

1. The New Organisation

QUESTION: *What will the new organisation be called?*

ANSWER: We have commenced a process to determine the new name. The process involves developing it through our transitional governance structure whereby a shortlist of possible names is being tested with external marketing assistance to be engaged to further refine the name and logo options. We will not go public with a new name until we have fairly well-developed options.

There will likely be a tagline associated with the new name that describes the organisation. For example: “Australia’s Peak Body - Surveying, Spatial Science & Earth Observation - Professionals | Businesses” or “The Peak Body for Surveying, Spatial Science & Earth Observation Professionals & Businesses”

QUESTION: *What is the proposed timeline for the formation of the new organisation?*

ANSWER: Our intention is to be operational during the first half of 2023 subject to member support for the creation of new organisation. We are currently preparing the resolutions to put to the members for vote and there will be an Extraordinary General Meeting for both organisations on Tuesday 24 May 2022. If the motions are supported, a period of around six months is needed to transition into the entity.

QUESTION: *If the merger proceeds, how will their assets and any liabilities be dealt with?*

ANSWER: The assets of both organisations will be transferred into the new organisation, once any liabilities have been cleared, so that new organisation has the benefit of those. New funding options are currently being explored and the intention is that with a sharpened sense of purpose, and increased relevance to the whole sector we will be successful in attracting funding from a variety of sources to assist with the establishment costs. The new organisation will operate sustainably through stronger governance and accountability, attracting more members and offering more income generating services.

QUESTION: *Will the new organisation be defined as a Professional Body under the Professions Australia definition? If no, what impact will this have on the new organisation (e.g. ineligible to undertake Migration Skills Assessments for the Australian Government)*

ANSWER: Yes. Retaining Professional Body status was identified at the beginning of the journey as being essential. We are seeking legal advice to ensure that there is no impact on that status or impact to the important services that we provide.

QUESTION: *What role will volunteers play in the new organisation?*

ANSWER: Volunteers are the lifeblood of a member-based association. The members are the subject matter experts on a wide range of topics and there will be a number of committees in the new organisation that members can participate on to ensure this knowledge is utilised in the best way possible. It is our intention though to increase staff numbers (in line with affordability) to reduce the burden on some members who in the past have been responsible for service delivery.

We will also continue to seek volunteer input on a range of activities and initiatives.

2. Purpose and Value

QUESTION: *What are the benefits of joining the merged organisation?*

ANSWER: The primary benefits of the new organisation are:

- An overall strengthened voice and influence with policy makers at federal and state level
- Retention of all the professional body strengths of SSSI, with similar fee structure proposed for professional members, along with a redesigned business member model that offers increased value, and more options
- Increased professionalism of services offered such as learning and development courses, certification and advocacy
- Increased relevance to current and new members
- As an overall strengthened organisation, together we shall be better placed to address big issues such as staff shortages
- The building of new strategic partnerships and shaping new ways to collaborate with other bodies and aligned industry sectors
- A commitment to continuous improvement of service delivery to members
- An opportunity to grow the membership considerably.

The Sector is placing increasing demands on its representative bodies. Coming together allows the creation of new funding streams and stronger financial viability.

What this means for members is:

- Greater career opportunities for professional members and growth opportunities for businesses.
- As the only national geospatial body representing both professionals and businesses, we expect that our opinion will be widely sought, as we will be providing considered and thoughtful inputs to the issues that matter. This will improve members' work environments through the creation of opportunities and streamlining of regulations. A more attractive fee structure. In the future we will be reviewing the membership fee structure to make it as attractive as possible, while meeting baseload income requirements
- Access to the highest standard of professional development courses, certification programs and more, with our intention to employ professional educators and specialists
- Opportunity to access programs of the highest relevance to our members
- In time, a reduction of the currently fragmented geospatial sector as we work to approaching other bodies to become associated entities of SSSI and SIBA | GITA.

QUESTION: *What will be the core purpose of the merged organisation and what are the key initiatives the new entity will champion?*

ANSWER **We exist to build a vital, diverse and thriving geospatial community.**

This is our proposed statement of purpose. It is important to note that in this context, geospatial is an all-encompassing term covering all forms of surveying, GIS and spatial science, earth observation and remote sensing.

We shall do this by:

- **Workforce development** – attract new talent to our sector and cultivate a qualified workforce that can meet sector demand to enable growth
- **Policy & Advocacy** – provide a unified voice to government, spatial users, and business customers to identify and drive awareness of the value of the sector to support greater and more affective take-up of geospatial technology and effective use of geospatial data

- **Identify new growth opportunities** – what are the emerging and rapid growth industry sectors requiring geospatial expertise to support further growth?
- **Professional Development and Certification** – build industry capability through certification, micro-credentialling, data standards, procurement etc
- **Engagement** – articulate the vital role geospatial plays in shaping the way we work, live and play to the broader community.
- **Profile** – elevate the profile of the geospatial sector and those who work in it, celebrate member achievements and be the peak body professionals and businesses want to join and be part of.
- **Celebrate the excellence** that exists within the sector through awards, events and strategic communications profile

QUESTION: *What are the advantages of joining a cross discipline industry body, rather than joining a discipline specific body?*

ANSWER: The world is changing rapidly, and the pace of change is likely to accelerate. The impact of technology is already blurring the line around many roles and disciplines and while this can be threatening for some, the opportunities to expand career options are as available as they are exciting. The concept of a single discipline for life will become more and more of a rarity. Even within geospatial, surveyors are broadening their roles by moving into various forms of remote sensing (drones, robotic instruments, sensor monitoring, management of large data sets, digital twin production etc) and interaction with other disciplines is becoming a daily reality.

All workforces, not just those in geospatial are faced with continuous education and professional development to remain competitive. Being part of this new organisation will open new opportunities for our members.

QUESTION: *What are the benefits of joining a national organisation rather than a state-based organisation?*

ANSWER: The industry is moving towards national competency frameworks for each discipline. Over time the local jurisdictional requirements will diminish. After all remote sensing and GIS is the same the world over, hydrographic surveyors have international mutual recognition and engineering surveyors carry out the same work to the same standards everywhere they work.

In the case of land surveyors (cadastral surveyors), given that in each jurisdiction they are providing a service that operates under identical principles regardless of jurisdiction, working under a titling system that is common to all jurisdictions, it is logical to assume that at some point in the future we could be operating under a common national framework.

QUESTION: *How can one organisation effectively provide equal value to individual members and business members?*

ANSWER: **Success of business is the success of employees.**

The value to individual members and business members is closely intertwined. More opportunities for professional development means improved career and employment opportunities for individual members. For employers, they shall have better options with which to fill vacancies by having a better trained workforce. The same applies to growth of the overall sector – growth is good for business but also leads to improved career opportunities. If we are successful in accelerating the growth of the sector, then there are more career and employment opportunities for professionals and a better trained and more available workforce for employers allowing businesses to grow.

3. General

QUESTION: *What is the structure of the proposed new Board?*

ANSWER: The Board of the new organisation will be a skills-based Board. That is, there will be an overall skills matrix that defines what complete set of skills is needed for the Board to provide effective leadership, governance and strategic direction. The intention is that there will be between 7-9 directors, and where possible directors will come from the membership, with a provision to appoint external directors where specific skills needed cannot be filled from the membership. Diversity will be one of several important criteria, as a diverse Board is more likely to be innovative in its decisions.

QUESTION: *Will SSSI and SIBA|GITA memberships occur in FY2022/2023?*

ANSWER: Membership renewals will proceed as normal the 2022/2023 FY. Existing members will automatically become founding members of the new organisation. We are currently receiving external legal advice on making the membership transition as seamless and effortless as possible for both individual and business members.

Once the new organisation is up and running it is intended to offer more membership categories, but these will be designed to attract broader membership, with the primary categories of individual and business members continuing.

QUESTION: *How will Young Professionals (YPs) be represented in the new organisation?*

ANSWER: Young Professionals will feature strongly in the new organisation and will continue to be well supported. In discussion with the YP National Committee to date one of the first things on the agenda will be to determine a more contemporary name for the group so that we capture not just young professionals but early career professionals as well (those that have changed professions with some doing so later in life).

The management team will engage closely with the National YP Committee and others to develop more events that can attract new young/early career members, along with expanding the mentoring program into other forms of professional and/or leadership development.

QUESTION: *How does this merger affect SSSI's relationship with FIG and other international bodies?*

ANSWER: As the new organisation will retain its Professional Body status, our relationship with FIG will continue unchanged, other than updating their records with our new name and any new contacts at our end. In our recent discussions with FIG about our proposed formation of the new organisation, they have been following our progress with great interest, because FIG also recognises it needs to undertake reform to maintain its relevance as peak global body for the industry. Our current relationship with FIG is excellent, having won the right to host the FIG2025 Working Week in Brisbane, sharing our intellectual property and providing support to the FIG Young Surveyors in Africa to get their own mentoring program up and running and also supporting the nomination for an Australian based President of FIG.

SSSI and SIBA|GITA already have a number of relationships with other international bodies. The new organisation will seek to continue these relationships but intends to strengthen those where it aligns with our strategies of creating growth opportunities, volunteering opportunities or further professional development for our individual members, and importantly the creation of new opportunities for our business members.

QUESTION: *Will Certification continue under the new organisation?*

ANSWER: Certification will continue to be a priority, and in fact will increase in its importance for the new organisation, as it is a core piece of our workforce development strategy. Our intention is to boost certification by increasing the number of specialties for certification, further promotion of certification to government agencies and professionalising the management of certification by engaging an experienced staff member to develop and coordinate the program.

The benefits of this will include:

- Simplification of application processes
- Reduced assessment time
- Greater options for certification
- Greater recognition for certification in the workplace
- Introduction of training courses to assist professionals to develop the required skills needed to achieve certification in a more timely fashion.