

The ‘Inner Melbourne Action Plan’ – leveraging Work Integrated Learning to facilitate meaningful connections between local councils and universities.

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IMAP is four inner Melbourne councils (City of Melbourne; City of Port Phillip; City of Stonnington and City of Yarra) working collaboratively to fund and deliver initiatives to ‘Make Melbourne More Liveable’. The seventh strategy of IMAP is to promote the inner Melbourne region for knowledge rich businesses. In 2010 IMAP embarked on a project to focus on improving and increasing the participation of the IMAP Councils in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) activities and through this, strengthen and improve the relationships between the IMAP Councils and the education sector. This paper will provide an overview of the project; the model implemented and discusses lessons learned and provides insights for universities from the local government perspective.

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Conference theme(s) covered:

- Shaping stakeholder partnerships for future WIL success including service and community based learning
- Showcasing collaborations with industry

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The Inner Melbourne Action Plan

Melbourne's inner Councils; the Cities of Melbourne, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra, in partnership with VicUrban worked together to develop the Inner Melbourne Action Plan (IMAP), adopted in December 2005. The vision was to strengthen the liveability, attractiveness and prosperity of the region.

IMAP sets out 11 regional strategies and 57 actions to address one simple objective: to make the Inner Melbourne Region more liveable. IMAP is unique in bringing key government stakeholders together to develop and deliver regionally based actions. This new approach challenges existing structures of government, administration and resourcing arrangements.

IMAP explores the actions that Councils within the Inner Melbourne Region may collectively need to implement to achieve the aims of Melbourne 2030. It concentrates primarily on actions that can be completed within 5-10 years.¹

Eleven Strategies to 'Make Melbourne More Liveable'

The following strategies have been identified to achieve the vision of IMAP:

1.	Celebrate the unique and concentrated 19th century heritage of the Inner Melbourne Region.
2.	Effectively link transport routes so that the Inner Melbourne Region is accessible throughout by walking, cycling and public transport.
3.	Minimise the growing impact of traffic congestion.
4.	Increase public transport use
5.	Plan to accommodate 90,000 more dwellings by 2030.
6.	Support the distinct and diverse character of Activity Centres.
7.	Promote the Inner Melbourne Region as an investment location for knowledge rich business sectors.
8.	Facilitate the growing importance of the Inner Melbourne Region as south-east Australia's freight hub.
9.	Substantially improve the environmental performance of the Inner Melbourne Region.
10.	Complete the regional open space network.
11.	Promote the Inner Melbourne Region as a tourism destination.

Strategy 7 – Focusing on the Knowledge Economy

Strategy 7 – Promote the Inner Melbourne Region as an investment location for knowledge rich business sectors – focuses on the economic, social and cultural value the knowledge sector has for the Inner Melbourne Region. Working collaboratively with the education sector has been identified as an action. The table below outlines the actions identified under Strategy 7:

IMAP ACTION	ACTION DETAIL
Action 7.1	<i>Government/Industry links</i> Work with State Government and stakeholders to expand networking efforts (including a network for tertiary education providers) based on the 'Councils for Biotechnology' model.
Action 7.2	<i>Support creative businesses</i> Develop a support package for new and emerging businesses aimed at businesses with a focus on the practical implementation of new knowledge and ideas, design or creative endeavours.
Action 7.3	<i>Improved information</i> Undertake and disseminate research on industry, employment and property trends across the inner region.

¹ Further information regarding IMAP can be found at <http://www.imap.vic.gov.au>

IMAP ACTION	ACTION DETAIL
Action 7.4	<i>Adopt a Regional economic development statement.</i>
Action 7.5	<i>Wireless broadband</i> Work with the private sector to facilitate the delivery of Wireless Broadband (WB) Internet coverage for the entire region.
Action 7.6	<i>Exporting health services</i> Work with the State Government and health sector to promote and market the Inner Melbourne Region's world class health service capabilities internationally.
Action 7.7	<i>Universities and regional development</i> Work collaboratively with universities and TAFE to define and develop a stronger role in regional development.

Through Action 7.7 the IMAP Councils recognise the impact the universities and TAFEs have on the economic, social and cultural prosperity of the Inner Melbourne Region.

In regards to the Inner Melbourne Region, the education sector can:

ATTRACT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge workers to the city • International students to the city • Increase tourism 	CONNECT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse industry networks • International academic networks
GENERATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale employers • Revenue • Create future employees 	INFORM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education services • Perform research • Inform policy

Local government can benefit from strengthening connections with the education sector through:

- Accessing high quality students to work on projects
- Conducting joint or collaborative research
- Accessing current research and thinking
- Recruiting work-ready graduates interested in local government roles
- Greater awareness in the community of the employment opportunities offered in local government

Universities can benefit from strengthening connections with local government in through:

- Obtaining Work Integrated Learning opportunities for students across a diverse range of courses
- Conducting joint or collaborative research
- Accessing current industry experience and knowledge – for course development
- Employment opportunities for graduates

The relationships that exist between the four IMAP Councils and the universities and TAFEs are driven through a number of connections created at the organisation and individual level. In terms of improving and strengthening regional development and links with the higher education sector, these relationships should be considered and managed holistically.

The figure below depicts the high level connections between the IMAP Councils and the higher education sector.

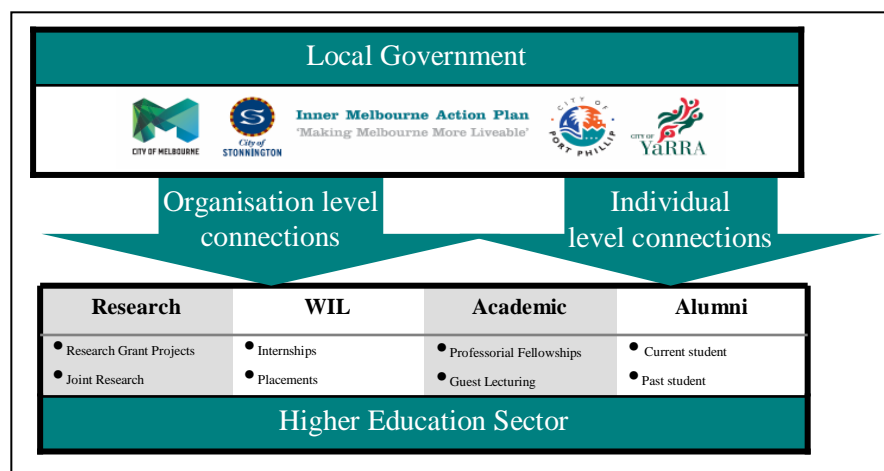


Figure 1: High level connections IMAP Councils and higher education sector.

The IMAP Councils selected WIL as the connection to be exploited and leveraged to work collaboratively with the higher education sector.

The IMAP Councils recognise that local government is not limited to *rates, roads and rubbish*. The roles in local government are wide ranging and diverse, and cut across multiple disciplines/courses offered by the higher education sector. The table below provides an overview of the career streams available in local government organisations.

Capital Works and Building	Communication and Marketing	Corporate & Business Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Projects and Infrastructure Project Management Construction Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Marketing Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis and Planning Finance Management Human Resource Management IT Management Legal Occupational Health and Safety
Economic Development and Tourism	Engineering	Environment and Public Space Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Buildings Traffic Drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Architecture Parks and Open Space Waste Management Arboriculture
General Management	Health and Community Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Leadership / Management Project Management Risk Management Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aged Care Arts and Culture Children and Youth Community Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Care Environmental Health Family Support Recreation and Sport Social Planning and Projects
International Relations	Planning and Development	Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Relations (City of Melbourne) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Surveying / Inspecting Planning Property Management Land Surveying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research
Sustainability	Urban Design	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Planning and Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Design Architecture 	

Local government organisations are often small-medium in size – this means that team hierarchies are often quite flat and team sizes small. This is important to note when considering student placements, as team size and structure can often influence a manager’s willingness and ability to host a placement. However, on the flip side, the team size and flat structure also means that the student placement opportunities available are often challenging and worthwhile for students.

The IMAP Work Integrated Learning Project is born

At the end of 2008 the IMAP Implementation Committee resolved to support a round table with key stakeholders to identify the issues and opportunities relating to the IMAP Councils working collaboratively with universities in the definition and development of a stronger role in regional development. Through the round table, WIL was identified as a key area where the IMAP Councils and higher education providers could partner and work collaboratively.

In May 2010 a workshop was held between the IMAP Councils, Office of Knowledge Capital (based at the City of Melbourne) and the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and the intent, opportunities and actions of the IMAP WIL Project were defined.

The **intent** of the project was to:

- Identify and understand opportunities for work integrated learning.
- Identify and understand the role students play in addressing areas where it is difficult to recruit new staff.
- Identify and understand our ability to staff short-term projects.
- Minimise the complexity in the process of employing students.
- Ensure higher education providers and students see Councils as an ‘Employer of Choice’.
- Generate a high level of support, visibility and awareness both internal and external to Councils.

The **opportunities / actions** of the project were:

- Develop materials illustrating WIL in Councils.
- Develop a four Council model approach.
- Provide regular ongoing opportunities for WIL employers to meet, share ideas and information.
- Develop an internal marketing plan for the four Councils to raise the profile of WIL.
- Develop policy.
- Develop a checklist.
- Develop a Frequently Asked Questions guide.
- Promote and market Council opportunities to the universities

The IMAP WIL Project Team made up of Human Resource team members from the IMAP Councils, progressed the project with the intent of rolling out policy and a promotional strategy across the IMAP Councils. At the IMAP Implementation Committee held in March 2011, the group recommended a part time Project Manager be appointed. The part time Project Manager – Alexandra Moloney - started in May 2011 based at the City of Melbourne and reporting to the IMAP Executive Officer and project team leader.

A project plan was developed and approved by the IMAP Implementation Committee. At a high level the project’s primary driver was to leverage and use WIL to develop stronger links with the higher education sector, and the project was organised into three project areas aligned to the primary driver:

- a) **Project Area 1 – PROMOTE WIL – Create Awareness**
- b) **Project Area 2 – STRENGTHEN WIL – Make It Easier**
- c) **Project Area 3 – FACILITATE WIL – Broker Relationships**

The Project Team also resolved to replace the Work Integrated Learning title with the term ‘Student Placements’ which would be more meaningful to local government managers and team leaders.

The deliverables and achievements made by the team will be outlined for each project area.

Project Area 1 – PROMOTE – Create Awareness

Project Area 1 focused on promoting student placements to managers and team leaders working in the IMAP Councils; and also in creating awareness amongst the higher education sector of the learning opportunities available in local government.

Deliverable / Achievement	Outcome
Conduct information briefing and discussion with managers and team leaders at the IMAP Councils.	<p>May 2011 – June 2011: Face to face briefings were conducted across IMAP Councils to promote the use of students; understand needs; existing programs and issues with current processes and policy.</p> <p><i>There is now greater awareness across the IMAP Councils of student placements.</i></p>
Student Placement Showcase	<p>As part of Melbourne Knowledge Week 2011 IMAP hosted the ‘Student Placement Showcase’ – The showcase provided a space for universities and other organisations to exhibit their student placement programs, and to have academics and staff on hand to speak with local government managers and team leaders.</p> <p>Managers and team leaders from across the IMAP Councils and other local councils were invited to attend the event.</p> <p>There were 11 exhibitors and 100 people attended the event. Feedback received from exhibitors and attendees was very positive and a recommendation has been made to run a similar event as part of Melbourne Knowledge Week 2012.</p> <p><i>As a result of this showcase there is greater awareness from both local councils and the universities on how they can partner on student placements.</i></p>
Presentations	<p>Academics have presented their course specific student placement programs to Council staff – for example University of Melbourne GIS Internship program details were presented to interested GIS staff from across the IMAP Councils.</p> <p><i>As a result of these presentations greater awareness from both local councils and the universities on how they can partner on student placements, and suggested placement opportunities were progressed.</i></p>
Student Placement Inventory and Key Contacts	<p>A key barrier and challenge for manager’s wanting to undertake student placements within their team is having knowledge of the programs available and who to contact. The project has produced a resource called the ‘Student Placement Inventory’ that will be available through each Council’s staff intranet and on the IMAP public website.</p> <p>The inventory is a detailed list of the student placement programs run by the various universities and relevant information for each program – contact point; duration of placement; timing of placement; cost of placement and level of student undertaking the placement.</p> <p>The inventory has been completed with input from the universities and currently contains 121 student placement programs that are relevant for local government. A process has been put in place to maintain the inventory and keep it updated on a regular basis.</p> <p><i>As a result of creating the inventory there is greater awareness from the universities of the student placements relevant to local Councils. IMAP Council managers and team leaders have an ongoing resource to help them plan placements.</i></p>

Deliverable / Achievement	Outcome
Promote deliverables and achievements more broadly.	<p>A number of activities have been completed or are underway to promote IMAP and the project achievements and deliverables to other local Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Placement Showcase 2011 • Publishing policy and documents on the IMAP public website • LG Pro – presented on project outcomes to LG Pro HR group in May 2012. • Promotion of project outcomes to Municipalities Association of Victoria and Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government. • Abstract for paper accepted for delivery at the ACEN international conference in October 2012.

Project Area 2 – STRENGTHEN – *Make It Easier*

Project Area 2 focused on making it easier for managers and team leaders working in the IMAP Councils to plan and manage student placements.

Deliverable / Achievement	Outcome
Policy and Supporting Documentation	<p>The Project Team have produced a Student Placement Policy and supporting documents. The policy has been tailored and adopted by the IMAP Councils. The policy and documents are available on each Council's intranet site and launched to staff. A list of the documents produced and available is included in this report. A generic set of policy and documents have also been made available via the IMAP public website.</p> <p><i>The policy and supporting documents make it easier for manager's to access students by – providing clear information on how to plan and manage student placements; documents to assist in planning and managing student placements; providing clear direction on perceived barriers such as insurance and payment requirements.</i></p>
Regular Planning	<p>A key element of the Student Placement policy is that it encourages managers to plan ahead for student placements. Managers are encouraged to plan for student placements in line with their regular annual and workforce planning and documents are provided to assist in the process. Councils may also provide a reminder to managers prompting them to plan student placements.</p> <p><i>Planning ahead of time for student placements and considering students in workforce planning will ensure better outcomes for all parties.</i></p>
Human Resource Support	<p>Each Council has included student placements within the function performed by the Human Resource department – aligned with the recruitment function in each Council. A guide for the recruitment team, to assist them in supporting student placements, has been developed.</p> <p><i>The aim is to have resources available in each Council who can assist managers in setting up successful student placements and ensure that when it comes to student recruitment there is alignment with each Council's strategic workforce planning objectives.</i></p>

Project Area 3 – FACILITATE – *Broker Relationships*

Project Area 3 focused on bringing local government manager's together with university staff brokering connections and relationships to lead to successful student placements.

Deliverable / Achievement	Outcome
Student Placement Showcase	<p>As part of Melbourne Knowledge Week 2011 IMAP hosted the 'Student Placement Showcase'. Following the showcase a number of relationships have been formed between Council staff and university.</p> <p><i>As a result of this showcase there is greater awareness from both local councils and the universities on how they can partner on student placements.</i></p>
Student Placement Inventory and Key Contacts	<p>The Student Placement Inventory will assist managers in making contact with university staff and setting up relationships.</p> <p><i>As a result of creating the inventory there is greater awareness from the universities of the student placements relevant to local Councils. IMAP Council managers and team leaders have an ongoing resource to help them broker relationships.</i></p>
Introductions	<p>The IMAP Project Team have been involved in arranging approximately 10 student placements that were generated directly through IMAP WIL Project events or promotion.</p>

Conclusion - Lessons Learned

The IMAP WIL Project increased the interest and willingness of managers in the IMAP Councils to host student placements – there were a number of student placement opportunities planned and put in place as a result of the project.

The policy and supporting documents were implemented into the IMAP Councils in May 2012 with the aim of continuing this interest and increasing the number of placements while generating stronger ongoing relationships between the IMAP Councils and the universities.

The lessons learned from the project that may assist the higher education sector with engaging with the local government sector are detailed below.

Prior to the IMAP WIL Project the majority of the student placements that took place were generated through a student making contact with a Council and requesting a placement as part of their course.

Many of the student placements in the Councils were 'work experience' style placements. The placement was often seen as an imposition on the team and manager's time and a belief that the placement was solely for the student's benefit.

Feedback from Council managers and HR staff was that often there was a lack of clarity in regards to the payment and insurance responsibilities of the Council, making the process of setting up a placement cumbersome and discouraging them from hosting students in the future.

Building on these perceived barriers the IMAP WIL Project worked to:

- Ensure student placement opportunities aspire to be of mutual benefit or 'win-win' for both the students and the employer.
- Ensure successful and repeat placements through establishing a 'connection' or relationship between Council and university staff.

- Identify that, for Universities, the smaller size of local government organisations and teams lends itself well to ‘project’ and ‘research’ style student placement opportunities.

Further, the main aims of the project was to encourage cultural change through:

INCREASED PLANNING:

- The student placement policy and practice encouraging managers to ‘plan’ for student placements – getting them to consider how having a student will benefit the organisation and their team.

SUPPLY INFORMATION:

- Providing managers with detailed information to help in this planning. The IMAP Student Placement Catalogue provides an inventory of the WIL opportunities including:
 - Course / discipline details.
 - Timing of the placement.
 - Length of the placement.
 - Cost of the placement.
 - Contact point at the university.
- Encouraging the higher education sector to provide information about programs ahead of time – allowing local government managers time to plan for placements to occur and secure budget if required. All local government organisations run the same budget and annual planning cycle.

EASE OF USE:

- Making information about WIL programs, for example payment requirements, insurance requirements easier to understand and navigate.
- Encouraging the higher education sector to make information about WIL programs easier to find, understand and navigate.

HIGHLIGHT OPPORTUNITIES:

- Illustrating that student placements go beyond the ‘work experience’ style placement, and that many of them can offer a great deal of benefit to the local government organisation.
- Encouraging the higher education sector to consider local Councils as fantastic organisations for student placements, with a diverse range of career streams available.
- Encouraging the higher education sector to understand the types of placement that work well for small-medium sized organisations and work with local government managers to tailor mutually beneficial programs.

ENCOURAGE RELATIONSHIPS:

- Brokering connections between Council and university staff and providing environments where this is encouraged – such as the Student Placement Showcase.
- Most importantly, spending the time and investing in developing strong working relationships with local government managers. These strong connections will benefit WIL programs and students, but also lead to broader mutually beneficial outcomes for both Councils and universities.

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Kylie Storer	City of Stonnington
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Appendix 1 - Student Placement Policy and Documents.

The tables below are illustrative of the policy and supporting documents implemented at each of the IMAP Councils.

Copies of these documents can be found at the IMAP website – www.imap.vic.gov.au

Student Placement Planning and Management Documents

Focused on developing stronger links with the education sector we have made it easier for staff to gain access to a student and graduate workforce.

The **policy** documents will assist you in understanding our **legal obligations**.

The **planning documents** will help you **plan** ahead of time and make student placements easier to manage, ensuring successful outcomes for the student, your team and the organisation.

The **management documents** will assist you in getting a student on board and supporting them once they are on board.

Policy

<i>Document Title</i>	<i>Description</i>
Student Placement Policy	Student Placement Policy covers legal and payment obligations required when hiring a student.
Student Placement Frequently Asked Questions	Student Placement Frequently Asked Questions covers information to assist in your queries regarding student placements.

Planning

<i>Document Title</i>	<i>Description</i>
Student Placement Annual Planning Document	Prompter to assist teams in planning student placements.
Student Numbers Forecast Spreadsheet	Spreadsheet to assist in forecasting the number of student placements planned across a year.
Student Project Brief	Form to document the details of a student project.
Student Placement Catalogue	Information on Student Placement opportunities offered by universities
Student Placement Checklist	Checklist covers activities for you to complete pre, during and post placement.
Student Placement Training Plan	Student Placement training plan template.

Management

<i>Document Title</i>	<i>Description</i>
Student Interview Guide	Guide for interviewing students.
Mentor Guide	Guide for those mentoring students.
Student Exit Interview Guide	Guide for conducting an exit interview with a student.