

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau / Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
Comisiwn Seilwaith Cenedlaethol i Gymru / National Infrastructure
Commission for Wales
Gan/From: Infrastrucutre Victoria

What principles do you believe represent good practice in establishing an independent infrastructure advisory agency?

Infrastructure Victoria was established in 2015 with a remit of providing transparent, independent and expert advice on infrastructure matters. It seeks to ensure long-term infrastructure planning is thoughtful, evidence based and consultative and works with the community to build consensus about priority infrastructure initiatives.

Establishing the organisation via legislation, with specific provisions related to independence, has been important in fostering an acceptance of Infrastructure Victoria as authoritative voice on infrastructure matters.

Providing a clear remit and deliverables has resulted in an organisation that is focussed on outputs and outcomes. The organisation has clearly defined strategy development, research and advisory roles with specific processes for the delivery of this work to different audiences.

For what reasons was your body established through legislation, and what impact has this had on the independence of your organisation?

Establishing Infrastructure Victoria through legislation was important to ensure the organisation was created with the support of all parties in the Parliament. The legislation needed to pass through both houses of Parliament to be enacted, providing an opportunity for all members of Parliament to consider and debate the powers, responsibilities, structure, governance and deliverables of the organisation.

The *Infrastructure Victoria Act 201* has a number of provisions which ensure Infrastructure Victoria is independent of government. These include:

- A stated objective of independence
- An Independent board, with four of the seven directors being appointed by the Governor in Council and required to have private sector experience (the remaining three Directors are Secretaries of key government departments)
- Not being subject to Ministerial direction or control
- Freedom to publish –Infrastructure Victoria does not require approval of government to publish its 3D–year strategy or research
- Delivery of the 3D–year infrastructure strategy to the Parliament (with a requirement that the Government of the day formally respond to it).

'More information about our [legislation](#) and our [independence](#) is available via our website.

To what extent do you consider that the arguments for setting up statutory bodies to advise on infrastructure would apply in other countries, or was your decision related to factors specific to Australia/your state?

The need for evidence–based, consultative and long–term infrastructure planning applies equally to other jurisdictions as it does to Victoria.

Every state and country can benefit from an approach to infrastructure planning that is based on rigorous assessment of evidence, research and analysis, and consultation with the community and stakeholders.

Independent advisory bodies provide an opportunity for necessary and sometimes difficult infrastructure policy or planning matters to be the subject of public discussion without governments and other political parties having to initially lead them. This promotes a more mature, evidence based consideration. They also serve a public sector governance role in highlighting both good practice and opportunities for better performance by public sector agencies responsible for infrastructure policy, planning and

operation. This includes opportunities for innovation and partnerships with other sectors in policy, strategy and delivery of infrastructure.

We have undertaken a consultation program throughout 2016 as part of the development of our 30-year infrastructure strategy and it has demonstrated that communities are eager for transparency about how planning decisions are made and how funding is allocated. Having an independent agency provide advice to government to guide decision-making is likely to increase community confidence in the process and outcomes.

'Our [consultation website](#) has a range of information on the development of our strategy and the consultation program, including reports from each phase of consultation.

For what reasons do you look at both economic and social infrastructure as part of your remit, whereas Infrastructure Australia concentrates on economic infrastructure?

Infrastructure Victoria takes a triple bottom line approach to its work, considering the social and environmental benefits and impacts, as well as the economic ones. This is in recognition of the fact that infrastructure is more than just an economic enabler. Infrastructure responds to, and can shape, our society and environment, as well as our economy. The provision and operation of infrastructure can impact the environment, and all infrastructure decisions have outcomes for society and communities.

Infrastructure Victoria believes all three should be considered when making recommendations about infrastructure, noting that balancing all three will often be difficult and involve trade-offs. Our draft 30-year infrastructure strategy and supporting technical documents on our website provide more detail regarding how this is done in practice.

How do you work with Infrastructure Australia where your responsibilities interact?

Infrastructure Victoria has a clear state-focus, but takes account of what is happening interstate and nationally via strong links with organisations such as Infrastructure Australia, Infrastructure New South Wales and Building Queensland.

These 'I-bodies' meet regularly to share information and insights on a range of infrastructure matters including funding and financing, research, and best-practice approaches to project procurement and