4000 professionals around the world are now alumni of the Professional Certificate in Asset Management Planning, and according to participants capability assessments the course is having a significant impact in lifting the capacity of Asset Management Professionals.

IPWEA and Cahoot Learning’s long-term partnership has led to the success of this course for the past eight years. The Cahoot Learning platform and pedagogical approach enable significant learning to be created.

The Professional Certificate in Asset Management Planning uses an active learning approach which achieves significantly higher levels of engagement from participants and also leverages the experience of expert IPWEA mentors to impart real world experience and knowledge.

Participants conduct a self-assessment of their capability before and after the course, enabling a comparative analysis of its effectiveness. An aggregation of post course surveys completed by 1052 alumni over two years shows that participants have achieved an average 67% uplift in their proficiency across a range of 12 capability areas, with the average capability moving from ‘Advanced Beginner’ to ‘Proficient.’

Improvements were reported across all 12 capability areas, but some of the biggest improvements occurred in the ability of alumni to prepare an asset management plan and identify and document areas for improvement in an asset management plan.

Where the average pre-course response was for participants to rate themselves as novices against this criteria, the rating by alumni post-course was either ‘competent’ or ‘proficient’.

Other significant advances were in the ability to articulate the benefits of assessment planning, audit a completed asset management plan, and connect expenditure projections to long term financial, climate adaptation and strategic plans.
The Background

Asset Management is recognised internationally as a discipline applied to the management of public works infrastructure and services. Asset Management builds an understanding of the cost, risk and performance trade-offs in the short, medium, and long-term, when making decisions regarding community owned infrastructure assets. Asset Management is about ensuring infrastructure assets and services that the community value is delivered efficiently today, whilst providing certainty for the generations of tomorrow.

To meet and exceed community expectations of infrastructure assets we require a pipeline of skilled and capable asset management professionals who view Asset Management as a viable and rewarding long-term profession. Achieving this demands a strong commitment to the professional development and accreditation of asset managers.

Highly skilled asset managers are in high demand and the skills shortage needs have been highlighted by several recent reports, including the Local Government NSW Priorities Report, issued in the wake of the 2021-2022 State Budget that found that four in five NSW local governments are experiencing a skills shortage in engineering, asset management and planning.

In 2021 IPWEA launched the Asset Management Pathway, a structured development pathway for asset management professionals seeking to uplift their knowledge and skills to deliver improved outcomes to the communities they serve. The Professional Certificate in Asset Management Planning has educated a generation of asset management professionals and is recognised as a global standard in Asset Management training. The course engages participants with hands-on experience through drafting an Asset Management Plan using their organisation's own data. Course modules build the learning in stages with a range of video content, activities and peer interactions, supported by IPWEA's Mentors.

IPWEA has engaged in a long-term partnership with Cahoot Learning to provide the learning platform that underpins the course, enabling an immersive learning experience that results in significant capability uplifts, strong peer to peer engagement and the ability to implement course concepts back in the workplace.

Cahoot Learning has been at the forefront of virtual course design and delivery since developing its bespoke learning platform and model in 2011. Cahoot's learning model is built on fostering relationships between learners that leverages the collective knowledge of the cohort. Capability uplift is driven through an active learning pedagogy delivered through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. This brings learners, subject matter experts and facilitators together in ways that leverage their time and investment into the learning in highly efficient and effective ways. Cahoot Learning's pedagogical approach is also officially certified by the Education Alliance Finland as "Outstanding", with an evaluation score of 95%.

"It’s very pleasing to see the capability uplift that the Professional Certificate in Asset Management Planning is achieving across such a significant number of participants. This course is having a real impact on asset managers professionals, not just in Australia, but also in New Zealand, Pacific Islands, Canada and the United States’.

says David Jenkins, CEO IPWEA.
A key differentiator between IPWEA’s Professional Certificate Asset Management Planning and other courses is the active learning pedagogy that is proven to uplift capability across a range of 12 capability areas. Participants in the course are surveyed pre and post course across a range of 12 capability areas relevant to asset management planning (See Figure 1). Participants in the course reported a 67% uplift in capability, lifting them from ‘Advanced beginner’ to ‘Proficient’.

Figure 1.

According to Jonathan Jones, Head of Education, IPWEA ‘the Professional Certificate in Asset Management Planning effectively builds participants knowledge and understanding of asset management planning, however where this course really excels is the practical, applied and contextualized learning process which supports learners to get hands-on with their data, building an asset management plan, in a supported learning environment. Participants walk away from the course with new skills, capability and confidence in asset management planning, and a draft asset management plan that can be used within their organisation’. ‘We mentor every participant through the process of creating their asset management plan, working closely with each participant and in groups to bring life to the concepts and frameworks and importantly to help each participant contextualise these within their own workplace. This is why participants report such a significant level of capability uplift’ says Jacqui Hansen, Senior Advisor Asset Management, IPWEA. ‘90% of participants report that they are applying the course concepts back in their workplace prior to the course concluding. Their learning ‘sticks’ because they are immediately applying it’.

Lianette Leon. Alumni

Lianette Leon, who moved from a finance director role to a newly created asset management position for the city of Baytown in Texas, USA.

Despite the online delivery of the course, Leon said she “never felt lost” and the mentoring was a particular highlight. Leon said the course helped her understand concepts such as the “linking of consequences with budgets” and assisted her with tools to communicate medium and long term asset planning to stakeholders.

“It was great in showing how we can be efficient in providing a superior level of services to citizens and still work with limited budgets every fiscal year,” Leon said.

“I better understood how we can extend the life of our assets and invest the tax dollars in the best way, and how we can communicate and give feedback to citizens”.

Articulate – I can articulate the benefits of asset management planning
Assess – I can assess the applicable data for lifecycle cost modelling.
Collate – I can collate, upload, edit and report upon asset management data for use in an Asset Management Plan.
Interpret – I can interpret asset management figures, graphs and reports in an Asset Management Plan, and can identify a suitable method of renewal forecasting for the Asset Management Plan being prepared.
Comm – I can effectively communicate service and risk consequences.
Doctech – I can document customer and technical levels of service.
Docrisk – I can document a risk register and identify the main risks to be included in an Asset Management Plan.
Develop – I can develop demand management options and priorities for capital.
Prepare – I can prepare a draft Asset Management Plan.
Audit – I can audit a completed Asset Management Plan.
Connect – I can connect the Asset Management Plan expenditure projections to long-term financial plans, climate adaptation plans and strategic plans.
Identify – I can identify and document areas for improvement of an Asset Management Plan.

Professional Certificate Asset Management Planning Proven in driving capability uplift
Community and peer to peer learning works

88% of Professional Certificate in Asset Management Planning participants report they have learnt from their peers during the course, which is designed to engage participants in active learning and dialogue.

The impact of engagement and peer-to-peer learning on an individual undertaking a complex course is highly significant, especially where they may be the only person in the organisation with an asset management role.

This course drives interaction and has an engagement level which is high for a face-to-face learning experience but achieves this in an online environment that puts the learning front and centre, while giving them the opportunity to learn in a digital environment, wherever and whenever they choose.

According to Anthony Morris, Co-founder and Director, Cahoot Learning,

“the IPWEA team have created and delivered something special in the Professional Certificate in Asset Management Planning.”

“Being innovative is often claimed but usually falls way short,” said Morris.

This program truly is innovative. In 2014, it was brave enough to pioneer a new form of accreditation - the Professional Certificate, an industry-based acknowledgement of learning, commitment and capability. It pioneered a new form of pedagogy with a community-based digital learning experience that outshone its face-to-face legacy in every measure.

“It was on full display at a global conference on Disruptive Innovation in Education at Stanford University and was acknowledged as a breakthrough in engineering education. Eight years later, the data shows what a remarkable program this continues to be. Huge applause and gratitude to the IPWEA team for their vision, leadership and grit”.

Rob Mizany, Senior Analyst in the National AM Team at Kainga Ora New Zealand, recently completed the course and stated

‘I had limited understanding prior to the course, and by the time I finished I was much more confident when talking to colleagues. I actually had an opinion to add to the conversation. The great thing about this course was that we were seeing and discussing other Asset Manager’s issues and plans and it really broadened our understanding’.

Best practice asset management of essential public infrastructure

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