

Federal Senate Report – Traffic Engineering Associate Program

Response provided by Caroline Carabott (former participant)

In 2009 I was presented with the opportunity to participate in the Main Roads initiated Traffic Engineering Associate Program for duration of 3 years. The program involved undertaking rotations and training programs in all facets of Traffic Engineering fields within Main Roads WA and Local Government; each rotation being 12 and 6 months respectively. The collaboration of doing an exchange with Local Government was to enhance the stakeholder relationship between both the State and Local Governments with the opportunity to have a greater understanding of what each organisation is exposed to in regards to traffic engineering.

The TEA Program offered you (the participant) choices in placement opportunities and looked at streamlining your interest in the traffic industry. I was able to choose my placement times; it also helped to have an eagerness to learn as much as possible whilst on each rotation taking in as much knowledge as possible with the assistance from the knowledge sharing program that currently exists within Main Roads.

Training opportunities were made available to suit each rotation. There was also an opportunity to add additional training to the TEA Program where it had not been identified at the start of the Program.

Regular meetings were held with the TEA Program Coordinator (Craig Wooldridge). This built confidence and security to me as an individual as making a career change as big as this was a little daunting at times. The encouragement from Craig Wooldridge was undoubtedly a great asset when participating in the TEA Program.

Career progression 'Women in Management' – on numerous occasions I was approached by the women in Main Roads enquiring as to how they too could be a part of the TEA Program. I had lengthy discussions with those interested in taking on a career change to Traffic Management / Engineering fields. I have expressed the interests of others to Management; however the progress of this seems to be limited as no one has since joined the program. I have been informed that the lack of funding is a contributing factor for this.

The Program has since come to a standstill. It would seem from a participant's point of view that the Program was not supported after a management restructure and that having a substantive position in a particular field would be more beneficial to the Traffic Engineering team. After two and a half years, the Program had changed from having full management support to very minimal. I met with the respective Managers and in the best interest of my career I sought a substantive position in Traffic Management and was successful.

At the initial time of accepting a position on the TEA Program I knew I wanted a change in career in the Traffic Engineering field. It was agreed that the rotations completed would assist in my decision to undergo further Technical studies as recognition of prior learning (RPL). Since completing the Program the rotations completed have not been recognised and it was expressed to me by Management that no acknowledgment has or will be supported as part of RPL for further studies. This was a disappointing outcome of my time on the Program.

It should be noted to those who wish to undertake such a career change and participate in any future Programs of the like within Main Roads and/or the Transport portfolio that a clear outcome of the qualifications at the end of the Program is reached by all parties. With a clear understanding of the boundaries associated with taking on the TEA Program.

Although the TEA Program was cut short and was not recognised I would like to give full credit to Management for supporting my time on the Program and am very thankful for the opportunities presented to me along the way. The Program was most beneficial in my career choice and if the Program was to start up again I would fully support management and encourage future participants as an ambassador for Main Roads.