



Moreland City Council uses Principal Toolbox to enhance project visibility

Finding a project portfolio management tool that is intuitive, flexible, simple to use and effective is no easy task.

Moreland City Council in Melbourne's booming inner north had been grappling with project management issues for almost a decade.

"We'd been trying to get it right at Moreland for eight or nine years and we'd had policies and methodologies and frameworks and PMO officers," the council's Project Management Adviser Ruth Robles McColl said.

"We should have been in quite a mature state by the time we looked at software for our project management purposes but we weren't."

Moreland purchased the Principal Toolbox through Connexion Systems in early 2015.

The Council set about implementing a Project Portfolio Management tool in a slow, measured way in consultation with Connexion staff.

Ms Robles McColl said the flexibility the tool allowed meant the software could be tailored to match staff capabilities and then ramped up as employee skills increased.

"We needed to bring people on board and build their competency in project management alongside the tool," she said.

"A fool with a tool is still a fool."

"Without Toolbox we wouldn't have been able to put some of that training into practise because people were using all sorts of different templates and Excel spreadsheets and Word templates for some things.

"It's so intuitive and easy to use that we were able to convince people that if you know what you are supposed to do and the right way to do it by using Toolbox it will actually make it a lot easier for you."

Ruth Robles McColl- Project Management Adviser





“The tool itself actually prompts people when they need to fill things in, it helps them with automated reports and it shows them that it’s not that hard if you invest in some of the planning up front.

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Unlike a number of other products, the broad scope of the Principal Toolbox allows it to be used for the life of the project from business case development, planning through to delivery and project completion.

Ms Robles McColl said the software had replaced the need for the council to buy any more MS Project licences, leading to a substantial saving.

She said while it was initially adopted to be used only on selected capital works projects, Principal Toolbox was now used for all capital works including the \$5.5 million Coburg Children Centre project and the \$26 million Oak Park Aquatic Centre.

It has also been rolled out for all of Moreland City Council’s operating projects.

“People who were resistant to change are now actually coming to me and asking to put their projects on the tool and I’m struggling to keep up,” Ms Robles McColl said.

“We had no idea when we first started that’s how we were going to end up. We really thought it was going to be about trying to capture our capital projects and trying to save a few of them.

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“But the way it’s turned out, the way we’ve rolled it out and the benefits people see by using Principal Toolbox has meant that we’ve broadened that significantly across all projects.

“We’re even using it for our community consultation, our council plan, our IT projects, all the stuff that doesn’t even have budgets attached to it are going into Toolbox, which is really good.

“Anything that is seen as a project at Moreland City Council is expected to be on Toolbox – that’s our goal.”

Melbourne’s inner-north suburbs are undergoing a massive urban renewal as factories and industrial areas make way for high-density apartments. The Council’s population is predicted to swell from 178,000 to 280,000 within a decade, keeping its 1000 staff including 200 Principal Toolbox users busy.

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Ms Robles McColl said the software allowed visibility of projects across the Council’s network, promoting accountability, transparency and helping to streamline projects.

“It gives corporate visibility at that higher level reporting but it also helps the project managers to be able to help manage their executives on individual projects as well,” she said.

“It gives ownership of individual work packages and ensures timeframes are realistic.

Ms Robles McColl explained that planning out the projects in the past was quite ad hoc, but now with a bit more structure behind it and a bit more visibility they found they could go in and see quite clearly how their budget was going and where there might be concerns that need intervention.

“The red, amber, green status indicators are really important and the fact that we can break them down as well is really helpful. We are getting a lot better at saving time and money on projects because of that early intervention through the visibility of the tool.”



Connexion Support

The after sales service and support offered by Connexion Systems has enabled Moreland City Council to get the best out of the software.

“They are not only well versed in the software and knowing the product inside out but they know project management and understand the content and the context of what we’re trying to achieve,” Ms Robles McColl said.

“They were able to offer us value by giving us ideas and suggestions and that has been absolutely critical to the success of the rollout.”

Ms Robles McColl said the Principal Toolbox was an excellent fit for Local Government.



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“Bringing in the software and bringing in the tools has been the solution to our project management woes,” she said.

“I’ve seen other tools and I’ve seen the ins and outs of how other software works and I find them quite limiting.

“They either do the business planning side of it well or the risk management side of it well but I hadn’t seen a tool like the Principal Toolbox that actually incorporates all of those aspects of the project life cycle and carries it through from conception to end and that’s one of the key things that makes it such a valuable tool for our organisation.”

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Principal Toolbox can streamline your project portfolio

To find out how the Principal Toolbox can help streamline and consolidate your project management, visit www.connexion.com.au for more information.

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How Principal Toolbox has improved business for Moreland City Council

Moreland City Council has found that Principal Toolbox has significantly improved the maturity in the way the organisation delivers projects. Principal Toolbox has been advantageous within Moreland City Council for the following reasons:

Saves time

The time spent on reporting has been significantly reduced due to the automatic creation of project management documentation, such as project status reports and project business cases.

Organisation transparency

Automated executive reports distributed monthly have allowed for organisational transparency. Division directors can now view the executive reports and identify areas that need attention. If required, directors can focus in on individual projects.

Intuitive tool that is easy to use

Some of the most appealing functionalities of Principal Toolbox include its ease of use, intuitive dashboards and flexibility to adapt to a changing business environment.