

Q&A WITH POLICY ANALYST LOUIS ZIRAS

Louis has been with ICN since 2004 and is one of the organisation's longest serving employees.



Q. Prior to working for ICN what was your professional background?

I come from a sales and marketing background where I worked as a Marketing Manager for a large suburban accountancy practice. I have also worked in telecommunications sales in a B2B role. Prior to becoming a Policy Analyst, I worked as a Business Capability Adviser at ICN Victoria. I was recruited in 2004 into the role by ICN to work on a campaign, Buy Local, to introduce SME manufacturers to ICN services to help the SMEs with import replacement opportunities. I was recruited because of my B2B sales experience and I was the first Adviser to not come from an industrial background. Typically, I would spend one day a week in the office and four days a week on the road visiting manufacturers and introducing them to the portfolio of ICN services. I then moved to my current role as a Policy Analyst in 2009.

Q. What does a Policy Analyst do on a day to day basis?

The Policy Team brings to life the [Local Jobs First Policy](#). We assist with implementing the Policy on behalf of the Victorian Government, providing assessment services to procuring departments, agencies and authorities. We do this by conducting contestability assessments for each tender to identify the contestable and non-contestable items, which allows industry to address specific items in their proposals. As a team we also evaluate the ANZ value-added activity commitments made by bidders in their Local Industry Development Plans (LIDPs).

Q. What is the most enjoyable part of being a Policy Analyst?

I really enjoy the team that I work in. We are all very close and the people make ICN a great place to work. However, the most enjoyable part of my role is when I am researching industry capabilities in terms of contestable and non-contestable items and identifying new capabilities and new manufacturers in Victoria. I am continually pleasantly surprised when I identify new capabilities that are available in Victoria. It shows that Victoria is at the forefront of Australian innovation with new capabilities becoming increasingly available.

Q. What is your fondest memory while working at ICN?

When ICN ran the Observer program for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games we took international delegations from future bidding cities around the facilities to showcase what we were doing in Melbourne. Showcasing the city's world class infrastructure and sports facilities made me immensely proud to be a Melbournian. Following on from the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games we exported a number of capabilities to Delhi, the host city for the 2010 Commonwealth Games. This is my happiest memory while working at ICN as I was part of a team showcasing Melbourne to the rest of the world.

Q&A WITH POLICY ANALYST LOUIS ZIRAS

Louis loves going to see all of the arts and culture that Melbourne has to offer. Including, music, movies and theatre performances.



Q. Why is ICN a great place to work?

ICN is a great place to work because I truly believe that the organisation makes a real difference to industry. Over the 15 years that I have worked for ICN I have received an amazing amount of support and continue to do so. For the past 21 years I have been living with multiple sclerosis (MS) and I am extremely lucky to be working full time. I appreciate a lot of people in my situation do not have the opportunity to work full time and for that I am extremely grateful to ICN for being so supportive. I also feel that my value to ICN is fully recognised and the work that I do for the organisation is fully appreciated.

Q. Outside of work what are your main interests?

Outside of work my main interests are my family, I have three lovely children. I also love getting out to see movies, gigs, the theatre, the orchestra, and other arts and performances. My wife is an ex musician and I also share her passion for music, so we try to go out and see our favourite bands when we can. I really try to make the most of going out as there are multiple barriers that I need to overcome on a daily basis in terms of getting out and about. Being wheelchair bound everything needs to be planned, so when I do go out, I really treasure and enjoy it.

Q. What is the best thing about living and working in Victoria?

Melbourne is a great city; everything is within an arm's reach. One day you can fall into a great coffee shop that you never knew existed, the next day you can go to a concert and the following day you can go to a world class sporting event with 90,000 other people, minutes from the city centre. The diversity of the city really excites me. I live in a northern suburb, which is peaceful and quiet, there is a lake and a creek very close to our house, but we are only a stone's throw away from the hustle and bustle of the city centre. There are so many green spaces near the city centre, at work we are sandwiched in between Albert Park and Fawkner Park with the Royal Botanic Gardens just around the corner. The public transport in the city is fantastic, which is extremely important to me as it allows me to be independent and to get around the city in my wheelchair. I think the city is also constantly improving. Infrastructure is being built, at a rapid rate, that will make a real difference to people's day to day lives, such as the Metro and Westgate Tunnels.

Q. And finally, what one thing could you not live without and why?

Hope. Hope that the world is going to get better. Hope that there is something around the corner that will help me with my disability. Hope that I'll still be able to carry on doing what I'm doing at work and outside of work, such as spending time with my family and being independent. Hope is the one thing that I could not live without.