

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies would like to acknowledge both the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung, and Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we are located in Melbourne. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal language groups across all of Victoria, whose lands we provide funding for specific projects around Early Childhood Education. We acknowledge their history, their people, and their stories. As an Association we will work together for reconciliation, a process that starts with the acknowledgement of true Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures of Australia, and will always value the contribution to our community and culture, the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families, communities and their stories.

Procurement Policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Businesses

Introduction

Procurement is the purchase of works, assets, goods and services that will achieve the purpose of the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS). This policy provides guidance on the processes AGECS follow for the procurement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.

Purpose

This policy provides an opportunity to increase the volume and value of participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses contracted with AGECS. In doing so, the aim is to stimulate Indigenous businesses and consultants in their entrepreneurial endeavours particularly across Victoria and provide a role model for early childhood education organisations to do the same.

Evaluation of policy success

The success of this policy will be measured by the increase of the number of Indigenous businesses awarded contracts with AGECS annually.

Objectives

- For AGECS to promote supplier diversity and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses and their employees through the procurement of goods and services related to our RAP.
- For AGECS to support improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation and social outcomes.
- For AGECS to use their buying power to generate social value above and beyond the value of the goods and services being procured.

- For AGECS to actively respond to recognition of the inequities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers.
- For AGECS to support self-determination with increased employment of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers and services across Victoria when and where appropriate.

Policy

AGECS will establish and continue to update and expand a state and national register of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Steps to achieving this outcome as follows (these steps are repeated cycles).

1. Exploration (brainstorming) stage:
 - During this initial exploration stage AGECS considers the following guidance on the exchange of goods and services outlined in the Narragunnawalli resource guide. From a cultural perspective goods and services could include *“the exchange of socially, culturally and spiritually valuable songs, dances, art, stories, rituals and ceremonies”* ([p2](#)).
 - For Victorian businesses AGECS will explore and select from a register on the [Kinaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce](#) owned businesses as possible providers.
 - For National businesses AGECS will explore and select from [Supply Nation](#) (also includes Victorian businesses).
 - Seek guidance from AGECS Aboriginal consultant and community representatives AGECS has a relationship with.
 - [Indigenous Business Australia](#) (IBA) is a commercially focussed organisation. Economic independence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is at the heart of what we do.
 - [Victorian Aboriginal Business Directory](#): Supporting improved procurement outcomes for Aboriginal businesses.
 - Localise searches according to service location required by AGECS.
2. Narrowing down options stage
 - Engagement coordinator (often also a Reconciliation Ambassador) will call/email for quotes related to the service being sought and relevant to the local region AGECS is offering resources, professional learning events or projects in.
 - For goods and services over \$1000 a proposal will be presented at the next RAP Committee meeting by the Engagement Coordinator for approval.
 - The engagement coordinator will then advise the Council with the final decision if it is not specifically a RAP project.
3. Hiring stage
 - Engagement coordinator or Aboriginal Consultant will contact successful contractor and negotiate payment options.
 - Payments be made financially, or through other means such as vouchers, etc.

4. Building relationships:

- Continue to support successful contractors where appropriate and if unnecessary to change contractors.
- AGECS will continue to maintain the established list of local, regional, state-based, and national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses to accompany policies and procedures. This cycle will be revisited annually in order to review, update and expand this list.

Principles

- o For each event/project based in a new location in Victoria the engagement coordinator will investigate the region prior to an event with the support of AGECS Aboriginal consultancy to procure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters, catering businesses, venues, businesses supplying electronic equipment, other services required to deliver the event and local elders for Welcome to Country.
- o Progressively a database will be built.
- o Every two years a review of this database of Aboriginal presenters and services will be conducted to ensure all businesses are still functioning.
- o It is essential that AGECS Council and their subcontractors have undertaken cultural safety training to increase the successful selection and engagement of Aboriginal suppliers.

For questions about this policy, contact the Chair of AGECS's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee, nominated Aboriginal Representative (Bindi James) or Reconciliation Liaison Officer.

Version	1	Approved by Council on	July 2022
Responsible person	The President	Scheduled review date	July 2025