) the Secretary of DSE, in appointing members, will take into account the need for the composition of the Council to reflect the major spatial sector industry and user representatives in the State, including private and public users.
- (b) the Secretary of DSE, in appointing members, will take into account the need for the Council members to have between them:
 - Experience and knowledge of the key priorities and issues impacting their sector;
 - Capacity to think and act strategically and to lead transformative change in the sector they are representing.
 - Authority to make decisions and commitments on behalf of their sector.
- (c) The participating associations would continue with their own operations and representing their members' interests. If members cannot attend a particular meeting, then alternate representation is not required.

Department of Sustainability and Environment

6.2 Establishment of Working Parties

- a) Working parties can be established for specific projects. These working parties are to be established in such a manner as to ensure varied representation and to address required interests.
- b) Membership of the working parties is not to be restricted to members of the VSC however it will be preferred that the Chair of the working party will be a member of the VSC and will report to the Council on the working party's behalf.

6.3 Terms of appointment of members

- (a) A member of the Council holds office for the period, not exceeding two years, specified in the instrument of his or her appointment.
- (b) A member of the Council is eligible for re-appointment.
- (c) At the end of the Council's first two years, all members will be invited to re-nominate as a member. In the event that all members wish to continue, then up to six members, as decided by the Secretary DSE, will be offered a further two year term, while other members may be offered a further one year term.

6.4 Resignation and removal of members

- (a) A member of the Council may resign as a member by writing, signed by the member, and addressed to the Secretary DSE.
- (b) If a member of the Council resigns or is removed from office, their representative body may nominate an alternative person to be considered for appointment as a member. The replacement will serve until the end of the term of the Council member who they replace.

6.5 Vacancies

- (a) Repeated non-attendance at meetings by a Member of the Council may result in a new nomination being sought.
- (b) The Secretary of DSE may remove a member, at any time without cause.

6.6 Attendance as an Observer

A person who is not a member may, with the approval of the Chair, attend meetings of the Group as an observer and may only participate in discussions at the invitation of the Chair, for the purpose of giving expert advice.

Department of Sustainability and Environment

7. Meeting Frequency

During the implementation phase the Council will meet monthly, allowing for meetings to be deferred if warranted. Following a period of time, yet to be determined, consideration will be given to meeting bi-monthly or quarterly. Out of sessions activities may also be arranged in appropriate circumstances.

8. Reporting Arrangements

VSC will report to the Secretary of the Department of Sustainability and Environment on its progress and charter, and be required to review its own performance against its Terms of Reference to ensure it continues to meet the requirements. It should provide an annual report to the Secretary of DSE on its progress and achievements.

9. Council Responsibilities

To achieve its objectives, the Council will be responsible for developing a work plan with tasks and milestones along the lines of the following tasks:

- Ensuring academia, private industry and government develop and adhere to strategic work plans to implement VSIS.
- Undertaking a coordinating role across the whole of spatial industry.
- Establishing a single access point for all spatial data.
- Developing a Spatial Atlas.
- Establish principles for benchmarking to ensure strategic alignment with Victoria's economic, social and environmental needs.
- Specifying and maintaining the spatial information infrastructure.
- Undertake an information management role.

10. Member's Responsibilities

- Ensuring that initiatives to be considered by the Council are discussed adequately within their own sector prior to Council meetings to the extent required to enable the Council member to be able to speak on behalf of his/her sector.
- Briefing the members of their respective sectors on matters considered by the Council and its response.
- Proactively supporting implementation of the VSIS within their sector.

The Council will also provide a forum for sharing of ideas and experiences to assist its members to develop a broader understanding of SI issues and to facilitate and coordinate implementation of VSIS.

Council decisions are to be made by consensus or by a simple majority vote of the members present, provided that there is a quorum consisting of a majority of the members for the time being appointed. In case of lack of a quorum, decisions will be held over until the next meeting of the Council.

All members (including the Chair) have a deliberative vote in relation to matters being decided and in the event of an equality of votes the Chair has a casting vote.

Department of Sustainability and Environment

Changes in Terms of Reference may be recommended to the Secretary only by a 2/3 majority of all members of the Council.

11. Chairman's Responsibilities

The Chairman will be responsible for:

- Scheduling meetings and creating their agendas;
- Agreeing the forward program of work of the Council;
- Ensuring that papers for the consideration of the Council are circulated with sufficient time for Council members to consult within their sectors (minimum 7 working days);
- Running the meeting in accordance with the agenda and in particular ensuring that the decisions of the Council are unambiguous and accurately recorded in the minutes.

12. Confidentiality

The detail of deliberations must be treated confidentially in order to provide a forum for frank and fearless advice and debate.

However, outcomes of Council meetings will be published unless specifically identified as confidential during the meetings.

13. Conflict of Interest

Members must be aware of the need to manage all genuine conflicts of interests and be aware of the possibility that an interest they may have could raise the perception of a conflict of interest.

A member who has a direct pecuniary or private interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting must declare the nature of the interest and the potential for there to be a conflict:

- (a) at the commencement of a meeting in accordance with the Meeting Procedure, or
- (b) if they become aware of an interest during discussions, as soon as possible after becoming aware of the interest.

The Chairperson or member presiding at a meeting at which a declaration of an interest is made shall cause the declaration to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

A member who has made a declaration of a potential conflict of interest may not be present or take part in any discussion of the matter to which the declaration relates unless the Chairperson or member presiding directs otherwise.

A member who has made a declaration of a potential conflict of interest must not vote on the matter to which the declaration relates.

14. Secretariat

The VSC will be supported by a Secretariat located in Spatial Information Infrastructure, Strategic Policy and Projects, in the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

15. Support

The Victorian Spatial Council may request that the Department of Sustainability and Environment carry out investigations on particular matters related to the implementation of the Victorian Spatial Information Strategy (VSIS) and other designated projects as they arise . This request will be considered by the Department and responded to in the context of current work programs and budget availability.

16. Distribution of Minutes

Papers and minutes of the Council will be copied to the members and be available via the Land Channel website on the internet.