

## Notes from Survey and Spatial Stakeholder Workshop 7 Nov 2019

Bruce Anderson, November 2019

While much of the commentary was “do more of the same” there was an important new theme that came through at the stakeholder session. Stakeholders noted that there was an erosion of their business opportunities by other groups and that this was impacting on the profession’s standing. Consequently, survey and spatial professionals are not recognised for the contribution they make to business and New Zealand society. It was observed by stakeholders that in many cases councils (especially those with high numbers of staff imported from other jurisdictions) that staff did not understand the role the surveyor play. A phrase that could reflect Survey + Spatial NZ (S+SNZ) and the profession is;

### **S+SNZ – invisible in a changing sector**

#### Background

A facilitated stakeholder engagement session was conducted by Bruce Anderson prior to the S+SNZ AGM on 7 November 2019.

Attendees were stream and branch representatives, and board and Council members. The level of engagement during the session was very good. The purpose of the stakeholder session was:

*to identify issues of importance to the members and for this to be used to inform the Council and Boards development of a new strategy and letter of expectation.*

Of note is that Council undertook a similar session prior to the stakeholder session. As a general comment, while many of the themes were similar, the focus appeared to be more internalised than the stakeholder views from the facilitated session.

#### Where do Stakeholders Think the Profession will be in 20 Years

Stakeholder believed that in the future there will be a dumbing down of measurement as more automated data collection occurs. This data collection will be undertaken by a distributed workforce of non-professionals and data will be increasingly open source. Design will be undertaken by other professions and via AI, point cloud or community. The profession will be more advisory and make greater use of its interpretive skills. The profession will be involved managing data rather than collecting it.

There was also a view that Councils will still have prescriptive consenting requirements and that this would also involve increase risk transfer and changes to decision-making processes.

#### What do you want and what are you getting out of S+SNZ

Stakeholders were asked to identify what they wanted from S+SNZ. The key themes were;

- A collegial organisation that provides a place and sense of purpose. As one person put “mana by belonging”. Stakeholders valued networking opportunities provided at branches and stream as well as at the conference.
- Skills development through training and engagement. This was on three level, individual technical skills, more business orientated skills and personal development. The comments on personal development included a desire for growth through leadership opportunities and informal mentoring. There was strong support for CPD events and the conference.
- Advocacy - local and central government. Recognition as a key lobby group and with power to influence and shape the future
- Marketing the profession which in turn would support commercial viability of businesses and the profession.

There was strong alignment between what stakeholders wanted from S+SNZ and what they believed they were receiving from the organisation. However, stakeholders were clear that they wanted more...

### Suggested Solutions and the Future

Stakeholder comments have been grouped into four themes. In no order;

- Advocacy
- Promote the Sector
- Share knowledge
- Maintain professional standards and promote those standards widely

#### Advocacy

Attendees wanted S+SNZ to do more advocacy but in a more pro-active manner and on topical issues. This included a call for S+SNZ and the professional to demonstrate thought leadership. Stakeholders also wanted more advocacy to support members in their regions and their professional interests.

It was noted that to undertake more advocacy would require more resources and that the streams and regions would need to identify issues and topics of importance. It was also noted that head office and specialists would need to coordinate responses. This would involve manage priorities and to spreading the load.

Associated with advocacy and several other themes was the suggestion to develop consistent survey specific producer statements. This is a sound mechanism to promote the role, importance and professional standing of surveyor especially in local government.

#### Promote the Sector

A clear theme was that stakeholders wanted S+SNZ to promote and market the profession to local and central government, clients, other professionals and future generations. This is different from advocacy and relates more to the profession’s place in New Zealand society. There were six sub-themes;

- Explain (tell the story of) how the sector/profession is making a difference for New Zealand.

- Ensure that the scope and breath of member's professional practice and expertise is understood especially in local government. Key messages include value, risk minimisation, ethical underpinning and professional standing.
- As new markets or technology evolve where survey and spatial professionals are leaders or key users, S+SNZ should promote this tech or service offering. This may involve explaining the technology/process for lay people and can be done without promoting a company.
- Promote the profession to future members (i.e. undergrads, potential people). Attract people to become surveyors and spatial professionals via public information, STEM and high career sessions. Comments was also made on the need to engage early with undergrads.
- Develop programmes to improve diversity within the sector.
- Showcase our successes and successful people. This currently occurred but within S+SNZ. Are there opportunities to externally.

### Share Knowledge

Stakeholders were clear that S+SNZ needs to continue providing networking opportunities at branch and streams. There was also strong support for the conference.

As noted earlier, stakeholders also want to increase individual technical skills, build business-oriented skills and have personal development opportunities. Some suggestions on how S+SNZ could improve knowledge sharing include;

- Explore opportunities to collaborate internally within S+SNZ and externally with other likeminded organisations to deliver courses and events.
- S+SNZ could conduct travelling roadshows on select topics.
- Recognise that members needs are different but that it is important to focus on the needs without broadening the membership base.
- Develop tools for young professionals

Suggestions – As a means of providing a range of opportunities to members, S+SNZ could nominate members to Government committees, boards and advisory roles. The type of entities could be much broader than just technical, industry or professional bodies. Examples of organisations were members could make a solid contribution beyond survey/spatial include Kainga Ora, NZTA, Infrastructure Commission, Climate Change Commission etc. Nomination could be facilitated by asking members if they are interested in being considered for appointment and then S+SNZ nominating members as opportunities arise. The Government is always interested in intelligent and motivated individuals.

### Professional Standards

Comment on professional standards was limited but it is an important point of difference for a professional body.

- Actively promoting RPSurv as an equivalent to CPEng.
- RPSurv – finalise the qualification
- ensure that there is specialisation within the qualification.
- Promote the role of the Ethics Committee and how this plays out with professional standards and credibility.