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THE ADVOCACY ROLE OF S+SNZ HAS BEEN DEVELOPED AND SHAPED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, HELPING TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE SECTOR.

What is advocacy?

We're often asked: "What is the difference between advocacy and lobbying?" In brief, "all lobbying is advocacy, but not all advocacy is lobbying".² Advocacy is an activity that aims to influence decisions whereas lobbying is a specially focused form of advocacy with the purpose to influence legislation. The time period over which advocacy takes place on a particular issue can be short or long depending on the issue and where it is at along the continuum from initiation to legislation.

Why is advocacy important?

Advocacy is important for a number of reasons. Perhaps the two most important reasons are: first, to reliably and

authoritatively inform development of policy and legislation and, second, to advocate for the profession by making our views known. Advocacy also serves to raise the profile and reputation of S+SNZ.

Limited resources, however, mean most S+SNZ advocacy is focused on priority areas set out in the Letter of Expectation³ and on national issues that align with the strategic goals of the organisation. Those have been informed by members' input such as the annual stakeholder workshops. Local, single issue advocacy is primarily driven by branches with support provided by National Office where possible and especially where local issues are found to be more widespread.

Before 2018, advocacy on major issues tended to be done by ad hoc groups set up to deal with single issues or



Advocacy

The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, policy, or interest, or the active support of an idea or cause.

advisory groups set up to encompass a broader area that would also deal with any advocacy required. However, the establishment of an advocacy function within National Office in late 2017 has centralised the coordination of much of S+SNZ's advocacy.

Where does 'engagement' fit in?

Engagement and advocacy complement one another. We engage with stakeholders in key areas such as central and local government, and with the private sector with like-minded organisations. This allows us to get to know upcoming areas of work that are of potential interest and to be able to inform and influence at a number of stages in the course of developing policy and legislation. Those stages include initial scoping and informing and being a party to initial consultation.

Subsequent stages take on a more visible advocacy nature and may include making submissions in response to wider, public consultation (especially by government departments), or making submissions on proposed legislation or national strategies to select committees.

Over the past two years we have participated in all these areas. In addition, S+SNZ supported a member in seeking a declaratory judgment from the Environment Court on a question of law relating to the Resource Management Act 1991.

What is our impact?

Measuring the degree of influence and impact that we have is more difficult. It is hardest to measure at the initial stages where we may be participating along with a number of others in scoping, as part of reference groups or through funded specialist input during the course of a major project.

At the other end of the advocacy process, any change resulting from a submission to select committee is easiest to measure although that may also be attributable to other submitters all making the same point.

As a general rule, the potential for greatest influence is through involvement and helping to shape thinking at the earliest practical stage, and more difficult at the end stages unless significant issues and implementation problems come to light. That is why it is easier to identify impact when there has only been late-stage involvement which has directly resulted in change.

Member input

Professional organisations are a crucial component of the legislative process as they seek to develop and implement sound public policy. Irrespective of the stage we become involved at, the most important thing is expert information and quality analysis to reflect professional concerns and views.

For surveying and spatial matters, our members in the relevant stream(s) are the source of that information and analysis. National Office can provide the coordination, and assist with the writing of the submission so that it has the greatest possible impact.

There are also instances where specialist policy and legal skills and knowledge of the machinery of government held by National Office staff can provide or add further analysis. In many cases it has to be a team effort combining knowledge and skills to seek the greatest influence or impact.

An overview of where and what we have tried to influence over the past two years

S+SNZ has provided input on a number of issues over the past two years. Some input is ongoing on longer term projects where S+SNZ members have particular expertise while other input has been in response to either targeted or public consultation. Much of the advocacy work has been published on the advocacy page of the website and is summarised below.⁴

Early stage influencing

Two key examples are where S+SNZ or its members are providing sustained, longer term input to Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) and the Surveyor-General. There has been specialist input into the Landonline rebuild through a funded lead consulting surveyor for the past two years, and all the licensed cadastral surveyors on the Reference Group for the *Review of the Rules for Cadastral Survey* are members of S+SNZ.⁵

S+SNZ targeted input

S+SNZ has been specifically asked for input on several matters where our members are stakeholders. LINZ has consulted with S+SNZ on proposed changes to Landonline terms and conditions, and on the use of the overseas public cloud as part of the Landonline rebuild project. In addition, the Positioning and Measurement Stream, S+SNZ branches and National Office provided support to LINZ's national roadshow on implementing NZVD2016 after the successful joint S+SNZ – LINZ NZVD2016 workshop in Napier.

S+SNZ is also consulted on board representation. This year the Minister for Land Information asked S+SNZ to provide nominations for the Cadastral Surveyors' Licensing Board, and the Minister for Building and Construction asked for nominations for the Engineering Associates Registration Board.

S+SNZ submissions as part of broader public consultation

S+SNZ has also participated in public consultation led by three government departments (LINZ, the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)). Over the past two years S+SNZ made formal submissions to the Surveyor-General in response to two consultation documents on the Review of the Rules for Cadastral Survey.

Last year S+SNZ made a submission to MfE on draft planning standards advocating, among other things, using NZVD2016 as the standard vertical datum. NZVD2016 has been incorporated in the finalised National Planning Standards⁶ which require use of a vertical datum in new policy statements or plan information (incorporated through a policy statement or plan review, change or review) to be consistent with NZVD2016.

This year, further submissions to MfE have followed on the proposed National Policy Statements on urban development and on highly productive land. Most recently a submission was made to MPI on action for healthy waterways.

Select committee and legislation-related activity

The lengthy process of legislation development means there is often no proposed legislation before the House of Representatives relevant to the survey and spatial sector on which S+SNZ can make submissions to parliamentary select committees. This has been the case over the past two years.

However, occasionally other opportunities arise to make written and oral submissions to select committees such as occurred when the Governance and Administration Com-

mittee called for submissions on the National Disaster Resilience Strategy. S+SNZ was able to highlight the role of survey and spatial professionals as first responders and subsequent response and recovery roles following earthquakes, floods, slips and other natural hazards.

S+SNZ supported a member in seeking a declaratory judgment from the Environment Court that a conversion of cross-lease title to fee simple title did not constitute a subdivision under the Resource Management Act 1991. Though the court disagreed, the judgment provided clarity on the issue and also that consent authorities should not impose onerous conditions on those seeking conversion.⁷

Reflection

The voluntary contribution of S+SNZ members' expertise is critical in progressing advocacy on matters important to both professional and related national interests. Over the past two years this has placed a particularly heavy burden on the Land Development and Urban Design Stream and the Cadastral Stream, mainly because of input sought by LINZ on the review of the Rules of Cadastral Survey and the Landonline rebuild project, and by MfE on resource management issues. These have raised both the visibility and the value of S+SNZ input at central government level.

Other streams and branches have continued with long-term engagement with their stakeholders and achieved visibility and impact particularly at local government level and among professional groupings with similar interests. Those will be showcased in a future issue.

NOTES

1 Matt Ryder retired from Cadastral Stream leadership at the 2019 AGM.

2 Advocacy & Communications Solutions: www.advocacyandcommunication.org/wp-content/themes/acs/docs/resources/redesigned_tools/Difference_in_Lobbying_and_Advocacy.pdf

3 2019-20 Council Expectations for the S+SNZ Board: www.surveyspatialnz.org/Attachment?Action=Download&Attachment_id=5565

4 <https://www.surveyspatialnz.org/members/advocacy>

5 Review of the Rules for Cadastral Survey: <https://www.linz.govt.nz/land/surveying/rules-standards-and-guidelines/review-rules-for-cadastral-survey>

6 National Planning Standards: <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/national-planning-standards> (p 67)

7 Environment Court Decision on Cross-Lease Titles Released: https://www.surveyspatialnz.org/news_and_events/Story?Action=View&Story_id=187