

the SURVEYOR

ISSUE 23 · MARCH 2024



Profile

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SURVEYING

*Exploring the
depths of*
MINE
SURVEYING

In Profile:
SCHLENKER
SURVEYING QLD

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OUR AFFILIATES





BY MICHELLE BLICAVS
Chief Executive Officer

A UNITED FRONT *in Australian surveying*

Our members are seeking advocacy and regulatory support from Surveyors Australia.

Forty-eight percent of surveyors across Australia expect the volume of work to remain the same in 2024, while 24% expect less and 28% expect more according to our “pulse” survey completed by 200 firms in mid-February.

Fifty-eight percent anticipate keeping staffing levels the same, 31% are planning to hire more staff and only 11% think they'll reduce staff numbers.

The biggest challenge ahead feels like it will be the uncertain economic conditions alongside the skills shortage. Regulatory changes have 12% of surveyors concerned and 8% are watching technological change.

These results from our February member poll explain why our members are seeking advocacy and regulatory support from Surveyors Australia alongside education and training.

The National Hourly Rates results were also released in February and we were pleased to note an overall increase of 8% in rates. There is a summary included in this edition of *The Surveyor* and the full report available on our website for member principals.

We have held a few workshops and events in various states and territories in the first part of this year and the mood is generally positive. At our lunch in Sydney with the Chief Economist of the Commonwealth Bank, Stephen Halmarick, it was suggested that this year will be much like last year, and next year will be better.

Surveyors Australia has created a new training company to help meet the needs of the industry and deliver on upskilling the profession. We are thrilled to have two new cohorts underway, with the Diploma of Surveying and Certificate IV in Surveying and Spatial Information both at capacity. But there are still more than 300 on a waiting list!

Surveying Careers is off and running for the year, particularly in Queensland, thanks to funding from the Surveyors Trust. Expect a call from our team asking you to help out at your local school.



At the launch of Parliamentary Friends of Small Business. L to R: Andrew McKellar, Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO, our CEO of Surveyors Australia Michelle Blicavs, Susan Templeman MP, Member for Macquarie, the Hon Julie Collins MP Minister for Housing, Homelessness and Small Business, Allegra Spender MP Member for Wentworth and Bert van Manen MP, Member for Forde and Chief Opposition Whip.

Surveying Unleashed in Sydney in March will be a full day with students and surveyors, and we hope to offer this program in other states as the year progresses.

For engineering surveyors in Victoria, the challenges continue and we are working with government and our industry partners to address the important role of all surveyors on building and infrastructure sites. We are partnering with Consulting Surveyors Victoria on a major project to ensure we have a broader understanding of the standards required for engineering and construction surveying.

Digital Plans, Licensing and Registration, Plan Audit and Surveying Acts are still very much on everyone's mind as I travel around the country, and we are working to support our members in each jurisdiction to tackle their regulatory requirements.

And this year will see elections in Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory. Melanie Gibbons, our Head of Advocacy, has a strong plan for ensuring state and federal government representatives are aware of the important role surveyors play in supporting our economy.

We continue to monitor the changes proposed to the ANZSCO Codes because

this shows acknowledgement of the variety of roles and responsibilities surveyors play. Once these are fully endorsed, we will have land, engineering and mine surveyors in a professional and technical capacity acknowledged.

With so many amazing surveying firms around Australia I don't envy this year's National Consultancy Excellence Awards judges! But you have to be in it to win it. No matter the size of your firm, I encourage you to enter and acknowledge the great culture within your company and your progress through the Awards process. You're all winners to me!

We are looking forward to building stronger international relationships this year, thanks to our membership with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). Would love for some of you to join me at this year's Working Group in May in Accra, Ghana.

To get a full update on our activities and how we are delivering for the profession, I hope you will join us in Queenstown in July as we celebrate business and leadership in surveying. And as always, please reach out as the year continues if we can assist you or your business. 🍷

SUCCESSION

in surveying

Schlencker Surveying Qld has been operating on the Gold Coast since 1994, offering surveying services and property development advice across South-East Queensland and beyond. With this year marking the firm's 30th anniversary, The Surveyor sits down with director Ken Burnett along with daughter Stephanie and son Tim, who are ready to take the reins when he retires.



KEN BURNETT AND Rod Schlencker started Schlencker Surveying Qld (SSQ) in 1994 after Rod contacted Ken to see if he would come and work for him, as he was expanding his survey practice in Central Queensland down to the state's south-east.

Ken was in the process of starting his own practice at the time, so the pair agreed to form a separate company to manage everything south of 'the Maryborough line'.

"Rod's brother Tony had a very successful mapping business called Schlencker Mapping, so we pooled our resources and traded as the Schlencker Group," Ken explains.

"We currently have 15 staff, four of whom have been with us for more than 20 years. Phill threatens to quit about every other day, but we won't let him," Ken laughs.

SSQ works on projects of all sizes, from small 'mum and dad' renovations to large residential subdivisions, high-rise towers, long line easements, telecommunication corridors, and survey control and mapping. The firm has been involved in a number of notable projects in the Sunshine State, namely the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project, Q1 Skywalk, and Gateway Motorway, as

well as major projects in Canberra, Alice Springs, Kiribati and The Torres Strait.

While the big jobs are always memorable, Ken recalls unique and interesting milestones from many of the smaller projects SSQ has consulted on as well.

In 2015, the firm utilised cutting-edge technology to undertake a survey of the Cream Track from Springbrook down to the Currumbin Valley. Ken says they were able to locate old walking tracks once used by dairy farmers in Springbrook to take their cream down to the train station in Currumbin in the early part of the last century. The team was then able to supply plans and maps for historical records and the expanding South-East Queensland network of bush walking tracks.

SSQ also recently undertook pro bono work out at Mitchell for the Gunggarri Nation. The original requirement was to undertake a DTM survey of about 20ha, so they had an accurate feature plan to use to develop concept plans, strategies and interactive community planning. However, the team soon discovered the main boundary defining the extents of the site was last surveyed

in 1885, and they needed to reinstate that boundary before they could relate the features to the boundaries. Department of Resources records showed a 21m difference in the location of the western boundary on various plans and data sources.

“This was a real team effort resulting in the field survey being completed in four days using a drone, GPS and a good old-fashioned plumb bob and compass on occasions,” Ken says, “The day’s work was emailed back each night with reduced and updated information sent back quickly, so there was no lost productivity. We were on a very tight schedule. It was a very satisfying job as we found some of the 1885 marks and I was able to mentor Tim and Jason Mylrea on looking for old survey marks and interpretation of old field notes, etc. They then mentored me on the current ‘smoke and mirrors’ gadgets. How things have changed!”

Of the surveys he’s completed, Ken says the two standouts are a SWER line survey at Cunnamulla and a Seismic Survey in The Simpson Desert.

“The first was a two-month swing leading up to Christmas 1974, followed by a shorter swing to replace an assistant who chopped his big toe in two with an axe, and then a final two-month swing leading up to Christmas 1975, where B&F trusted me enough to finish the project as the surveyor in charge,” he recalls.

“The second standout was the three-month stint in the Simpson Desert in 1979. Both surveys were relatively straight forward, but the experiences and characters I met were memorable. This is the stuff I talk about when asked what surveyors do. These two jobs alone saw me trying to catch a camel to sell in Alice Springs, feral pig shooting, constantly sharpening chainsaws, axes and brushhooks, Min Min lights, bush camps, bush mechanics, attacked by a swarm of bees, negotiating long drops that subside when built on sand hills, drafting plans and doing calculations under carbide lights, cooking on wood stoves while living in sweltering shearing sheds in the middle of summer... oh and the odd reference to surveying thrown in for good measure.”

“Over my career I’ve had great mentors such as Pat Crilly, Bob Hall, Peter Torlach, Charlie Martin, Ross Smithwick, Doug Adams, Barney Pluthero, Bob Harrison, Dave Luxmoore, Peter Busby, Bruce Dalton and Rod Schlencker. I just hope that what I’ve done has honoured them and that I leave something that can be grown upon in the future.”

Our conversation turns to Ken’s plans for retirement, at which point he will be able to leave SSQ in the highly capable hands of his daughter Stephanie, who manages the office, and his son Tim, a surveyor.

When asked how he managed to find not one but two children willing to take on the family business, Ken says, “There’s no secret... Nan and I have great children! My wife, Nan, has been my rock and I would not have ever ventured down the path of owning my own business if it wasn’t with her support. When Rod and I started the business, my four kids were aged three to nine years. I had a desk in the front bedroom and my survey assistant worked in our small study. About a year or so later, I excavated under the house and built a large rumpus room downstairs, which immediately became our office for the next few years. So, from a very early age all our kids became immersed in surveying, whether they realised it or not.

“After finishing senior, Steph was originally running outdoor education courses. In 2004, she took on some after-hours work with us, scanning all the old files so we could convert to a paperless office. On occasions she went out chaining for the surveyors and her job eventually morphed into a full-time office job with some field work thrown in. She soon became indispensable and—fortunately for me—made me somewhat redundant!”

“Tim took a gap year or three after finishing senior. When he came back, he started working with an arborist and doing landscaping as well. On one occasion his older brother, Dennis, asked him what he would really like to do and he said he’d thought about surveying. Den said to talk to me about it, and the rest, as they say, is history.

“Over the years, Rod and I implemented two succession management plans, however, for various reasons they didn’t work out. Leading up to Rod’s eventual retirement in 2017, we often discussed planning for the business when I eventually retired. On one occasion Rod asked if I’d ever considered Steph and Tim. I think he could see their potential to really make a go of it. I had considered it, but I’d never broached it with them as I didn’t want to put them in a corner,” Ken explains.

“Over time the idea germinated, and we’ve been able to discuss the options and are working to a transition that not only involves them, but other staff as well. We have a great bunch of young surveyors and our strategy has always been to maintain a career path for them as well. We are actively engaging with CSN, our accountant, and solicitor, about optimising everyone’s needs.

“That said, we’ve been so busy the past few years that I sometimes wonder if I’ll ever get to retire! But being semi-retired means I get to spend time with our five grandchildren, who are all under five years.

“Nan and I also enjoy travelling. We’ve done England and Europe, New Zealand, skiing in Japan and Canada, as well as countless camping and caravanning trips around Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory. We’re yet to do the big circuit, which we plan on doing in 2025, as we’re heading off to England and Canada for a few months this year to catch up with some family and friends.”



A special team

SSQ’s professional survey staff boasts over 185 years of combined surveying experience across a wide range of specialties, including mapping, photogrammetry, engineering, construction and land development.

“In 2021, our office administrator had to move back to Perth. We didn’t want to lose her so she now works full-time from Perth, coming back once or twice a year to catch up and join staff functions. Similarly, our draftsman moved to Yeppoon late last year and is working full-time from there. Probably not a big deal as far as larger organisations go, but if you have great staff, you’ll go the extra mile to keep them,” Ken says.



Stephanie

Like any kid of a surveyor, Stephanie recalls being driven past projects and having permanent marks pointed out whenever they went somewhere.

"I know I'm turning into my father when I start to do the same thing!" she laughs.

"Working for and with Dad, I have come to understand him better and the sacrifices both he and Mum made throughout our lives. I'm proud of what they created. It's also a privilege working with my brother and watching him achieve everything he has in and outside of surveying.

"I really enjoy that no day is the same and there is always something to learn about the industry and management. The best part of the job is working with our team. We have a fantastic group of people who I greatly admire as individuals. They supported us through an extremely difficult time as a family when my sister, Nicole, passed away from cancer in 2019, and I can't thank them enough.

We celebrated 20-year work anniversaries last year for Bruce, Chris, Kaylene and Phill, which is a reflection of our culture and the dedication of our staff.

Stephanie also recently graduated the Business Academy.

"We had come through an expedited succession period and it was a perfect opportunity to re-evaluate the business. The Business Academy helped to identify areas to improve and how to effectively implement changes. We re-budgeted to fast-track equipment upgrades and currently have designs underway for our office renovations. We have come up with new procedures for our remote workers, and are on track for our Pathway to Cadastral Surveyor training. We are investing in our staff training and are excited about the future of surveying."



Tim

Tim began his surveying career as a chainy (survey assistant) in mid-2014 for SSQ and completed his Bachelor of Spatial Science Degree at USQ at the end of 2022. He is now a Registered Graduate and working towards becoming a Registered Surveyor with the goal of becoming a Cadastral Surveyor.

"Becoming a surveyor always interested me but I didn't want to commit to anything straight after school as I wanted to travel. But after travelling and working in different industries I knew I was ready to come home and pursue a career and felt that surveying offered me all the characteristics that I enjoyed in a job.

"I love the combination of working outdoors in a technical profession. I also love the variety of work. One day you could be on the water or setting out a million-dollar house and the next you could be at the top of a mountain looking for original marks that are over 100 years old."

Tim's continued work towards becoming a Cadastral Surveyor is a big undertaking but no doubt one that will benefit the business immensely.

"I'm making the most of my time working under Dad alongside the other cadastral and experienced surveyors at SSQ to learn as much as I can about the profession. They are always approachable and make time to help me and the other non-cadastral surveyors to better understand and expand our cadastral knowledge. I am very grateful for the opportunity and think this is one of the reasons why it is important to become Cadastrally registered. For surveying to continue to be recognised as a profession with integrity and hold public trust, we need as many cadastral surveyors as possible." 📍





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INDUSTRY TRAINING ALLIANCE

Surveyors Australia is pleased to introduce the Industry Training Alliance (ITA). We have applied to the Australian Skills Quality Authority to become a RTO to deliver nationally recognised courses.

ITA IS DEDICATED to the education of individuals and industries alike, and contributing to easing the skills shortage in the surveying industry. At ITA, we are on a mission to revolutionise the way training is delivered, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their location or current job commitments, has access to high-quality educational opportunities, something that has already been achieved through the Surveyors Academy.

At the core Industry Training Alliance's philosophy are our three guiding principles—quality, flexibility, and inclusion—with a belief that everyone deserves access to exceptional education, and Surveyors Australia uphold the highest standards of excellence in all our programs. Through our flexible training options, we cater to the diverse needs of learners, regardless of location. Moreover, by championing

inclusivity, we create pathways for individuals from all backgrounds to thrive in their chosen fields.

Looking ahead to the years 2024 and 2025, we're excited to unveil our strategic roadmap for the future. Central to our vision is the expansion of our training offerings to include upskilling short courses designed to meet the evolving needs of various industry sectors. From Business and Leadership to Safety and Project Management, we're committed to providing training opportunities that align with the demands of today's rapidly changing job market.

We're dedicated to fostering partnerships with industry leaders to develop tailored training programs that address specific skill gaps and emerging trends. By collaborating closely with employers and industry experts, we ensure that our



training initiatives are not only relevant but also impactful.

Industry Training Alliance is more than just an educational institution—it's a catalyst for positive change in Australia's workforce landscape. Through our commitment to quality, flexibility, and inclusion, we're paving the way for a brighter future where every individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Join us on this journey as we work together to build a stronger, more resilient workforce for generations to come. 🌱



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Premise

BY MELANIE GIBBONS
 HEAD OF ADVOCACY AND INDUSTRY
 ENGAGEMENT, SURVEYORS AUSTRALIA



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR FIRST PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

Surveyors Australia has recently made a submission to the Federal Government's pre-Budget process.

THIS IS THE first time we have taken part in this important process. We believe it is necessary to take part as it will assist in our aim to increase the profile of surveying and to set a positive economic framework for our members and their businesses.

These submissions are predominately made by businesses, associations and charities and are considered by Treasury and the relevant ministerial departments as they develop the upcoming budget and plan for Australia's future.

With approximately 80% of our membership coming from small business, we utilised this opportunity to call for measures to assist small businesses to reduce some of the pressures being felt by our members.

We advocated for taxation support (especially with the equipment upgrades needed for the upcoming switch off of the 3G network) and for opportunities to unlock more infrastructure to ensure we have the right economic conditions for our industry to thrive into the future.

Our submission also touched on the need to assist with migration to help address the skills shortage and to provide



mutual opportunities for training our Pacific neighbours.

We placed a significant focus on funding and support for education and training to help further address the skills shortage and provide ongoing development for those in our industry.

Our Surveying Careers Taskforce is visiting schools and encouraging young people to consider surveying as a career. Once they have showed a passion for this profession is important that they are not

turned away due to a lack of affordable and accessible training pathways.

University, TAFE and indeed our own Surveyors Academy, need to be better federally funded to be appropriate pathways to help ease the pressure of this shortage.

The Federal Budget will be released in May and we are looking to take further part in the discussions between now and then to continue to push our policy priorities. +



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Exploring the depths of **MINE SURVEYING**

Land Surveys mining and regional manager Shane Watson retraces the steps of his career as a specialist surveyor to the mining industry, and explains why he's helping champion nationally aligned certification standards.



About Land Surveys

Established in 1997, Land Surveys, an ISGroup company, has steadily grown to become one of the leading geospatial firms in Australia and abroad. It has focused on expanding into new markets, integrating innovative technology, and investing in the recruitment and training of new personnel. With multiple offices across Australia, as well as locations in Papua New Guinea and the United Kingdom, Land Surveys now employs over 400 staff members, solidifying its position as a prominent player in the industry.

SHANE ORIGINALLY STARTED out studying Mining Engineering at the Western Australian School of Mines in Kalgoorlie, but says his heart just wasn't in it.

"At the time, I moved out of home to Kalgoorlie and back then in the mid '90s, Kalgoorlie really was the 'wild west'. I grew up in the country but, even so, it was a massive education for me both from an academic and social perspective. I really didn't focus on my studies as much as I should have and decided to take a year off to see what I wanted to do."

A year off didn't mean sitting around with his feet up, however. Shane needed to find work, and managed to secure a contract to do a leveling project and underground surveying support on a mine site in the Northern Goldfields.

"I managed to stay there for nearly nine months and enjoyed it so much that I ended up cancelling my engineering course and started a surveying degree," he explains.

"I loved the balance between the field and office work, and it was while exciting new technology was coming into play. It really excited me and sparked my passion towards the surveying profession."

Working underground

Shane spent the first decade of his working life underground, with a bit of open pit work thrown in.

"In 2002 when I graduated, I also received my Grade One Authorisation and took on a role as a junior mine surveyor

down in Kambalda. Over the next five years I had the opportunity to step up and start to manage and lead a team of mine surveyors, from which that experience opened an approach to jump into the contracting space with Spectrum Surveys managing their mining department.

"Again, this was another great opportunity, where I could further build on my experience by visiting and working on different mining operations and dealing with all the different people that this brought with it. Contracting is such a great way to fast track your experience in surveying—you get to see the many ways that people work, the different systems and methods used, which you can then take and build your own processes and skills. It reignited my passion and I think that really drove me to through the next stage in my career."

In his current role as Land Surveys' WA mining and regional manager, Shane looks after three different teams, comprising 50-plus staff that work from down in the south-west right up to the Pilbara and then out east to the Goldfields.

"Our regional team covers all aspects of surveying, from mining production work on underground or open pit mines and on small and large infrastructure projects as the construction surveyors or audit surveyors for the EPCMs. We have a strong mining and resources focus, however, we also work with the local

shires and state government departments on their infrastructure projects," he says.

"We do a lot of work on road, rail, earthwork and construction projects where we not only use traditional survey methods but also use MLS, TLS and UAVs to capture data for our clients.

"Our vision for Land Surveys is to be Australia's leader in providing surveying and geospatial solutions that exceed our clients expectations. As surveyors, our role is to provide the geospatial data that is required to design, build, and maintain these projects. Having this data enables smart and informed decisions about the spatial information that impacts these projects."

"Obviously, with the way technology is continually evolving, there's always new equipment or better ways of capturing data. One of the biggest challenges for a surveyor is understanding the technology on hand and working with all these different technologies to help facilitate the most effective and comprehensive data solution. Whether that be flying a UAV, using MLS or TLS, rail trolleys, linking in asset management, feature extraction, modelling and utility location, where we can merge parts or all of this data to compile a 'complete' dataset depending on the project's requirements.

"So, at Land Surveys we have subject matter experts in each of these fields.





“We will continue to work towards ensuring that mine surveyors across Australia have a similar competency-based system that allows simple and easy mutual recognition...”

As managers and project surveyors you bring all these people and technology together to achieve that complete dataset. It's about bringing all those different resources together, staying on top of the latest technology to capture data faster and smarter, however, we can't forget this still needs to be underpinned by the fundamentals of surveying—do your checks and verification.”

Standout projects

Asked about projects that have been career highlights, Shane points to some of the overseas work he's done in the early stages of his career.

“Going to another country and helping a client with a survey or problem is very rewarding. You get to see the different cultures and methods of surveying they use. Some were really ‘old school’, and it was satisfying helping train and impart some new survey knowledge to the local surveyors,” he explains.

More recently and on the home front, Shane says Land Surveys is currently involved in some major iron ore projects across the Pilbara.

“These ‘big ticket’ projects are interesting; you've got the asset owners looking at upgrading not only their rail infrastructure but also the supporting infrastructure. It's like I was talking about before, combining our services in rail, UAV, TLS, utility location, feature extraction and modelling to provide a comprehensive dataset that the team then use in the design and construct of the new infrastructure. It's about mitigating the risk for the design and build of these new assets.”

Shane says there have been many times throughout his career that he has been asked to take on more engineering-focused project manager roles, but he has fought to stick with the surveying profession as it's always been his passion.

“Obviously now as a manager I don't do nearly as much field work as I used to, but I'm still really motivated by the troubleshooting challenges on a project,” he says.

“I like to pull things apart and rebuild them or work out why something isn't working and so forth. I think that's a lot of what we do in survey—identifying what the problem is and how best we use our survey skillset and technology to fix it. Asking what the issues or the risks are in doing it, what technology do we need to apply, and what checks and balances have to be put in place to ensure we actually get the result we need. I think that really is part of what drives me.”

Championing standards

Over the past 15 years or so, Shane has also been heavily involved in the Mining Authorisation process in Western Australia.

“Many years ago, it looked like a decision was going to be made to remove the certification process for authorised mine surveyors under the Mining Safety and Inspection Regulations,” he says.

“Essentially, there would have been some minimal guidance, but it was going to be left up to the mining operator to verify the competency of mine surveyors on their operation. I've been heavily involved with the Australian Institute of Mine Surveyors for many years, and through this Institute and along with my peer mining surveyors, we rallied together to fight the removal of the certification process.

“It would have been so damaging for our profession and industry, not to mention the safety risks that could have been introduced due to the lack of oversight that comes with an external competency-based system run by subject matter experts. How can you verify someone's competency in a role when you don't have the knowledge about that role?”

After intense lobbying, they managed to keep the certification process in the new mining regulations. As well as being immediate past president of the Australian Institute of Mine Surveyors, Shane is an active industry representative on the Surveyors Competence Advisory Committee for the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, and with the team has been working through developing the new certificate of competency process, the legislation exam, practical and portfolio exam and guidance material to support the *Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022*.

“We really need a nationally aligned standard,” Shane says.

“We will continue to work towards ensuring that mine surveyors across Australia have a similar competency-based system that allows simple and easy mutual recognition so that mine surveyors can transfer and work in any state or territory. We are nearly there, with one final hurdle to introduce a system of continual professional development here in WA.”



BY STEPHEN TREW, MEGAN CANT & CHLOE HAMER
Partner, Special Counsel & Lawyer, Holding Redlich



CONTINUED CHANGES TO INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LAWS: RECAP ON CLOSING LOOPHOLES

Following significant legislated changes in 2022, the Federal Government in 2023 introduced additional extensive changes to the industrial relations landscape.

On 4 September 2023, the Federal Government introduced the *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023* (Cth) (Closing Loopholes Bill), which contained some of the most far-reaching and controversial amendments to the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) (FW Act) and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) (WHS Act) to date. These changes build on the amendments made to the FW Act under the Secure Job, Better Pay reforms.

On 7 December 2023, the Closing Loopholes Bill was divided and some of the amendments were passed in Federal Parliament and received Royal Assent on 14 December 2023. These changes became the *Fair Work Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Act 2023* (Cth) (Closing Loopholes Act).

The remaining changes were more complex and controversial, and were transferred to a separate bill, known as the *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes No.2) Bill 2023* (Closing Loopholes Bill No.2). This Bill passed both Houses of Parliament on 12 February 2023 and received Royal Assent on 26 February 2024, becoming the *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes No.2) Act 2024* (Closing Loopholes Act No.2).

The sweeping changes impact the surveying industry and employers should consider these in their organisational strategy, workforce planning and employment decisions. We provide a high-level summary of the key changes to workplace relations and safety law arising from the *Closing Loopholes Act*, and a brief introduction to the changes under the *Closing Loopholes Act No.2* below.

Key changes in force

- Small business redundancy exemption: The small business (less than 15

employees) exemption to redundancy pay will not apply to a business that downsizes to less than 15 employees due to bankruptcy or insolvency.

- Regulated labour hire arrangement orders: Employees, unions and host employers can apply to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) for an order that labour hire employers must pay their on-hire workers the full rate of pay they would receive under the host employer's enterprise agreement had they been doing the work as an employee of the host employer.
- Workplace delegates rights: New workplace delegate rights including the requirement for employers to allow delegates with reasonable access to the workplace to communicate with members and non-members about industrial issues and paid time during work to attend training.
- New workplace protections for delegates: From 1 July 2024, new enterprise agreements and workplace determinations must include a term providing for the exercise of workplace delegate rights.
- Right of entry: Officials of a registered organisation can enter a workplace to assist a Health and Safety representative without a Fair Work entry permit.
- Workplace protections for employees subject to family and domestic violence: It is unlawful for an employer to take adverse action against an employee on this basis and for an award or enterprise agreement to discriminate against a person on this basis.
- Criminalising wage theft: Employers that intentionally underpay wages will commit a criminal offence, facing significant penalties and/or imprisonment. Small businesses will be exempt if they have complied with the pending Voluntary Small Business Wage Compliance Code. This offence will come into effect the later of 1 January

2025, or the date after the Minister declares the Code.

- Mediation and conciliation conference orders: Attendance at the FWC conciliation conference is compulsory for employee and employer industrial action under a protection action ballot order (PABO) to be protected industrial action.
- WHS changes: A new federal offence of industrial manslaughter effective from 1 July 2024, increased penalties for offences under the WHS Act and amended provisions dealing with criminal liability for bodies corporate and the Commonwealth.

Key changes to FW Act under Closing Loopholes Act No.2

The changes under the Closing Loopholes Act and the commencement of the Closing Loopholes Act No.2 mark the beginning of a full year of employment change. Employers should note that most of the following key changes under the Closing Loopholes Act No.2 will commence this year:

- protected right to disconnect for employees
- introducing a statutory definition of "employee"
- setting minimum standards for "employee like workers" in the gig economy
- implementing a new definition of casual employee and changed pathway to permanent employment
- an informal FWC jurisdiction to resolve disputes about unfair contract terms in certain service agreements
- further amendments to enterprise bargaining
- increased penalties for civil liability provisions and amendments to the defence of "sham contracting".

If you have any questions about any of the changes that have passed or are upcoming, please contact Partner Stephen Trew at stephen.trew@holdingredlich.com or Special Counsel Megan Cant at megan.cant@holdingredlich.com.

Disclaimer: The information in this article is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular individual or entity. Although we endeavour to provide accurate and timely information, we do not guarantee that the information in this article is accurate at the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future.



BY GUY ROBERTSON
Director, Robertson Surveying

FUNDING OUR FUTURE

It is no secret that since the pandemic, universities have been experiencing funding pressures.

AT THE UNIVERSITY of Newcastle (UoN), this has resulted in budget cuts to smaller degree programs, including the Bachelor of Surveying. The most concerning funding cut is part of a university-wide reduction in funding available for casual academics, effectively de-funding external lecturers for courses (subjects) with small cohorts. This affects core courses, Land Boundary Definition and Town Planning, along with the elective course, Land Valuation, within the Bachelor of Surveying.

For many years, the two core courses have been delivered by industry professionals Brian Mott and Ian Donovan. Brian and Ian bring decades of real-world experience to deliver this important content in a way only a practising professional can. Removing these important insights and first-hand knowledge will impact the program's quality, potentially affecting its ongoing certification with CRSBANZ. It is also anticipated that the next generation of Registered Surveyors could miss out

on the in-depth knowledge required to keep Australia's projects moving.

The current funding shortfall for the two core courses is approximately \$40,000 PA. Over the past few months, there have been several meetings between industry and the university to address this problem. The key issue behind the cuts is low enrolment numbers. First-year enrolment numbers have been around 30 students each year. The university has advised that 60 enrolments are required to relieve the funding issues.

UoN academics Dr Lloyd Pilgrim and Dr Medhi Kakhi have been exploring opportunities for more attractive delivery options, including an Associate Degree and a hybrid model that would offer higher flexibility for regional students or people who are already working. Working alongside industry, they are developing a model that works and will increase enrolments. Unfortunately, this won't happen overnight.

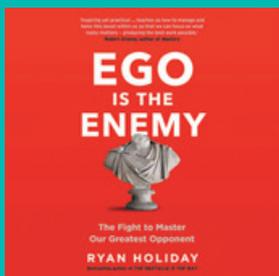
To ensure the short-term stability of the degree program, the funding shortfall has been guaranteed for 2024 by the Institution of Surveyors NSW (including the Hunter Manning and North Coast Regional Groups), the Country Surveyors Association and the Association of Public Authority Surveyors. We will continue to work with the university to develop a long-term solution through representation to government and assisting the university to market its degree program.

The profession must work together to help the university ensure that the high standard of the Newcastle degree is maintained and arm our future Registered Surveyors with the knowledge and skills required to keep Australia moving. +

Guy Robertson is a University of Newcastle graduate, Chair of the ISNSW Hunter Manning Group and sits on the ISNSW Board of Directors.



+ BRAIN food



READ

If you're after ways to communicate, manage and lead better at work and even in life, then Ryan Holiday's *Ego is the Enemy* tackles what is sometimes our biggest hindrance. Looking at the nature and dangers of being consumed by our egos, this book helps create a path that can lead you back to humility and confidence. Available online and in bookstores.



WATCH

If you're a lover of the great outdoors—particularly loading the car up and hitting the tracks—YouTube channel *4WD 24/7* is a must-watch. Previously known as *4WD Action*, Shaun Whale, Graham Cahill and their mates head out and hit some of the best 4WD tracks across Australia, bringing you tips, tricks and the best gear.



LISTEN

From *Harvard Business Review* comes the *HBR IdeaCast* podcast. From the leading thinkers in business and management come ideas surrounding leadership, career, business and marketing. If you're after business advice or simply want to hear from some of the brightest minds in biz, this is the podcast for you.

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2023 HOURLY RATE SURVEY

For the fourth consecutive year, Surveyors Australia carried out its National Hourly Rate Survey of member firms, the results of which have now been released to its member principals.

THE SURVEY WAS open to all of its member firms, of which 200 completed the survey.

In a challenging economic environment, marked by persistent inflation, escalating interest rates and a dip in construction demand, the *Surveyors Australia Hourly Rate Survey* shows average charge-out rates grew strongly in 2023.

As in 2022, most consulting firms are small business with less than 10 employees and a revenue under \$2 million. Only 13% of metropolitan firms had more than 10 FTEs and 19% had a revenue of over \$10 million.

The average charge-out rate across all roles increased 8%, with an increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) over the 12 months to the December quarter rising 4.1%. Further, the 2023 Consulting

Surveyors Business and Remuneration Survey indicated that salaries for most surveyor roles increased in 2023, with most firms increasing salaries by at least 5% of base salary. As a result, costs remain high for surveyor firms, and many raised their hourly charge-out rates. Firms in both metropolitan and regional areas both reported an increase of 8% in charge-out rates from 2022.

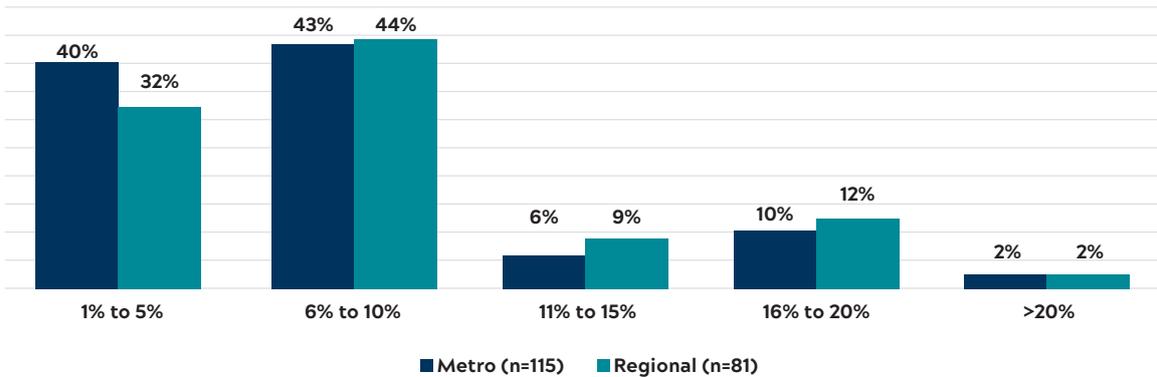
Rate increases for Registered/Licensed Surveyors were slightly higher at firms in metropolitan locations than in regional areas. Metropolitan firms reported a rate increase of 11% for field work with an assistant and 14% for work carried out solo in the field. Office charge-out rates are up 11%. For regionally based firms, charge-out rates for field work undertaken by a Registered/Licensed Surveyors increased

by 8% as well as work undertaken with an assistant. Hourly rates for office based work are up 7%.

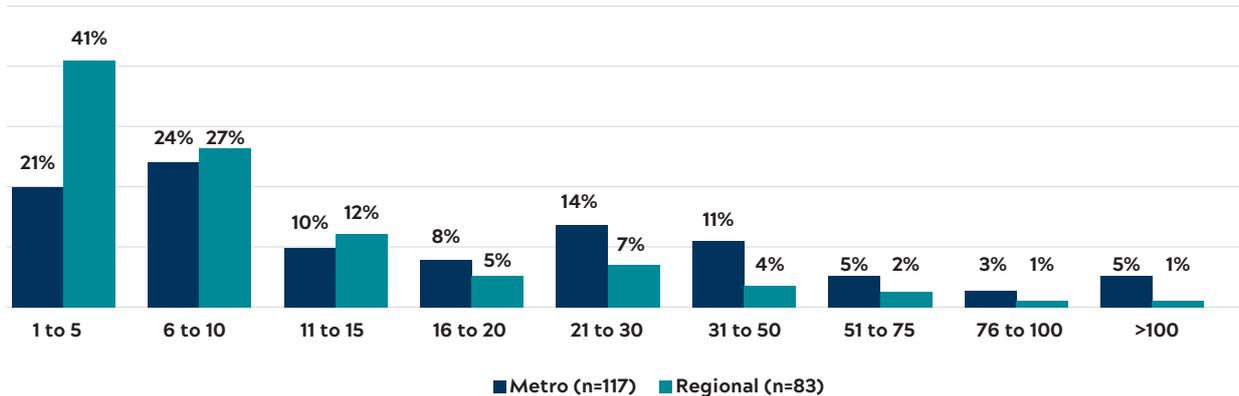
Metropolitan based firms reported particularly large increases in hourly rates across office-based roles.

The largest increase was for work undertaken in the office by a Consulting Surveyor/Director, with rates up 15%. Charge-out rates for Town Planners were also up, 10% for senior staff and 13% for junior personnel. Office charge-out rates for Field Assistants and Administration staff were up 12% and 13% respectively. In regional areas, hourly rates for Civil Designers (14%), GIS Operators (20%) and Environmental Scientists (23%) increased. Conversely, hourly charge-out rates for Laser Scanner roles in regional areas fell by 3% with field rates dropping 7%.

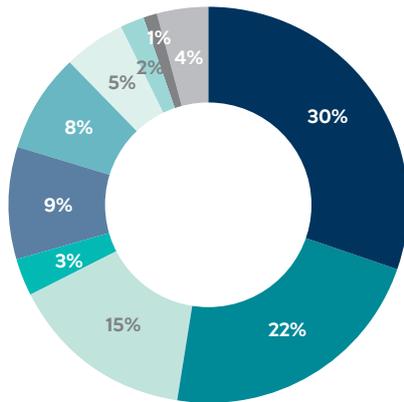
PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN HOURLY RATES



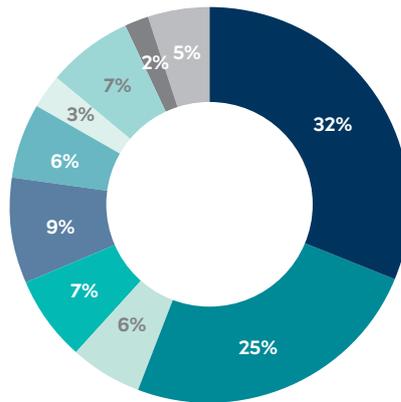
NUMBER OF FTE STAFF



JOB TYPE BREAKDOWN BY HOURS METRO (n=117)

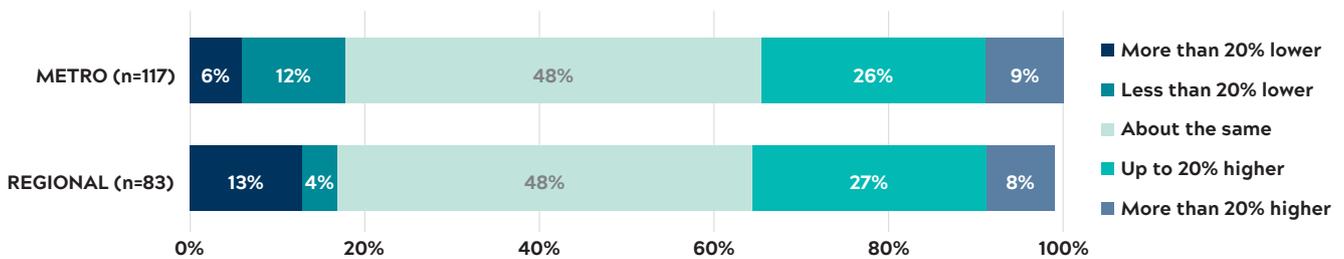


JOB TYPE BREAKDOWN BY HOURS REGIONAL (n=83)



- Cadastral Surveys
- Detail/Feature Surveys
- Set Out - Infrastructure
- Engineering Design
- Set Out - Residential
- Set Out - Commercial/Industrial
- Scanning and Modelling
- Town Planning
- Mine Surveys
- Other

REVENUE GROWTH LAST FINANCIAL YEAR



Over two in five firms charge the same rate for office and field-based work across most roles, and most charge more for two-person teams.

Similar to 2022, in 2023, over two in five surveyor firms reported the same hourly charge rate for field and office-based work for Drone Pilots (51%), Laser Scanners (46%), Technicians (48%) and Graduate Surveyors (43%).

Amid the contraction in construction activity, many surveyor firms reported stable revenue over the last financial year, with pricing revisions probably countering decreased demand.

Almost half of both metropolitan and regional firms reported steady revenue in 2023. Around one in three firms reported steady revenue in 2023. Around one in three firms increased their revenue, with 9% of metropolitan and 8% of regional firms growing revenue by over 20%. Around one in five firms indicated that revenue fell in 2023, with 13% of regional firms and 6% of metropolitan firms citing a drop of more than 20%.

To balance out the economic pressures arising from high inflation and the slowdown in construction, many firms reported increasing their pricing over the past two years. Over half (51%) of metropolitan firms increased their pricing in FY23, with a further 28% increasing it in FY24. These proportions are 43% and 31% for regional firms respectively.

Over half of responding firms in metropolitan areas, and 31% in regional areas, reported turnover of \$2 million in the 2022/2023 financial year. One in five metropolitan-based respondents reported revenue over \$10 million, with the same proportion of firms reporting turnover under \$1 million.

With persistent inflation creating an uncertain economic environment, there was a slight fall in the proportion of work quoted at a fixed price.

Around a third of surveyor firms charge a fixed price for more than 80% of their quotes. While this is consistent across metropolitan and regional areas it is significantly lower than in 2022—down from 49% in 2022 to 33%. For regional firms, this fell from 42% to 35%.

To manage profitability, most firms use timesheets to track project costs (85% metropolitan and 88% regional) and across both areas, nine in 10 firms check these timesheets against final invoice costs.

To reduce costs and maintain profitability, an increasing proportion of surveyor firms are outsourcing support tasks offshore.

In 2023, 34% of metropolitan based firms outsourced support tasks (including drafting, data modelling or management, administration and financial services) offshore, up from 27% in 2022 and 17% in 2021. 18% of regional firms outsourced support work offshore, up from 14% in 2022 and 6% in 2021.

Most firms focus on land and construction surveys, with fewer undertaking planning and design projects.

In 2023, approximately 84% of work carried out by metropolitan firms related to surveys, whether cadastral, detail/feature surveys, or set-out, with this proportion dropping to 78% for regional firms.

In contrast, 13% of regional based firms undertook town planning or engineering design work in 2023, compared with 5% of firms in metropolitan locations.

Based on the responses from 200 surveyor firms, the 2023 *Surveyors Australia Hourly Rate Survey* indicates that firms are increasing hourly charge-out rates to maintain revenues in a challenging economic environment.

In addition to providing charge-out rates at an aggregated level, the 2023 *Surveyors Australia Hourly Rate Survey* provides data for surveying roles at a state and regional level where available as well as other rate data including breakdown on project types, quote comparisons from state to state and the passing on of costs to the client. 📍

This report, along with the National Salary Survey, continue to be fundamental tools for business analysis and planning and are available free of charge to Surveyors Australia member principals through the members log in area at www.consultingsurveyors.com.au



BY GORDON WREN
Subdivision & Strata Certifier

WHEN SHOULD YOU APPOINT A SUBDIVISION/STRATA CERTIFIER?

In this article, Gordon Wren explains what a subdivision or strata certifier is, and when you should appoint one.

I PREVIOUSLY WROTE this article a few years ago, and I am now updating this in light of the introduction of the Low Rise Housing Diversity Code (LRHDC), i.e. Part 3B of the Codes SEPP.

What is a Strata Certifier

Firstly, a Strata Certifier can issue a strata certificate for a Strata Plan. This then allows the Strata Plan to be lodged at the Land Titles Office (LRS) for registration. A strata certificate can be issued by a strata certifier or the local council. A Strata Certifier is registered by the NSW Government through the Building Professionals Board (the Board)[NSW Fair Trading].

PCA and AC

Secondly, in my experience there has been some confusion about whether the appointed Strata Certifier is a PCA (Principal Certifying Authority). The Strata Certifier when acting in the role to issue a strata certificate is not a PCA. A PCA is a Registered Certifier that issues an occupation certificate (ie building certifier) or a subdivision certificate where there are subdivision construction works to be carried out (ie subdivision certificate).

Subdivision/Strata certificate

Another area of confusion I have encountered is the applicant understanding the difference between a subdivision certificate and strata certificate.

A subdivision certificate allows a Deposited Plan prepared by a registered land surveyor to be lodged at the Land Titles Office for registration, resulting in what is commonly referred to as a Torrens Title. This plan is for the subdivision of land. The subdivision certificate is issued by a Subdivision Certifier. The issuing of a subdivision certificate is governed by the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act* (EP&A Act).

As I mentioned before, a strata certificate allows a Strata Plan prepared by a registered land surveyor to be lodged at



The advice that I give to applicants is that it is good practice to appoint a Strata Certifier when you “start to dig the hole”.

the Land Titles Office for registration. The titles in the Strata Plan are for defined cubic spaces within or adjacent to a building. The issuing of a strata certificate is governed by the *Strata Schemes (Freehold Development) Act* or *Strata Schemes (Leasehold Development) Act*.

When should you appoint a strata certifier?

The advice that I give to applicants is that it is good practice to appoint a Strata Certifier when you “start to dig the hole”. I give this advice, because once a hole has started to be dug for the project, the DA has issued, the Construction Certificate has been issued, and in my experience, the developer/builder then concentrates on the building works, and may not revisit all the DA conditions until the end of the project.

In my experience, there may be certain DA conditions that could be amended, but if these conditions are flagged at the end of the project, there is no time to request any amendments through a Sec 4.55 modification. Any Sec 4.55 modifications would be best applied for well before the end of a project.

Is there a Strata DA?

There have been many instances where an applicant has applied for a strata certificate at the end of the project, only to be advised by the strata certifier that there is no development consent for strata subdivision for their project. This can result in very costly delays. With amendments to the SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes)

[also known as the Codes SEPP], strata subdivision can be complying development under certain conditions. This means that a suitably Registered Certifier (with Subdivision category), can issue a complying development certificate (CDC) for strata subdivision. If a CDC can be issued, then a development consent from council for strata subdivision will not be needed.

Generally, the conditions are:

- a) The building DA is less than five years old
- b) The project is not a dual occupancy (see comments abt LRHDC)
- c) There are no heritage issues

If the applicant appoints the Strata Certifier early, then costly delays incurred by applying for a council development consent at the end of the project can be avoided.

Conditions of DA

There have been many examples where badly worded conditions, or unnecessary conditions, have not been addressed and deleted at the start of the project. Once again the applicant can be faced with costly delays. These delays do not only equate to additional financial holding charges, but also risk purchaser contracts being rescinded due to time overruns.

One such condition some councils impose is that a final occupation certificate is required to be issued before a strata certificate can be issued. This requirement could add an unnecessary delay of up to four to six weeks to a project. This condition should be deleted

by a Sec 4.55 modification. This has been reinforced by Practice Advice issued by the Building Professional Board in its Bulletin, Issue 18, Nov 2009:

“A number of councils are imposing conditions on the development consent for strata subdivision requiring the completion of associated building works prior to the issue of a strata certificate.

The Board’s view is that an occupation certificate is the appropriate mechanism for ensuring the building work is completed and suitable for occupation and that the strata certificate should not perform this role.”

Once again, if the applicant contacts the Strata Certifier at the end of a project, there simply is not enough time to try a Sec 4.55 modification to remove unnecessary conditions.

Low Rise Housing Diversity Code (LRHDC)–Part 3B Codes SEPP

As the name implies, this Code deals with approving Low Rise Housing, Dual Occupancies, Terraces, Manor Houses.

It is a means of allowing these projects to be approved by CDC (Complying Development) if:

- Certain elements of the development complies with the legislated parameters
- Compliance with relevant council LEPs

So an applicant can (if all conditions are met) build a Dual Occ or Terraces by obtaining a Building CDC from a Registered Building Certifier (without applying to council).

The applicant can then proceed to get a Torrens Title (Subdivision Certificate) or Strata (Strata Certificate) Plan from a Registered Subdivision or Strata Certifier, and lodge the Plan for Registration at LRS (again without applying to council, if all conditions are met).

In this article, I am not going to dive into what those conditions are, and how they are different in the many council LEPs.

Rather, this article focuses on when to appoint a Subdivision/Strata Certifier.

In relation to LRHDC, this timing is even more important.

In LRHDC, the Building CDC is the planning approval, and allows the construction to commence.

The Subdivision or Strata CDC is the planning approval for the subdivision.

This document is very important for the applicant when dealing with the service providers (water/sewer, electricity, NBN)

In my experience, the Subdivision/ Certifier or Strata CDC should issue their CDC about a week after the Building CDC.

In areas controlled by Sydney Water, two (2) Sec 73 Complying Certificates are required:

- One for the Building, and ultimately the Occupation Certificate
- One for the Subdivision, and ultimately the Subdivision or Strata Certificate.

I hope this discussion contributes to a smooth and efficient process for the subdivision and strata certification in a project you may be involved with. +



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Interested? Go ahead and contact us today



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BY TATUM WEST & TONY DAVIDSON
Principal – Accounting & Taxation & Partner – Financial Planning, People + Partners



END OF FINANCIAL YEAR IS COMING—IT'S TIME TO ACT

With March underway, it's crucial to prepare for the financial year ending on 30 June, especially with new tax rates approaching. Here are key strategies to consider:

Supercharge your super

Maximise your super contributions (up to \$27,500) either through work payroll or personal contributions. Remember to claim tax deductions for personal contributions. These contributions are taxed at a lower rate, offering tax-efficient savings, but be wary of exceeding contribution caps.

Revitalise your portfolio

The end of the financial year is ideal for evaluating your investment portfolio. Consider rebalancing or removing underperforming assets. Use capital gains and losses strategically to reduce tax liabilities.

Maximise personal deductions

Identify potential tax deductions like charity donations, work-related, or investment expenses. With lower tax rates from 1 July, advance this year's deductions to leverage the current higher rates. Consult an accountant for guidance, particularly with the upcoming tax changes.

Maximise business deductions

Don't forget to review and write off any bad debts, obsolete items on your asset registers and pay any superannuation

liabilities before 30 June. You may also consider prepaying expenses to bring forward the tax benefit from these deductions.

Accept a helping hand

Is your business eligible for support via the various government grants on offer? These often have time restrictions—for example, for the R&D grant, you need to register any activities within 10 months of the end of the year (still time to act for the 2023 year!).

Tax-efficient investments

Some investments offer better tax benefits than others. Dividends on Australian shares, particularly blue chips, generally come with franking credits that can help offset your tax bill on dividend income. It's worth considering these tax-efficient options when planning your investments.

Strategise Capital Gains Tax

Timing is crucial for selling appreciated assets. Aiming for over a year of holding can get you a 50% capital gains tax discount. Also, offset gains with any capital losses to minimise tax.

Save for future goals

Utilise schemes such as the First Home Super Saver Scheme or invest in tax-efficient products for long-term goals. These can reduce your taxable income while aiding in saving for significant milestones.

Review estate plans

Ensure your estate plans, including wills and Powers of Attorney, are up-to-date. Proper structuring can provide both familial support and tax benefits.

Seek professional advice

Consult with a professional tax advisor or financial planner, like those at People + Partners, for tailored end-of-financial-year strategies. Professional guidance can lead to tax savings and better financial goal achievement.

Remember, the end of the financial year is not just a deadline but an opportunity to reset and optimise your financial affairs for the year ahead. [+](#)

Tony Davison and Tatum West are Partners at People + Partners, the official financial partners of Surveyors Australia. For more, visit peopleandpartners.com.au



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SURVEYING CAREERS 2024

2024 has kicked off with a bang as Surveying Careers jumped into planning across New South Wales and Queensland. We are excited to be working with our local surveyors and industry partners as we promote the profession across both states.

THANKS TO THE funding provided by the Surveyors Trust, we established Surveying Careers in Queensland and employed Rohan Slater in Queensland and welcomed Georgia Psaros in NSW. Georgia and Rohan have hit the ground running and are doing a fantastic job with schools, firms and industry partners. We look forward to you meeting the team in the months ahead.



Work experience 2024

Eighty-plus students completed work experience in 2023 and we anticipate this number to grow in 2024. We have already started to receive requests for placements in both states which is very exciting. To support our firms and to provide a more valuable and engaging experience for the students we will be promoting various free software for students to use during their placements. This will be available from March via surveyingcareers.com.au and a webinar to promote the “how to’s” on this resource will be held with ACS and ISNSW in the near future. Watch this space for more info!

Surveying Unleashed

Monday 25th March, Pier One Hotel – Sydney

This is one of the most popular events we host in Sydney. With over 120 teachers, students, and surveyors, participating in this fantastic day; we love the enthusiasm and passion our surveyors share with the students and the results... students are signing up to join work experience, receive study info and some have already started working with local surveying firms. Its not too late to get involved for this years event, if you would like to sponsor a school to attend or would like to volunteer for the day, drop us a line at the email address at the end of the article.

Survey to the Surveyors

One really important piece of research we would really value your support of, is a survey targeted at gathering information on why people follow a career into surveying. In the coming weeks ISNSW and ACSNSW will be sharing a survey monkey link with a few important questions, your participation will actively influence how we plan for the next 12 months strategic process.

Careers expos

We look forward to a busy Careers expo season again this year—Our Surveying Taskforce team will be contacting surveyors across NSW and Queensland to invite you to support the profession at a local school. If you would like to get involved we are always looking for more help—last year we attended close to 40 career events in NSW and we are excited to double that number as we start heading off across Queensland.



Maths in Surveying Days

These days continue to be very popular and demand is growing across the state. Ian Iredale and the Maths in Surveying team are doing a fantastic job. We have numerous days planned across the state; Newcastle, Liverpool, Albury, Bathurst, ACT, Tamworth and three events in Sydney. Help is always needed so please jump on the volunteer crew - notifications come out regularly in the ISNSW and ACS updates so keep your eyes peeled.



COME AND SAY HI

We look forward to meeting many of you over the next 12 months wither at a career expo or event. We will also be at many of the Industry conferences this year, so if you see the surveying careers Banner please hop on by and say hello - we would love to meet you.

For more information on how we can assist you or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to email us at info@surveyingcareers.com.au

All the best

Cathy, Rohan and Georgia

The Surveying Careers Team 📍



PRS: *A family legacy*

The Surveyor sits down with Peter Richards Surveying (PRS) director Brodie Richards, who has proudly taken the reins of the family business started by his father.

PETER RICHARDS SURVEYING (PRS) has been operating in Melbourne for over 28 years in residential and commercial surveying. With a team of 35 staff, they're one of the larger surveying firms in Victoria delivering a unique 'all-in-one' style of surveying with both cadastral and construction surveying services. PRS prides themselves on their family-based values, delivering quality customer service on and offsite and continually growing with the industry, which was made clear by director Brodie Richards.

Peter Richards had successfully run PRS with years of experience under his belt, but the next stage of life for the business saw his son Brodie take the reins. Brodie's interest in surveying was one that began at a young age, being onsite with his dad and around the business on weekends.

"I'll say he brainwashed me. I was probably eight or 10 years old when I started helping him out onsite, getting the pegs out of the car and putting them onsite or holding the prisms on the weekend for him. I was always sort of conned into it by

following up with either a fishing trip or going to the footy," Brodie says.

"We always had a really nice weekend doing that kind of stuff, and so that's how I grew to love it."

After watching his dad successfully run PRS for years, Brodie knew that it was time for him to step in as his love of surveying grew. After receiving his surveying licence three years ago, Brodie says it is something that sets the business apart from other surveying firms and helps them deliver more services under a single roof.

"I always enjoyed the work as a surveyor. I liked the problem-solving aspect, and it always kept me busy. There's always something new to challenge you. In terms of taking over the management of the business, I could see some of the difficulties that Dad faced when he was not a licensed surveyor," he explains.

"Having licensed surveyors is really advantageous, because if the construction managers come across any

issues onsite, for example, if pegs aren't in and we need to do a cadastral survey, we can get it all done very quickly for the client and so there's no delays.

"It means that the clients don't have to chase up other survey firms and deal with one firm for this, and one firm for that. That's why most of our long-term clients are those developers that value the fact that we can do everything for them in one go."

Brodie's eagerness to get in and get the work done helped his dad phase out of the business, but Peter still sticks around to work on the projects he's most passionate about. Brodie's new perspective and industry understanding has helped PRS shift as far as business operations go but by immersing himself in industry events and connecting with surveyors, developers and architects he is gaining a whole new insight into the future for PRS.

"My perspective is constantly evolving. I've got a lot to learn, particularly on the business side of things, I was probably largely unaware of how important my



COMPANY PROFILE

Brodie with his son, Douglas, who was born in February 2024



Director/Licensed Surveyor Brodie Richards, Licensed Surveyor Cheng-Yee Tan, and Cadastral Manager/Licensed Surveyor Cameron Holley

responsibility is, particularly to all my employees and team members here,” Brodie says.

“Some of the goals for this year we’ve discussed with some other leaders are just about implementing a more tiered management system as we currently have a lot of direct reports to me. It’s about sharing that workload and hopefully everyone will benefit from that.”

Last year, Brodie and his team visited the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre at the Melbourne Museum as a way to learn more about First Nations people and strengthen those team relationships. The team building day was an opportunity for everyone to not only learn about First Nation’s people and their history, but their connection with the land, as Brodie says they “work closely with the land every day”. Broadening understanding for himself and his team is something Brodie is passionate about continuing to develop.

“I want to implement some more professional development days for the team. So, you know, personality

assessments such as DISC profiling, and other team building exercises I want to try and focus on,” he says.

Although at front of mind for Brodie, team development isn’t the only way that PRS has continued to progress. The evolving industry and the continued evolution of technology means that businesses have to keep up and shift constantly to meet demand and stay on top of projects. Brodie and his team over a number of years have continued to develop a project management software that helps the team stay on track for project timelines, tasks and take ownership of their work on and off site.

“It really helps us to track the progress of jobs. The invoicing, scheduling and project management is all built in there. One really great function is simply the ability to make notes on jobs, and actually assign tasks to each other. If a client calls up, any surveyor can just punch in the address, and know exactly where their job is at by looking at the notes. You can give constant feedback

within seconds to the client about the status of a project,” he says.

With Brodie’s understanding expanding within the industry and externally, not just from the completion of the ACS Business Academy, PRS is set to grow in leaps and bounds. No doubt Brodie’s understanding and view has shifted once again as he recently became a father to baby Douglas, which has further accelerated his desire for a reputable, family business that may possibly be handed down to his son one day.

“It’s definitely reinforced my belief that I want to have a business that’s respected within the profession and also within the community. It’s really important to me that we’re doing the right things and that it’s a great place to work, and that when people mention Peter Richards Surveying, it’s in a positive manner,” he says.

“That’s really important to me as a father, because if Douglas chooses one day to take it up that he can do so, and he’s left with a respectable business that he can take over and make his own footprint on.”

Five Minutes With... CATHY MOSES

Surveying Careers and Consulting Surveyors NSW



Tell us a bit about yourself personally and professionally:

I grew up in England and moved to Australia as a teenager. I have a great family and am married with two children who we brought up in Wollongong. Once the kids flew the nest, we moved to Sydney and got two chihuahuas to replace them, much to the kids' horror!

I have a creative arts background and degree. I kicked off my career at Australia's Wonderland where I stage managed two of the outdoor theatres. I then moved on to work as a creative director for about 10 years at a large not for profit and theatre in the Illawarra. I then moved across to the association sector specialising in community and stakeholder engagement, membership, and event curation. I have also worked with various associations to train their teams and create resources to help them with their everyday tasks.

How long have you been working with Surveyors Australia?

I'm heading into my fourth year now, managing the Surveying Careers Taskforce. I really love working here—we have a fantastic

team, Board, and members. Everyone is unique and brings something special to the team. It is very exciting to be a part of an organisation that is really committed to seeing people grow and flourish, not just professionally but also personally. We work hard, support each other, and have lots of laughs along the way.

What excites you about the surveying profession for the year ahead?

The increased desire to collaborate with people and organisations across the country. Over the past few years more organisations and people have come together to work together. It is creating a strong unified voice and increasing our profession's public profile and influence across the country. We are already seeing more young people and career jumpers reaching out to investigate becoming surveyors in NSW and I am really keen to see similar outcomes in Queensland, as we work with the surveying firms across the Sunshine State.

What's the biggest challenge for you?

I tend to be a bit of a perfectionist... although Michele would say it's my typing and Abigail would say remembering my passwords and technology!

Funniest moment on the job?

Probably most recently on a site inspection to Broken Hill with Abigail. Abigail was hungry and wanted some food. We saw a MacDonalds and decided to grab something from the drive-through. Unfortunately, she asked me to confirm the entry and, not really paying attention, I agreed we were going the right way... until she mounted the kerb and drove along the pedestrian pathway in front of everyone in the restaurant! Fortunately, there was no one on the path—they were all inside watching Abigail (I ducked down to hide)! Abigail was in hysterics while I could not stop laughing. I think the ultimate moment was when we made it to the right entrance and ordered and then had to wait—but were asked nicely if we could use the waiting bay, not the pavement!

What do you do when you're not working?

I love creating things, whether it's a meal, writing a book or gardening. Singing and performing is a passion, although I have not had the time to be in a play or musical for quite some time. I tend to get cast in the evil roles, like Madam Thenardier in *Les Miserables*. I also love travelling and would like to do more in the future. I have a great group of friends and we play tennis and swim, go out to French fairs and also do karaoke very badly!

Favourite holiday spot?

England in winter! I love the cold and the English countryside.

What's your drink?

I don't really have a go-to for drinks. I love a cocktail but always need advice otherwise I pick something horrible. My son refuses to go to cocktail bars with me now because he ends up getting all my unwanted orders.

If you could give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Take time to smell the roses and savour the moment more. Believe in yourself and trust your instincts. And do more travel before the kids come along. 🍷



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2024 NATIONAL SURVEYING CONGRESS

 **QUEENSTOWN NEW ZEALAND**

 **29 - 31 JULY 2024**

The **National Surveying Congress** is an internationally recognised event, gathering leaders from Surveying firms. The congress provides the opportunity to collaborate on future initiatives and overcome challenges we have within the global Surveying industry.

Held at **The Heritage Hotel Queenstown**, the 2024 Congress will feature discussion on **Team & Business Leadership, Economic Outlook, Infrastructure** and much more.

Presentations from Australian and New Zealand Surveyors will be featured - including from Business NZ, and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI).

The **2024 Surveying Consultancy Excellence Awards** will take place as part of the National Congress, located at the **Walter Peak Farmstead**, featuring a scenic cruise across Lake Wakatipu in the iconic commercial steamboat, the **TSS Earnslaw**.

Scan Below To Register:



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www.consultingsurveyors.com.au

✓ **Confirmed Points:**

New South Wales (CPD):

- 10SP

Victoria (FPET):

- 2.25CSP & 8 'Other'



EVENTS

What's been happening?



VICTORIA

GUIDE FOR FEES BREAKFAST WORKSHOP

By Michael Degg

On the 14th February CSV hosted a breakfast workshop to provide an update on the current iteration of the Guide to Fees. There were over 70 members in attendance and the feedback was extremely positive. The workshop sought to gain feedback from the industry regarding the root to branch review recently undertaken by CSV. The workshop also included presentations from business owners, managers and Craig Sandy, the Surveyor General of Victoria.

Healthy debate was encouraged regarding appropriate professional actions and fees and CSV looks forward to continuing the pursuit of ensuring surveyors are remunerated in a manner that is reflective of their expertise, the professional and essential service they provide, and their value to the development industry. 📍



NORTHERN TERRITORY

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY SURVEYING FORUM

The Northern Territory Surveying Forum held recently in Darwin featured engaging discussions.

Jonathan Jones and Casey Bruton from the Industry Skills Advisory Council NT (ISACNT) addressed the surveying skills shortage. Robert Sarib provided updates from the Surveyors Board NT, while Angus Cole-Adams shared insights on digital plans. Bill Payze highlighted GNSS and inter-tidal zones. The forum concluded with a round-table discussion where necessary changes to the *Surveyors Act* were discussed. 📍



NEW SOUTH WALES

UPSKILLING PROGRAM: 'HOW TO SEARCH'

On 6 February, NSW Surveyors attended the first course in our Upskilling Program: 'How To Search' with Mark Groll from InfoTrack. The program is the first in a series of events designed to up-skill surveyors from any level. The following day marked the beginning of the NSW Business Academy with attendees discussing strategy, story and sales. It was wonderful to have four regional surveyors and engineers traveling to join our three city-based surveyors. The Business Academy is a unique opportunity for business leaders in surveying firms to connect, learn, and review their businesses to improve their profitability and achieve other measures of success. On 13 February, ACSNSW hosted its first boardroom lunch of 2024 and saw a fantastic discussion about the economic outlook with Stephen Halmarick, Chief Economist and Head of Global Economic & Markets Research at Commonwealth Bank. 📍



VICTORIA

CSV 31ST ALLAN VAN TENNIS TOURNAMENT

CSV's 31st Allan Van Tennis Tournament held on Friday, 9 February at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club served up a smashing day of corporate camaraderie and competition. Congratulations to the victorious SMEC team, Paul Munoz and Adam Iskra, and runner-up Taylors team, Chris Burrows and Matthew Laidler, on their stellar performance! We extend our gratitude to Planned Resources for their proud sponsorship, making this event a memorable success. 📍



QUEENSLAND

THE GOLD COAST SURVEYING FORUM

There was a great turnout for the first event of the year in Queensland. The Gold Coast Surveying Forum featured presentations from Ken Sherwood, Richard Statham, People + Partners and Sean Finnigan from Bennett and Bennett. Richard Statham presented updates from Titles QLD, Ken Sherwood and Michael Arnold spoke about the Competency Standard, Registration Process and AMR, People + Partners' Barry McGee and Hadrian Pereira spoke about 10 tools for financial health and Sean Finnigan from Bennett + Bennett gave a great presentation on POSI. An event of great presentations and discussion shared among surveyors, and many connections made! 📍



EVENTS

What's coming up?



+ NATIONWIDE

BUSINESS ACADEMY

The Business Academy is an opportunity for Emerging Business Leaders in Surveying Firms to come together over to connect, learn and review your business with a view to improving profitability and achieving other measures of success. The Business Academy consists of 9 Sessions, including Strategy, Story, Sales, Pricing, Profitability, People, Risk Management, Succession and Assessment. With our NSW Business Academy already underway for 2024, it is not too late to register for our Queensland and Victorian opportunities. Numbers are limited so be early to register. And this year will be delivered in New Zealand thanks to our partnership with Consulting Surveyors New Zealand.

+ NATIONWIDE

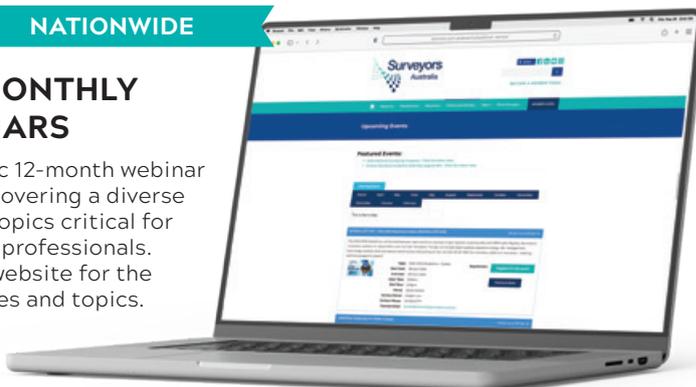
UPSKILLING PROGRAM

In line with our commitment to advancing the standard of surveying, we have designed a series of events to help up-skill surveyors from any level, with the goal of maintaining and furthering a highly-skilled workforce and providing support to our member firms. Whether you are new to surveying, or have been registered for many years, there is always a necessity to learn new skills and refine others. Attend in person or online each month.

+ NATIONWIDE

ACS MONTHLY WEBINARS

A fantastic 12-month webinar program covering a diverse range of topics critical for surveying professionals. Visit our website for the latest dates and topics.



EVENTS

+ TRAINING & EVENTS

NATIONAL

29-31 July - National Surveying Congress, Queenstown NZ

NEW SOUTH WALES

- 9 April - Upskilling: 'How to Design for Sewer & Water'
- 29 April - Practice Management Forum
- 3 May - Strata Laws: Attack of the Drones
- 5 June - NSW State Conference at Parliament House
- 13 June - ACS NSW Tennis Day

2024 NSW Roadshow

- 8 April - Dubbo
- 15 April - Maitland
- 17 April - Ballina
- 1 May - Nowra
- 6 May - Wagga Wagga
- 3 June - Sydney (In-Person & Online)

QUEENSLAND

- 17 April - Mackay Surveying Forum
- 6 May - Fraser Coast Surveyors Drinks
- 14 May - Gladstone Surveyors Drinks

Queensland Business Academy

- 18 - 19 April - Strategy, Story and Sales
- 18 - 19 June - Pricing, Profitability, and People
- 15 August - Risk Management, and Succession

NORTHERN TERRITORY

- 16 May - Northern Territory Surveyors Drinks
- 9 August - Northern Territory Surveying Forum

To learn more, visit consultingsurveyors.com.au

VICTORIA

- 8 April - ACS Webinar, Traffic Management
- 24 May - Joint Webinar with CSV & ISV

Victorian Business Academy

- 8-9 August - Strategy, Story, and Sales
- 17-18 October - Pricing, Profitability, and People
- 3-4 December - Risk Management, Succession, Assessment

To learn more, visit acsv.com.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- 8 April - ACS Webinar, Traffic Management and Risk for Surveying Consultants
- 24 May - Joint Webinar with CSV & ISV

To learn more, visit consultingsurveyorssa.com.au



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\$1,190 // koala.com



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\$199 // milligram.com

TIMELESS STYLE

A dot and a line. PICTO takes the seriousness out of timekeeping, showing time in the most minimalistic way. Its decades-long history and defiant design have made it an icon in the watch world. And yet, it is a symbol of time in the most peculiar fashion. This 34mm wristwatch features a matt gold mesh band and rotating dial.

\$269 // pictowatches.com



NEXT-GEN SOUND

Beoplay Ex represents the next generation in wireless sound. As versatile as they are beautiful, these earbuds with wireless charging case and active noise cancellation bring deep sound and snug comfort in one sleek package. An all-new ergonomic design gives you complete comfort right out of the case, while soft tips let you listen for hours without fatigue. Ex monitors ambient outside sound and adapts to cut it out, so you can enjoy distraction-free listening and the highest quality calls.

\$595 // bang-olufsen.com





HEAT IS ON

Designed for home or office, the 295ml Ember Mug 2 does more than simply keep your coffee hot. This smart mug allows you to set an exact drinking temperature, so your coffee is never too hot or too cold. Ember then maintains your chosen temperature for one-and-a-half hours so your hot beverage stays perfect. Safe to hand wash and submersible up to 1m in water.

\$199 // jbhifi.com.au



GO PRO

Apple's new MacBook Pro blasts forwards with M3, an incredibly advanced chip that brings serious speed and capability. With best-in-class battery life and a beautiful Liquid Retina XDR display, it's a pro laptop without equal. With an 8-core CPU and 10-core GPU using hardware-accelerated ray tracing, the new MacBook Pro can power through everyday multitasking and take on pro projects like editing thousands of photos or 4K video. Available in 14-inch and 16-inch versions.

From \$2,699 // apple.com

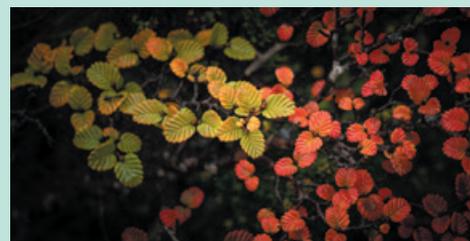
+ TRAVEL



THE STOCK ROUTE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Lazy River Estate in Dubbo, NSW, will host this year's The Stock Route Music Festival, returning for its third year featuring the very best talent in Australian country music. Attendees and artists are promised a day of affordable food, live music and great time.

thestockroute.com.au



WINTER IN BLOOM

From late April through May, Tassie's only winter-deciduous native tree, the Fagus, turns on its autumn show, triggering a pilgrimage to see entire hillsides ablaze in rust, orange and gold. Mount Field National Park and the northern end of Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park have reliable and spectacular displays of autumnal fagus throughout the season.

inspiringtas.org.au/event/fagus-21/



UNDERGROUND IN DARWIN

Go back in time to Darwin's WW2 Oil Storage Tunnels—an underground heritage museum like no other. The subterranean tunnels are one of Darwin's most popular tourist attractions, and the museum boasts relics of Darwin's rich history during WWII, including photos of the brave men and women who served in the protection of our great country.

ww2tunnelsdarwin.com.au

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