INTERVIEW:

Our group had the pleasure of interviewing Vikram Singh who is responsible for managing the software and applications at Yarra Trams. His main work at Yarra Trams is to review how the applications are running/operating, planning the roadmaps for those applications, building it up and delivering those pieces of work. The industry that he works in involves public facing which is any free or paid application or system that the public can access. He mentions that the tram tracker application is an example of public facing which he works on to deliver various information regarding tram timetables and stops. He also manages the internal corporate data which he calls enterprise asset management. The people he interacts with during his work includes his team and different teams within IT about IT security, the architecture, the networks, and the change process which is mainly on documenting changes at a certain standard to ensure success rate is good. Apart from IT teams, and within the business side, he very frequently interacts with people from HR to marketing to his operation areas because everyone is a stakeholder as they use the software too.

The interactions that he makes with different teams are dependent on what work needs to be done. He mentions that if he is working on road maps for enhancement, he will work closely with the architecture team to be updated on the recent changes within the IT space and ensure that he adheres to the latest architecture principles. As for the security team, he interacts with them to check whether there is a threat that needs to be fixed in the upcoming patches for the software. He also needs to ensure that if there is an enhancement being made, that it abides by the security policies and the solution they are coming up with is compliant from a security perspective. He closely interacts with the infrastructure team and applications team to ensure that any change his team makes follows the ITIL process. With the business side, he interacts more on their product backlogs, their priorities, when they can deliver and getting that agreement to requirement gathering sessions. There is also another team called the project team that he interacts with mainly if there are big pieces of work that need to be done that the operation teams cannot deliver on time.

He mentions that he has frequent catch-up sessions with clients and investors to check what is going on, what their priorities are on the product backlog with the clients which they work on in a scope of two-week windows. The aspects that he spends the longest on include planning, communicating with people, checking if all the processes are efficient and ensuring the team involved in the process is running and working smoothly. From a more technical point of view of the team, they work more on day-to-day tasks which can be the issues relating to the software, database, or infrastructure. The part that he finds to be most challenging at work is definitely the processes and documentation. Keeping the documentation up to date and ensuring people are always following the process as it can be tedious to update the documentation at times. Another challenging aspect is having good visibility and keeping an eye out for any improvements and detecting issue areas to fix and enhance over time. He says this is particularly challenging as there are so many moving parts from infrastructure to software and one change can break another thing.

The work that in his opinion best captures the essence of the IT industry must be the tram tracker app as it is a key app that is widely used in Melbourne. All the ongoing changes that he and his team maintain and publish, an example of this was the recent Grand Prix which they had to increase the number of trams running and change certain routes of those trams. All those changes had to be communicated to the public while making it as seamless as possible for the tourists coming overseas that are coming to watch the Grand Prix. He also mentions that Yarra Trams has systems in place so that businesses can easily update those messages and make them visible to the tourists who are not familiar with the tram network and how they operate. The information that his team makes available to the public and ensuring that they are reliable is something that he takes great pride in and something they do well from an IT industry perspective. To conclude the interview, we asked him if he could provide any more insight on how all the different parts of IT are able to help the tram tracker app works as well as it does. In response to this he mentions various teams which include the servers team, database team and his own team which is the tram tracker app merging together all the data and sending it off or displaying it via the tram tracker app. To sum it up, he says that the communication between various teams is the main factor in the smooth development of the tram tracker application.