

Dear Selection Committee,

***Application for AITPM Young Professional Awards Nomination 2023, NSW***

I am delighted to submit this nomination for the AITPM Young Professionals Award. I am passionate about planning and transport outcomes considering transport networks directly influence economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

My interest in planning and transport developed while growing up on the NSW South Coast. Living in a regional area gave me firsthand exposure to regional disadvantage, notably the effect of transport disadvantage on a range of intersecting factors such as healthcare services, social exclusion and income levels. For this reason, I chose to study Urban and Regional Planning with an aim to work in a field where I could make real and lasting change for regional populations. I find it fascinating the ways transport effects almost all aspects of daily life. During my university studies I authored a number of essays investigating and linking planning and transport infrastructure impacts with the environment and how areas with poor transport connections have lower socioeconomic outcomes as result of poor access to services, education and employment.

I commenced my studies at RMIT in 2019, completing two years of a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning before transferring to the University of New England after accepting a position at AlburyCity Council as a Trainee Town Planner. I progressed to the position of Town Planner before accepting a role as Transport Planner within the AlburyCity Council Transport Team. My experience at AlburyCity has furthered my interest and passion in achieving good development outcomes, within a broader regional context having regard to border and inter local government relationships.

My previous role in the development team as a Town Planner included assessing development applications to consider suitability and impacts of development. During this experience I developed an understanding of how development controls influence outcomes that affect the broader community. Experience I gained in reviewing Traffic Impact Assessments and proposed road networks for large subdivision proposals highlighted to me the importance and significance of development controls and policy, and how they directly affect issues associated with urban sprawl, car dependence and environmental destruction. I am extremely interested in how development outcomes can be improved through effective policy and controls. With urban sprawl at the forefront of planning and transport challenges, I am eager to learn more about how the adverse effects of sprawl can be mitigated through improved strategic planning, development controls and policy, through all levels of government.

Since commencing in the Transport Planner role, I have developed a keen interest in traffic and transport systems and how they can be improved considering they touch almost all aspects of life. While being part of the Transport Team under the City Projects cluster in the past year, I have been involved in many projects across differing multi-disciplinary internal teams and external departments such as Transport for NSW (TfNSW). One of the first small projects that

introduced me to the complexity of transport projects was authoring an advocacy letter to TfNSW in response to the proposed upgrade works to the Thurgoona Drive Hume Freeway Intersection Overpass. Feedback provided included advocacy for safe active transport provision considering there is no existing active east-west connection in the area. Traffic data counts and future population projections of our growth area corridor were included to justify inclusion of increased capacity for the project.

I am also a member of the internal working group for amendments to *Part 17- Off Street Car Parking of Albury Development Control Plan 2010*. Through my participation in this project, I have provided direct feedback and contributed to development controls that will influence future built form outcomes in the Albury LGA. Along with my team, we recommended and supported a decrease in car parking triggers in lieu of end of trip facilities in the CBD based on previous localised studies and data that outline consumer behaviour and community aspirations. These include the *Albury CBD Parking Strategy* and the *Albury Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy Community Consultation Report*. Aligning community aspirations with development control outcomes in relation to transport is extremely rewarding knowing the lasting impacts these controls will have on the development outcomes as well as the broader transport impacts to the way people travel and experience the LGA of Albury.

A key responsibility of my current role has been authoring the final draft of *MOVE: The Albury Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy* (AWITS). The strategy has been developed under the *Two Cities One Community Strategic Plan* (2C1C) which outlines actions to ensure a collaborative and integrated approach for the twin cities of Albury and Wodonga which each sit on the border of NSW and VIC. An inherent challenge for Albury is aligning transport connections across states. While aligning public transport (buses) are a major concern another multifaceted challenge is active transport links between Albury and Wodonga. Improving and increasing crossing points across the river is not only challenging due to the multitude of state and local authorities that need to collaborate for infrastructure development, but future projects will also require consideration of flooding impacts of the Murray River. Moving forward I am excited to advocate under the AWITS for future connections.

Part of my current role as Transport Planner at AlburyCity Council is understanding how and what strategies can be implemented to improve the way people travel. It is important to understand that car dependence is to an extent, necessary for certain trip types in regional areas. For this reason, the AWITS has a specific focus on transferring trips that have the opportunity to be taken via public or active transport modes. The AWITS Background Report revealed that more than a third of trips to work are less than 5km with the overwhelming majority undertaken via private motor vehicle. A key aspect of the AWITS is recognition that many of these trips that could shift to active or public transport modes have not due to these modes being less convenient than private car use. For this reason, the AWITS overall seeks to make public and active transport safe, accessible and connected for all to improve the convenience to support a mode shift. Through several actions such as active transport infrastructure improvements across the Hume Freeway to better connect the eastern suburbs and the growth area to the western suburbs the AWITS aims to increase cycling and walking mode share. The overall

objective of the AWITS is to introduce more sustainable transport modes, expand and align public transport systems, improve active transport connections and infrastructure, as well as improve freight efficiency to overall reduce traffic congestion and lower transport emissions. Considering Albury Wodonga is one of the most car dependent regional areas in Australia, I am eager to tackle the above-mentioned challenges through the actions of the AWITS, once endorsed by Council to improve liveability outcomes.

As a member of the Planning Institute Australian I recently attended the National Planning Congress, which further sparked my enthusiasm for greater collaboration and information sharing across planning and transport disciplines in local, state and private industry. Experiencing firsthand the benefits of networking and hearing other Australian and international case studies relating to planning and transport projects both inspired me and gave me insights to projects and methods for implementation that I have been able to take back to my team for future consideration.

I expect that attending the AITPM National Conference would provide me with extensive benefits that will strengthen my expertise. Engaging with the conference speakers will allow me to expand on my knowledge not only in relation to traffic and transport aspects but project implementation also. I am keen to hear more from leading industry experts especially in regard to solutions for regional car dependence and case studies of successful regional transport projects. I am interested in learning of successful behaviour change programs as well as successful infrastructure projects that are appropriate for regional areas in regard to cost and efficiency.

I am very interested in engaging with my peers in the Young Professionals Network committee. To be able to network and hear of other projects that have been successful will motivate me into the future. As a Local Government Subscriber Member (Albury City Council) of AITPM I understand that there are many events provided annually. I would love for the opportunity to sit on the NSW State Branch Committee as I believe the experience will be invaluable to my professional development. To be able to justify my attendance and assist in organisation of committee industry, social and career events will allow me to collaborate with new connections and expand my knowledge to improve transport outcomes for the local community.

While working at AlburyCity Council I have been exposed to the complexity of regional transport issues. Gaining more knowledge and understanding of real-life successful projects will allow me to make actual change and impact to the local community.

Thank you for considering this nomination. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Lillian Boland