

Private Sector Industry Association Involvement in the Registration Process

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SUMMARY

In NSW Australia, a Surveyor becomes Registered with the Board of Surveying and Spatial Information (BOSSI) to practice as a Surveyor. The process to become registered involves fulfillment of the following requirements:

- Recognised Degree
- Practical Experience
- Prescribed Examinations

This paper explores and outlines in detail a recent innovation to assist the Candidate Surveyors with the 'Prescribed Examinations' component of these requirements.

Up until recently, all of the examinations were conducted solely by BOSSI usually in March and September each year. However, the options available to candidates to undertake the Design of Engineering Works and Town Planning Projects have now been expanded, and this paper will address and explain these expanded options.

After discussions in 2006 between BOSSI and the Surveying Profession, BOSSI resolved that it would allow the Association of Consulting Surveyors (ACS) to conduct the Training and Examinations in the modules of Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning.

The implementation of the ACS BOSSI Program in NSW has been successful to date, and it appears that it will have a valuable role to play in the future Registration of Surveyors in NSW.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In NSW Australia, a Surveyor becomes Registered with the Board of Surveying and Spatial Information (BOSSI) to practice as a Surveyor. The process to become registered involves fulfillment of the following requirements:

- Recognised Degree
- Practical Experience
- Prescribed Examinations

This paper explores and outlines in detail a recent innovation to assist the Candidate Surveyors with the 'Prescribed Examinations' component of these requirements.

These requirements are outlined in detail in the BOSSI Determinations document dated February 2009, and in particular, Part 5 outlines the details about the Prescribed Examinations. The 'Prescribed Examinations' for a candidate will include the completion of the approved projects and an oral test to demonstrate competency in each of the approved projects. The approved projects comprise:

- i) Rural, Urban and Strata Boundary Definition Projects
- ii) Design of Engineering Works
- iii) Town Planning

Up until recently, all of these examinations were conducted solely by BOSSI usually in March and September each year. However, the options available to Candidates to undertake the Design of Engineering Works and Town Planning Projects have now been expanded, and this paper will address and explain these expanded options.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The BOSSI Examination Procedure

BOSSI conducts the examinations twice each year, usually in March and September. With the three separate Cadastral Surveying components, each candidate needs to demonstrate competency in five separate examinations - three in Cadastral Surveying plus Engineering and Town Planning. Candidates may attempt between one and five examinations in each examination session. (Each session in March and September extends over three to four days, depending upon the numbers of candidates.)

Each of the five examinations involves the candidate with two examiners, usually for about one and a half hours. The demonstration of competency is assessed from both an examination

of the candidate's project and also the candidate's knowledge of the project and associated guidelines and legislation.

The examiners are drawn from a number of sources, however, they are usually surveyors who are experienced in the various fields. While BOSSI board members are usually involved in the examination process, there is also a constant need to involve other guest examiners in the various fields.

It is also useful to note that BOSSI and prominent members of the Surveying Profession conduct a weekend workshop to assist candidates for future examinations. This workshop is held in May each year. The workshop involves a number of informative lectures explaining the BOSSI requirements for examinations. There is also ample opportunity for candidates to have informal discussions with the presenters and members of BOSSI.

2.2 Expanded Options

NSW is unique in many ways in Australia in that quite a number of Registered Surveyors not only carry out the wide range of Traditional Surveying Tasks, but also carry out the closely Associated Tasks of Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning. In fact, it is a widely held view that Surveyors are the professionals best equipped in NSW to manage land development projects, and to undertake the associated engineering design and town planning works. This view is clearly confirmed by the fact that a large number of land development projects in NSW are managed by Surveyors. The ongoing importance of the provision of these services to members of the public in NSW highlights the importance of BOSSI maintaining the competencies of Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning in the Surveyor Registration Process.

Over the years, it has sometimes been difficult for some candidates to obtain suitable experience and projects in Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning. This has particularly been the problem where a candidate has been working in a Surveying Practice or Department which only carries out the Traditional Surveying Tasks. The problem had been recognised and discussed by BOSSI and the Surveying Profession for some time. After various meetings in 2006, BOSSI resolved that it would allow the Association of Consulting Surveyors (ACS) to conduct the Training and Examinations in the modules of Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning.

3. THE ACS BOSSI PROGRAM

3.1 Program Details

The Program runs separately for Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning, although the format and structure for each module is similar. Each Program is limited to twelve Candidates, and comprises three Stages as follows:

Week One The three presenters spend one and a half days with the twelve candidates. The majority of the time is taken up with technical presentations, although generous opportunities also exist for each individual candidate to define a suitable project and obtain a clear understanding of what is required to ultimately demonstrate competency. There is ample opportunity for one on one discussions between candidate and presenter. Suitable projects are made available to candidates where necessary.

During Week Numbers Two, Three and Four, the candidates work on their projects. They can also direct particular questions to the presenters during this time.

Week Five The twelve candidates and three presenters meet again for one day. One presenter will formally assess the project of six candidates, with each candidate spending approximately forty five minutes with the presenter. The second presenter will do the same for the other six candidates, while the third presenter is available all day in the room with the candidates to address queries and problems.

The main purpose of this day is to ensure that the candidates are heading in the right direction with their understandings and projects.

During Week Numbers Six, Seven and Eight, the candidates finalise their projects.

Week Nine The final assessment for each candidate is carried out, and will usually require approximately forty five minutes. This assessment of each candidate will be carried out by one of the presenters, plus a BOSSI board member.

3.2 Program Content

A significant amount of input from the various stakeholders was required to get the Program up and running, and this was a co-operative effort between various members of the Surveying Profession including:

- BOSSI
- ACS
- BOSSI board members
- BOSSI guest examiners
- Surveyors

Within a very short time, workshop material was compiled, resulting in the two following documents being produced:

- Engineering Workshop Manual
- Town Planning Candidate Workbook

These documents have been refined and enhanced since the inception of the program, and have become valuable reference documents.

3.3 Assessment Procedure

The objective with the assessment procedure has been to make it credible, transparent, consistent and defensible.

A number of Heads of Consideration (or Checklists or Topics) have been developed for each discipline, and each candidate needs to demonstrate competency in each of these items. The candidates are made aware of these Heads of Consideration at the commencement of each program. Assessment of these Heads of Consideration is on a progressive basis throughout each program, and candidates can demonstrate competency in particular topics commencing during Week Five of the Program. When this occurs, the candidate then does not need to worry about those particular topics during the Week Nine final assessment. Better candidates may have demonstrated competency in perhaps up to two-thirds of the topics during Week Five, while other candidates may have only demonstrated competency in perhaps one-third of the topics.

3.4 BOSSI Involvement

BOSSI maintains an active observation, monitoring and audit role in the ACS BOSSI Program. A BOSSI board member, BOSSI chief examiner and/or nominee will usually be in attendance for each of the three stages of each program:

Week One The BOSSI representative will generally briefly address the group as a part of the introduction, to explain and endorse the Program from the viewpoint of BOSSI.

Week Five A BOSSI representative will attend the program for the full day. While this presence might be viewed by some as an audit of the program and presenters by BOSSI, it is also a valuable opportunity for BOSSI to better familiarise itself with the candidates who are seeking to demonstrate competency. The BOSSI representative does also get involved in the individual candidate assessments with the presenters.

Week Nine The final assessment of each candidate is carried out by the presenter and the BOSSI representative.

To date, there has been a significant amount of crossover of BOSSI representatives and program presenters.

3.5 Future Trends for the Program

The initial programs were met with an overwhelming response from candidates seeking to demonstrate competency in Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning, which was an obvious demonstration of a pent-up and unfulfilled demand. The early programs were invariably fully subscribed within a short time of release. The Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning programs were run concurrently, and three programs in each discipline were run during each of the first few years. The backlog of demand appears to have now been fulfilled, and fewer programs are now required. The Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning programs are no longer necessarily run concurrently - as obviously the same candidates generally wish to attend both programs.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SURVEYING PROFESSION

It had long been recognised in NSW by BOSSI and the Surveying Profession that a shortage of Registered Surveyors existed. While a number of possible reasons could be presented to explain this shortage, a lack of opportunity for some candidates to obtain suitable experience and projects in Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning was certainly one reason why Graduate Surveyors were not progressing to Registration.

The ACS BOSSI Program, which commenced in 2006, has undoubtedly significantly contributed to an increased number of Surveyors becoming registered in NSW by BOSSI, as evidenced by the following statistics:

Calendar Year	Number of Surveyors Registered
2003	15
2004	25
2005	19
2006	36
2007	36
2008	33
2009	24

In the past, each candidate for registration needed to demonstrate competency in the five separate disciplines referred to in Section 2.1 The BOSSI Examination Procedure. Even if the candidate was working in an office which carried out only Traditional Surveying Tasks, the candidate still needed to demonstrate competency in Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning. Not only does the ACS BOSSI Program provide a readily accessible opportunity for candidates to demonstrate competency in these disciplines, it also provides an opportunity for them to be properly informed with the latest and up-to-date information from experienced practitioners in this field.

The carrying out of Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning tasks, as well as Traditional Surveying tasks, by Surveyors in NSW is quite a Unique and Special Situation. The ongoing provision of these services to members of the public is obviously very important. The practice also provides additional and exciting career opportunities for Surveyors. It provides a broader opportunity for wider recognition in the community of the importance of the work carried out by Surveyors. The ACS BOSSI Program reinforces the Traditional and Diverse Role played by Registered Surveyors in NSW.

The ACS BOSSI Program presents an opportunity for greater involvement of practicing Surveyors in NSW in the Training and Registration Process.

5. CONCLUSION

The Program has been vigorously embraced by the Surveying Profession in NSW. Positive feedback has been provided from the candidates, Surveyors and BOSSI. The learning curve has been steep, and suggestions and enhancements have been incorporated into the Program along the way, however, the overwhelming response has been extremely positive.

The Provision of Suitable Projects and Training in Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning to candidates who may not otherwise have the opportunity to demonstrate competence in these disciplines provides the opportunity to get more Registered Surveyors in NSW.

The ACS BOSSI Program represents a unique Joint Public / Private Sector Co-operative Partnership Initiative in NSW. It represents increased Private Sector Industry Association Involvement in the Surveyor Registration Process, while at the same time maintaining the standards of, and being consistent with, and reinforcing the BOSSI Registration Process.

The implementation of the ACS BOSSI Program in NSW has been successful to date, and it appears that it will also have a valuable role to play in the future Registration of Surveyors in NSW. While there now appears to be a slight decline in the demand from candidates for the Programs, it appears that the accumulated backlog demand has been fulfilled, and that future Programs will continue to meet the demand generated by new candidates. The number of candidates wishing to demonstrate competency in Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning in accordance with the BOSSI Examination Procedure, as outlined in Section 2.1 of this paper, has significantly declined. It appears that the expanded option offered by the ACS BOSSI Program is perhaps also being embraced by a significant number of candidates as the preferred option to demonstrate competency in Civil Engineering Design and Town Planning.

REFERENCES

BOSSI Determinations Feb. 2009

BOSSI / ACS NSW Engineering Workshop Manual

BOSSI / ACS NSW Town Planning - Candidate Workshop

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

<u>Qualifications</u>	B.SURV. (HONS.) UNSW	1974
	Registered Surveyor NSW	1976
	DIP.URB.REG.PLAN. (PMER.) UNE	1986
<u>Employment</u>	NSW Department of Public Works	1974-1978
	Coonabarabran Shire Council	1979-1982
	Brown & Krippner Pty Ltd Surveyor and Town Planner	1982-present
<u>Positions Held</u>	BOSSI Guest Examiner	2004-2009
	BOSSI Board Member	2009-2010
	ACS BOSSI Program Presenter	2006-present
	Chairman NSW Country Surveyors Association	2008-2010

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