

Doubles: WCC allows senior managers to hold private jobs



A senior Warrnambool City Council manager is also working for a private company that is going global with a camera to stop mobile phone use while driving. Image: tehran-today.

Carol Altmann – The Terrier

When you dig into the Warrnambool City Council, it's amazing what tumbles out, like a full-time, senior manager having a second job outside of the council.

The manager is earning more than \$100,000 as a senior public servant, but also, at the same time, is working for a private company – all with the approval of the council.

As such, the manager in question, WCC Economic Development and Investment head Shaun Miller*, makes no secret of his second job, which he started in March and which is listed on his LinkedIn profile.

It's with an Australian-based group called Acusensus, which

has [developed a world-first camera system](#) to detect people using their mobile phones while driving and, it is hoped, reduce road accidents as a result.

It is a great idea and Acusensus, it is fair to say, is on the cusp of something very big.

It recently hooked up with the NSW Government to supply these cameras, and is rapidly building a network of global contacts.

No wonder it has been on a hiring spree, and Mr Miller has jumped on board as its International Business Development Manager.

Mr Miller also knows some of the guys at Acusensus, including its chair Ravin Mirchandani, who he worked with before his days with the WCC.

As I say, Acusensus and Mr Miller make no secret of any of this, [with the company making a public announcement](#) when Mr Miller was hired.



Acusensus announced in March its appointment of WCC Economic Development and Investment manager Shaun

Miller. Image: Acusensus.

Having said that, the announcement makes no mention of Mr Miller working for the Warrnambool City Council – it skips over that bit.

Mr Miller was refreshingly frank – if brief – when I asked him about this second job.

“In response to your email, I work 7.6 hours a week for Acusensus.

“This does not impact on my council role.”

So, as is often the way with the goings on inside the WCC, Mr Miller is not doing anything the council has not allowed him to do.

He is not breaking any council rules: we just don't know what those rules are.

I have no doubt Mr Miller is able to separate his roles entirely, but boy, it raises some questions as to why the council would think this was okay.

The most obvious is: how does the council keep an eye on such second jobs?

How does it keep an eye on whether a manager is spending council time working on council business, or on private business?

What about all of the contacts and insider knowledge the manager builds through council work – and for which he/she is paid handsomely by ratepayers – which could be of use in the private business?

And what if, in six or 12 months time, the manager jumps ship for the now well-and-truly-established private job that is far more appealing than the council job?

In some circles this is called hedging your bets.

Again, I am not suggesting Mr Miller is anything but stringent in separating off his 7.5 hours with Acusensus, but these broader questions still need to be asked.

And so I asked them.

I asked the WCC spokesman Nick Higgins on Tuesday if it was normal for senior managers – or any full-time council staff for that matter – to be given approval to have another job?

The answer?

Silence.

Crickets.

Bat + Ball + Home.

It appears The Terrier is not allowed to ask questions – or expect answers – about anything connected to the \$34 million of ratepayers' money spent on staff.

(Actually, it appears since [the credit card scandal](#) – which I will return to in coming days – I am not allowed to ask about anything at all, sorry readers.)

In the absence of any official explanation, we will have to assume the council has a firm policy to cover second jobs, which is what government authorities suggest councils do if they intend to go down this complicated path.

And if it doesn't have a policy, it might be writing or reviewing one right now. I wonder if it will be made public?

*Mr Miller was mentioned in dispatches as part of the WCC

group [that visited Flemington for four days](#) for, we assume, a Victorian tourism conference and, for one WCC staffer at least, most likely a day at the races. This story sent Terrier readers off down the rabbit holes to find out more, which is where the Acusenus job came to light. Good digging.