

Road Map & Framework for NSW SI Strategy

Outcomes of Industry Workshop

25th November, Sydney Masonic Centre

An industry workshop was held on the 25th November at the Sydney Masonic Centre to discuss the development of a Road Map and Framework for a NSW Spatial Information Strategy. This document is an outcome of that workshop which was attended by 44 industry representatives from 34 organisations.

Following introductory comments led by Mr Warwick Watkins, President of BOSSI, the participants discussed and work-shopped the following four major issues as separate syndicate groups, the outcomes of which are discussed below under:

- Governance & Engagement Models
- Stakeholders
- Strategy Focus
- Standards

1. Governance & Engagement Models

The development of a Governance Model and an Engagement Model is important in order to ensure that any subsequent SI Strategy is able to be implemented with a large “up-take” of the Strategy by the industry. This Syndicate Group considered “Governance and Engagement Models” in the NSW SI Industry with a focus on:

- what sort of Governance Model should the Strategy have
- how should the Strategy be structured so that all the stakeholders want to participate, ie that they want to “engage” with the Strategy
- how should it be structured / managed / achieve its goals
- how should the Strategy be measured

On the issue of **Governance**, the outcome of the group’s discussion was that:

- there was a need to have a “peak body” in the NSW SI industry (such as WALIS in Western Australia) and that this body should be representatives of key stakeholder groups
- this “peak body” needed to have an “advisory role” with perhaps with legislative capability
- there needs to be a “coordinating agency”, eg Dial Before You Dig was considered a good example of a independent body formed to coordinate access to utility data
- key custodial agencies need to be appointed for major data themes and be custodians for those themes
- there needs to be a focus on meeting the needs of the stakeholders

Some of the issues that this “peak body” needs to be concerned with should include:

- standards and how they relate to the SI industry
- interoperability of data between different participants in the SI Industry
- the allocation of data custodial roles of major data themes to relevant agencies / organisations

On the issue of **Engagement Models**, the outcome of the group's discussion was that:

- the engagement focus should be on “providing benefits through participation” and that access to data and sharing of data, including the resource capability to make the most use of that data, should be the prime focus
- a plan should be developed to communicate “benefits through participation” to all stakeholders
- innovation should be encouraged in the industry
- a data assess and pricing policy / strategy should be developed which provides a higher level of data quality with increased confidence in data

2. Stakeholders

The spatial information industry is a very large and diverse group of participants from Government (Federal, State and Local), Utilities, private sector and academia. This Syndicate Group was asked to consider the “stakeholders” in the NSW SI Industry with a focus on:

- who are the Stakeholders
- are they Data Creators, Data Maintainers or Data Consumers
- are there any other stakeholders
- are there any data sharing activities that need to be taken into account
- how can these Stakeholders “fit in” to a Governance Model

The outcomes of this Syndicate group was that the SI Strategy should:

- have a “market driven” and “outcome driven” business approach with a focus on providing benefits to the economy, and that the value of these benefits was more important than the number of users of spatial data
- be focussed on “what is done with spatial information” rather than “spatial information” and as such, ensure that spatial information is “fit for purpose” for which it is (can be) used in terms of accuracy / currency / availability etc
- add value to the community / government / economy

The SI stakeholders should include:

- the users and suppliers of data and services by Government and the Private Sector
- the “infrastructure” component, ie vendors of databases, communications technology, software providers etc

3. Strategy Focus

It is important to ensure that the focus of a subsequent NSW Spatial Information Strategy is appropriate and that it covers the right issues, is at the correct level of detail and contains the appropriate elements that will foster future implementation without being either too restrictive or too vague. This Syndicate Group was asked to consider the “Strategy Focus” in the NSW SI Industry, including:

- what should an SI Strategy include
- what should an SI Strategy not include
- where should the correct focus be
- how detailed / high-level should the SI Strategy be

This Syndicate Group indicated that the focus should be on the “collective industry participants”, ie the users, the providers, the maintainers and the community and that it should be “outcomes based” and be at a “high level”.

The SI Strategy should:

- include statements about the Vision / Objectives / Goals / Benefits
- offer a Governance Model
- be focussed on “open principles”, ie be vendor / platform independent
- seek to benefit from opportunities that may become available
- provide for “accessibility of data”, noting that this will need to include issues of data access, IP, pricing, standards etc
- foster skilling / competency of industry participants
- contain an engagement model which will need to be communicated
- adhere to principals of standards for metadata etc

Conversely, it was agreed that the SI Strategy should not include the following issues:

- pricing and costing issues
- technology considerations

4. Standards

Standards are important to any industry, and the SI Industry has a number of standards available, some of which are de-facto standards in common use. This Syndicate Group was asked to consider “Standards” issues in the NSW SI Industry, including:

- what standards should be embodied into a NSW SI Strategy
- how relevant are open GIS Standards to this Strategy
- how should the Strategy be structured it so that participants want to use these standards
- metadata and symbology standards – what are the appropriate standards

The issues relating to standards was strongly debated with a number of comments indicating that there was a need to derive a common industry purpose and focus with respect to standards, while noting that the SI industry is very broad and impinges on a number of related industries, eg Architecture, Geology / Mining, Electrical Engineering etc and that it would be very difficult to have a single standard to cover all professions.

However, the outcomes of this Syndicate group was that there was a need to have an overall focus on the major standards in the SI industry and that:

- international standards should be followed for data, metadata, symbology, particularly to accord with Open GIS specifications
- it is essential that the benefits of data exchange and interoperability be supported by standards and that this be communicated to all industry participants
- the strategy be structured so that benefits are delivered rather than focus on the cost issues
- ANZLIC and ISO metadata standards should be adopted
- symbology standards be reviewed for different industry requirements