

## **VALUE MANAGEMENT A PROCESS FOR FACILITATING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Value Management is fast becoming the premiere management tool for engaging communities in consultative processes.

An International Value Management Conference held in Hobart revealed significant interest from local and overseas participants in the application of Value Management in achieving effective community consultation.

The theme of the conference, “Value Management – Balancing the Scorecard by putting the Focus on People Values in Decision Making,” set the scene for ensuring that community values are identified and taken into consideration in the planning and design of major projects.

In the past, projects were likely to be conceived on the drawing board with little community input. As one senior government representative commented at the conference, designers didn’t mind what shape roads took as long as they were straight, flat and black. Whilst straight, flat and black may provide the lowest cost engineering solution, the community may value solutions that take steps to minimise impact on heritage areas, historic homes, rare fauna and flora, or provide for access to areas of interest.

In recognition of the era of increasing community involvement, presenters at the conference covered a range of topics as diverse as “What is regarded as providing value by the community?” to papers that described extremely successful community interactions. These are interactions whereby large groups drawn from the community work with designers and other stakeholders in the development of options and alternatives for proposals and then work together in the development of acceptable solutions. The process now coming to the fore in facilitating community participation is Value Management or VM for short.

Obviously not all projects follow an optimum path and a number of presenters at the conference described situations where good intentions had gone astray. But in all cases, even protagonists were prepared to extol the advantages of VM - describing the methodology as simple, straight - forward, inclusive and robust.

The development of Value Management into a process or tool for community consultation takes VM some distance from its origins in manufacturing and construction.

The Australian Standard for Value Management AS/NZS4183: 1994 is essentially based on VM as it was practised in the late 1980’s / early 1990’s and urgently requires revision. The standard could be greatly enhanced by the addition of guideline documentation outlining how VM methodology can be adapted for its various applications, such as that for community consultation. The series of Quality standards, AS/NZS ISO 9000, have benefited in the past from the production of the wide range of guideline documents providing different examples of the application.

The Institute of Value Management Australia (IVMA) is currently considering an approach to Standards Australia on this issue.

Back to the conference and its emphasis on People Values in Decision Making: Professor Roy Barton, of University of Canberra and a long time proponent of Value Management, placed emphasis on understanding the true meaning of value. He described how values of individuals may be captured in group or community situations and also showed how such values can be integrated to produce value-based decisions and outcomes.

His paper took the concept of "value" beyond the conventional "value for money" applications of Value Analysis and Value Engineering and bridged theory and practice by touching on the philosophical underpinning that supports the proposed methodology.

A paper submitted by the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council showed the use of VM in development of a community driven strategic plan.

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council had no viable strategic or operational plan and the new general manager was required to produce a community driven strategic plan, meeting statutory requirements, within four months, starting from scratch. Further, strong linkage between the State government's strategic planning process, Tasmania Together, was sought. A process was therefore required that had the potential and credentials to unify the community, inspire Council and provide the basis for the region to rise to its potential. The process was required to be of high confidence in an outcome that had high planning credibility and outstanding community support. One hundred community people, most targeted by personal invitation and others responding to public notices, assembled in short order to meet with Council and State government representatives. Led by three experienced value management facilitators, this group of high school pupils, farmers, business leaders, environmentalists, retirees, professionals and ordinary folk were guided over three days by a value management study that achieved the seemingly impossible. – Broad and deep agreement on normally divisive issues to produce data that formed the basis of a strategic plan. Value Management is a top-shelf tool according to the new GM. The experience of those involved in the process of developing the strategic plan for the Council attests to the fact that the quality tool selected was a perfect match to the job.

The VM workshop must equip all participants (key stakeholders) with a common understanding of the problem/opportunity seeking to be resolved. There must be a clear statement of the objectives and acceptance by all that these are appropriate objectives. For this to happen, representatives of all stakeholders must be part of the workshop.

Peter Yeomans, a Perth based educator and consultant, had this to say about VM "VM has the opportunity to claim another prize in its own evolution from humble, single-strand, dollar-focussed beginnings to an exponentially more powerful and contributive tool. Further, Value Management, painted on this broader canvas, might claim the right to being renamed "Values Management."

Rod McGregor is currently President of the Institute of Value Management and also a principal of ValueEdge Consulting, a company well respected for its achievements in Value Management.

For those wanting to know more please visit the Institute of Value Management's website at <http://www.value-management.com.au> or contact [rod@valuedge.com.au](mailto:rod@valuedge.com.au).