

MASTERING SOCIAL PROCUREMENT: ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN CONSTRUCTION (APIC) POLICY

“It takes 10,000 hours to become a master at something”- Malcolm Gladwell

We often forget that it takes time, the courage to fail, persistence and leadership to master anything new. Ten thousand hours in working days are about 4 years.

Becoming masters in Aboriginal participation will not be an overnight story. It will take time to achieve the outcomes of enabling Aboriginal people to actively influence and fully participate in social, economic and cultural life. As the business community, we have a key role to play to directly broaden opportunities for Aboriginal training, employment and business and indirectly influence an increase in school attendance and retention.

Mastering social procurement is no different to mastering a building or construction project. You do have to start with what you want to achieve, where you want to get in the end. Social procurement will require you to plan, design,

pilot, build and review your social procurement requirements in the same way as you manage any construction or building project.

Construction and building projects always have deadlines. Seldom ever do you have the luxury of 10,000 hours to become a master. You are slave to delivering your project safely, on time, on budget and to the specification. When a project is delayed, it is always the contractor's fault.

But...we all know that not everything in a project is critical path. Much can be done outside of the high risk and critical path areas.

The targets are modest and achievable. For 2016, it requires a maximum investment of \$15,000 in every \$1,000,000. On the longer term, it means a maximum of \$50,000 for every \$1,000,000. I don't want to be rude but

coming up with an excuse why not to do social procurement, will cost your organisation more in time and money than getting it done.

Successful projects are the ones where the effort is taken at the front end of the project. It takes courage and ongoing demonstrated leadership to achieve the outcome. I think it will take 10,000 hours before you can claim to have mastered social procurement.

How to master social procurement?

The following 5 steps are recommended to assist with social procurement:

1. Plan

The outcome from your planning will be the development of your Aboriginal Participation Plan (APP). However, I would like to stress the importance of engaging with the right partners long before any project

ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN CONSTRUCTION DELIVERING POSITIVE SOCIAL PROCUREMENT

	1 st MAY 2015	1 st JULY 2016	LONG TERM
CATEGORY 1 Project Primarily directed at Aboriginal Communities	Indicative minimum target of 1.5%	Mandatory minimum target of 1.5%	Mandatory minimum target of 5%
	APP REQUIRED WITHIN 60 DAYS OF CONTRACT AWARD		
CATEGORY 2 Projects over \$10 million	Indicative minimum target of 1.5%	Mandatory minimum target of 1.5%	Mandatory minimum target of 4%
	APP REQUIRED WITHIN 60 DAYS OF CONTRACT AWARD		
CATEGORY 3 Projects over \$1 million, less than \$10 million	Indicative minimum target of 1.5%	Mandatory minimum target of 1.5%	Mandatory minimum target of 3%
	APP RECOMMENDED	APP REQUIRED WITHIN 60 DAYS OF CONTRACT AWARD	

commences.
 When we engage with Aboriginal partners we must be willing to actively listen and earn trust.
 Did you know that there are more than 580 NSW registered building and construction suppliers registered on Supply Nation – and they have previous experience? There is another 50 vendors registered without experience. The 580 vendors do not include any ancillary vendors that can provide the low hanging fruit such as warehouse personnel, rags, office products, PPE and stationary. There are many different vendors registered with

Supply Nation.
2. Design
 Similar to any project, you will work through the different options available. It needs to consider the pathways (yes, this is a journey not a once-off contract requirement) to increase Aboriginal opportunities for:
 • training;
 • employment; and
 • the provision of services and goods.
 It works to start with including experienced Aboriginal companies in the process but it is easy enough to start with non-critical

path areas.
 The social procurement process will take more time and will require a different mindset and different way of contracting. Therefore it will need to be included in the design process.

3. Pilot
 The concept of piloting is well known and works well in the building and construction industry. It provides the opportunity to test, evaluate and redesign. It fits perfectly in social procurement. Work on a pilot scale, test and evaluate and be prepared to redesign. Don't stop at the pilot and realise that as the journey progresses that the pilots will become larger.

4. Build
 The goals allow business to start small and grow their social procurement. It is an ongoing process. Social procurement is a social investment. Similar to any investment, it will take time, nurture and sometimes it will have to change direction. It is important to think as a visionary but keep your feet on the grounded and remain real and practical; taking one step at a time forward aiming towards where you want to get to in the end.

5. Review
 Rome was not build in a day. Yet Rome became an empire. Why did Rome fall? The Caesars lost sight of the end. The process of review and learning lessons is a key part of a successful project and to measure how we are going towards achieving our goals and mastering social procurement.

It is also a good time to celebrate success. The more we find reason to celebrate the successes, even small ones, the more we will encourage those who need just that extra little nudge to be able to participate.

Social procurement creates an opportunity to build a bridge between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

I respectfully leave you with Elder Nelson's words: "No one accepts being told what to do, what is going to happen to their families, homes – land and water, cultural sites of significance, or how to live your life. So it is important to engage with community, including leaders, Elders and the community people themselves."

*Please note:
 The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author specifically and do not necessarily represent any official policy or position.*

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