

James Ramm



Qualifications: Bachelor of Engineering (Civil)(Hons)

Memberships: AITPM, ITE, YTP

Thank you for the opportunity to nominate for the 2023 AITPM Young Professional Award.

I have always seen myself pursuing a career that would allow me to provide solutions to problems that will facilitate a direct positive impact on the community. This led me to study civil engineering, and upon gaining exposure to traffic and transport based subjects at university I solidified a keen interest in the industry.

Traffic engineering is not an exact science, and there is never a singular “correct answer” to a particular problem. This need for adaptive problem solving and freedom for innovation greatly appealed to me from my first exposure to the industry, and convinced me that it was a career that I wanted to pursue.

Further, the problems that present themselves in traffic and transport are inherently complex in nature due to the inter-play between transport modes and road user groups. The challenge of striking an often intricate balance between all road users is captivating to me. Achieving this balance instils far-reaching benefits to a large portion of society, particularly when considering the extent that we interact with the transport network on a daily basis. This aligned with my ambition to join an industry where I can regularly provide a measurable impact on society.

On this basis, I commenced my career in the traffic and transport industry in January 2021 as a Student Traffic Engineer at O'Brien Traffic. After graduating from Monash University with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering with Class IIA Honours in June 2021, I have continued at O'Brien Traffic and am now a Traffic Engineer.

Reasons for Applying and the benefits from attending the National Conference

I am applying for the 2023 AITPM Young Professionals Award because I believe it will give me a great opportunity to enhance my industry knowledge, and fuel my enthusiasm for continual learning and the broadening of my horizons. Attending the AITPM conference would be a great opportunity to hear from some of the leading professionals within the industry and gain career inspiration, and insight into future trends. I am particularly interested in hearing from Marco te Brommelstroet and his radical views on urbanism and mobility, and am currently engrossed in his book *Movement: How to take back our streets and transform our lives*. In addition, the ‘Peak Car: The Mode Shift Battle’ and ‘Placemaking for a Modern Australia’ knowledge exchange sessions are of great interest to me and align with my key areas of interest within the industry (as discussed below).

I love meeting new people and understanding their experiences and perspectives, and believe this award would provide me with a fantastic opportunity to meet similar young professionals and network with a wide range of industry professionals.

I also aim to share insights that I gain from the conference with my colleagues at O'Brien Traffic to promote knowledge exchange and adoption of best practice and emerging techniques.

Key Areas of Interest

Since being exposed to the Movement and Place Framework at university, I have realised the importance that traffic engineering and planning has on placemaking and revitalising activity

centres. This is particularly pertinent in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing popularity of neighbourhood activity centres. Subsequently, I believe there is a possibility to apply placemaking principles to a wider range of projects, regardless of the scope. Such principles have wide-reaching effects, from reducing noise and air emissions, to improving road safety. I believe these ideas can be applied to a wider range of projects where they may not be typically considered, including during local area traffic management studies or road safety audit recommendations. I am keen to pursue increased work in this field as I progress my career in the industry.

I am also passionate about encouraging the use of active transport and reducing car-dependency where practical. Cycling and walking have obvious environmental and health benefits, but the opportunity for decreased private vehicle usership is often overlooked by the car-centric public. Encouraging the use of active transport (alongside other modes such as public transport) reduces vehicle traffic, which can enable freight and essential vehicles to move more freely. I believe that inspiring modal shift toward active transport largely revolves around creating a safe and comfortable environment (particularly for cycling). I have had the opportunity to work on several municipal strategy and investigation projects at O'Brien Traffic that were focused on an increased uptake of active transport, the largest of which was the Surf Coast Shire Safer Cycling Strategy. This project involved a somewhat novel approach to community consultation which allowed participants to mark a location on a built-in map that corresponded to each of their comments. I was then able to use qualitative and geospatial data analysis to collate these responses and visually identify key locations which presented a number of similar comments (i.e. "install bike path here for safer access to school"). I also utilised geospatial analysis to produce maps that indicated existing bicycle infrastructure, identified paths that required widening, and illustrated missing links in the bicycle network. This allowed our work to be integrated into Council's geospatial database, and provided a framework for future cycling and walking upgrades in the municipality.

Other Key Areas of Work

Over the past 18 months, I have enjoyed working on audits of accessible car parking spaces in a number of Council-owned car parks throughout the City of Stonnington. These projects have provided the opportunity to work alongside an accessibility consultant, which has provided insight into key issues that mobility-impaired road users face on a day-to-day basis. It has also shown me the importance of considering how all users will interact with a design, including those with vision impairment or utilising mobility aids other than a wheelchair. These projects have certainly triggered an interest in equitable design, and I am looking forward to carrying my learnings into other projects in the public and private sectors.

I have also had the opportunity to undertake face-to-face consultation for a number of Council strategy and investigation projects, including the Nelson Road Active Travel Corridor Study for City of Whitehorse and the City of Bendigo Road Safety Strategy. These projects provided the opportunity to engage with the local communities and enable them to directly articulate their concerns and thoughts. It was fascinating to hear differing opinions that were free from my bias as an engineer, and the opportunity highlighted the importance of taking off your 'engineering hat' and putting yourself in the shoes of a member of the local community while tackling transport-related issues.

Further, I regularly provide traffic engineering and transport planning advice for private sector developments across a range of land uses and development scales. This includes provision of design advice on traffic and transport related areas and drafting supporting documentation including traffic impact assessment reports, SIDRA analysis and swept path analysis. I enjoy the challenges that can present when working in a multi-disciplinary team on such projects, particularly when attempting to encourage developers to implement beneficial design components such as secure employee bicycle storage, or safer and more direct access for pedestrians to enable and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes.

In addition, I am heavily involved in the preparation of Traffic Management Plans and Traffic Guidance Schemes for a wide range of private developments, including a number of projects within

inner-city municipalities which required notable changes to local traffic conditions given the constraints of the site and local road network. These projects often require unique approaches, such as adjusting construction staging and working with construction managers to adapt their works and deliveries to maximise the safety and efficiency of the surrounding road network during the proposed works. I have also been involved in preparing Traffic Guidance Schemes for major infrastructure projects including Melbourne Airport Rail and North East Link.

I also have experience in developing Waste Management Plans and enjoy the ability to implement sustainable practices such as separated recycling for glass, soft plastics, cardboard or on-site composting systems. Working on such projects also allows for input on waste collection arrangements, ensuring that proposed measures are as safe as practical. I also recently conducted an in-house training presentation at O'Brien Traffic to introduce the wider team to some of the challenges and benefits of thorough waste management planning.

My work at O'Brien Traffic also encompasses a number of additional roles, including the monitoring and coordination of incoming tender notifications, preparation of tender submissions, and operation of the company's Google Ads and Google Analytics account.

Involvement with AITPM

I am currently a Second Year Associate member with the AITPM, and was previously a Student member. I am currently a committee member of the Victorian/Tasmanian Young Professionals Network branch and am commencing the Secretary role in July.

I am also heavily involved in preparations for the 2023 National Conference, including assisting with the abstract reviews in March and currently acting as the Session Coordinator of four breakout sessions.

I also regularly attend a range of AITPM events including technical seminars, webinars and networking events.

Involvement with other professional bodies

I am also a member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers and Young Transport Professionals and regularly attend technical webinars on a range of topics. I also enjoy perusing the global ITE forums and reading about unique transport issues and solutions from around the world.

Further, I have been involved as a Mentor in the Transport Engineers Monash (TEM) mentoring program since 2022 to encourage the next generation of professionals entering the transport industry.

Conclusion

I am looking forward to the learning opportunities that would come with receiving this award, and further driving my passion for the traffic and transport industry. I would also use the opportunity to further increase my professional network, particularly during attendance at the 2023 National Conference.

Thank you for taking the time to review my submission. Please let me know if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

James Ramm