President’s column

I am honoured to be the new President of the PIA Victorian Committee. I’d also like to congratulate the appointment of Nicola Smith as our new Vice President, along with Gavin Alford who continues as our Vice President – Local Government. In addition, I’d like to thank Steve Dunn for his time in the President’s role, and the Committee looks forward to Steve’s new role as the Victorian elected Director on the PIA National Board.

I came back to PIA around six years ago as I wanted to have a voice and make a difference for the betterment of our profession, a national advocacy body for planning, and to engage with our members on issues confronting them on a daily basis. I believe I can bring an informed perspective to the role of PIA President, having experience in all forms of government and private practice over a 20-year period, and having been Vice-President for the past two years. Whilst specialising in regional planning, I am very much across the metropolitan issues through various sessional roles with RMIT and Planning Panels. I look forward to working with the Committee and wish to pursue initiatives such as Planning Aid, forging stronger Local Government associations, making Planning News archives an on-line service, and keeping the lines of communication open between PIA and its members.

The change towards National governance at PIA has been reviewed and discussed by the new Committee who are energised and raring to go on a number of fronts. In particular, making the Chapters valuable ‘entry points’ for members who would like to be involved in issues, but not necessarily have the time to sit on Committee. You’ll note the new contacts for each of the Chapters listed on page 2 and I urge you to make contact if you’d like us to pursue an issue or related learning opportunity in those areas. The Committee has a diverse range of skills and interests around the table, including Urban Design, Law, Planning consultants, Transport, State and Local Government and, of course, Urban and Regional Planning!

On a policy front, given the review processes being undertaken, PIA would also like to see the next stages of the Underwood Review completed. PIA is hopeful that the comprehensive report and its recommendations do not sail silently into the night, and that an on-going dialogue and implementation schedule is announced in the coming months. The PIA Committee endorses the view from the November edition of Planning News regarding the current Planning Reforms as stated by the VCAT decisions article that ‘creation should not lead to chaos.’

Finally, we’ve all (just) recovered from a very busy Planning Month and welcoming in Liz Johnstone to her role as Executive Officer. In particular I’d like to personally thank Liz for her drive and commitment in hitting the ground running and ensuring Planning Month was a success, and we are looking forward to the Kemsley Oration being held at the Wheeler Centre. This year the Oration will be delivered by an emerging leader, Lucinda Hartley, an award-winning Landscape Architect and Urban Designer who is passionate about creating an urban identity that is deeply connected to community.

Lucinda is an Associate at Hansen Partnership, and a Co-Founder and Director of CoDesign Studio, a non-profit, planning and design enterprise, committed to helping disadvantaged communities to envision, design and implement neighbourhood improvement projects. I hope to see you at Kemsley, or at one of many events during the Christmas period. Happy holidays (or quiet time!) to all.

Brett Davis MPIA
President PIA Vic Division

Getting a job

Catherine Balagtas SMPI

About three months ago, I attended the Building your Career seminar for young planners to get some ideas of what next steps to take in my career after finishing university. I found the advice and stories shared by the speakers helpful in getting a sense of what is expected from planning graduates in the industry. I also got to meet fellow young planners who were in the same boat, trying to find their place in the industry.

But of all the things that I got from the event, I did not expect to land a four-month placement promoted by Matthew Cripps at the seminar. It just goes to show Will from Russell Kennedy was right when he advised: ‘you have to be in the right place, at the right time’; and I was just that, and now I am building my career as a statutory planner at Frankston City Council.

The first few months at work has been both exciting and challenging at the same time. I have been given the chance to experience first-hand what Matthew meant by planners in local government are like ‘jack of all trades’. I have been learning more about the planning profession than I ever imagined.

I have to say that attending these seminars is definitely worthwhile because you just never know what you can get out of it.

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