

Victoria buckles down

Since the last update from the Surveying Task Force in July, Victoria's hard-won gains against COVID-19 sadly were eroded as case numbers soared and the state went into lockdown. All the while though, surveyors and the surveying profession continued their work.

Traditionally, the July to September period is a key one for industry promotion. Due to the skills shortage that effects it, student enrolments in tertiary surveying courses are incredibly important to the future vitality of the profession. August heralds the beginning of university open day season.

With secondary school students locked in their homes this year, this season has taken on quite a different character – and educators and administrators have had to change tack. The Try Surveying brand was on hand to support these changes in the digital space, with online promotion campaigns taking centre stage once again.

Opening up online

For the University of Melbourne and RMIT University – the key university institutions that offer study opportunities in surveying and spatial studies – Open Day season went online in 2020 for the first time.

“Due to Covid-19 restrictions, Open Day at RMIT University was an online event this year,” says Chris Bellman, Associate Professor of Photogrammetry at RMIT.

These open days offered students the chance to hear from surveying teachers, students and graduates. Virtual lecture halls and extensive video content backed each university's presentation – content that can now be repurposed for a second life online, maximising its usage.



Figure 1: Surveying continues, even during a pandemic.

“While many prospective students were able to join the chat sessions and find out more about the programs available at the University, technical issues were a problem for some,” Professor Bellman acknowledges. To combat that and ensure the message about the surveying and geospatial science programs at RMIT is readily available, the team utilised the existing content to put together a detailed Google Earth Tour that is still accessible for potential future students. You can find this link on the Where to Study in Victoria page on the A Life Without Limits website.

In addition to the open days, RMIT University’s Program Manager for Surveying and Property Services Thierry Demathieu continues to run a monthly Experience Surveying webinar that students and parents can attend. Each month features a new guest presenter, who have outlined everything from their own university surveying study experience to exciting and impactful surveying projects they have had the chance to work on. In August, Thierry was joined by surveyor, RMIT Honours student and recipient of the *SSSI Award for Special Achievement (2017) - Vocational Education* Evan Zissimos. September’s event featured young surveying professional Amanda Li, who presented on her work across the \$45 million-dollar Digital Cadastral Modernisation Project.

Try Surveying supported the open days across both universities with social media posts, ever-updating listings on the Life Without Limits website, and news blasts to our considerable online database.



Figure 2: RMIT students taking advantage of the opportunity to conduct assessment field work in late June.



Making the most of social opportunities

Following on from a successful June campaign of a similar nature, a new Facebook advertising campaign was organised in August and September. Its focus was to drive awareness of the surveying information available at RMIT University and the University of Melbourne's open days. The target audience was students and career advisors in Victoria.

With a robust budget and making use of an array of eye-catching videos, the campaign highlighted the connections surveying had with STEM school subjects and promoted the virtual open day registration process. As part of the promotion, responders clicked through to relevant pages on the Life Without Limits website, which resulted in increased exposure and traffic.



Figure 3: Some of the results from one of the student-focused ads.

The campaign proved a great success. With an audience reach in the tens of thousands and 320% increase in video views, the message was heard loud and clear.

Across the life of the campaign, over 200 students, over 200 teachers and nearly 150 career advisors actively clicked through to the Life Without Limits website for more details about the days. In terms of the campaign's reach, over 24,000 students alone saw one of the adverts.

This was the largest campaign in a period characterised by online promotions – including extensive web content production and enews distribution.

Surveying the horizon

As Victoria's daily coronavirus case tally begins to dwindle, there is a sense that the hard work of everyday Victorians is beginning to pay off. The status of the road map to recovery changes all the time, so we cannot tell for sure when the surveying profession will be able to return to complete normalcy, but for the first time in a while that doesn't seem quite so far away. Until then though, the Life Without Limits brand will continue to do most of its work online, and we will always appreciate any stories, images or support sent to trysurveying@alifewithoutlimits.com.au. 2021 is, impossibly, just around the corner – and who knows what it will bring?

A life without limits