



“I’ve got a place” Indigenous Participation Strategies – Practice Insights

With application for the Australian
construction Industry

Consultation Project

Prepared by Strategy & Research, **yourtown**
2017

Overview

This report offers practice insights regarding strategies for increasing the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' (respectfully hereafter Indigenous) participation within the Australian construction industry. The primary focus is on metropolitan projects, but findings may be transferrable to other settings.

The purpose of this report is to share practice insights around what works, and what doesn't work for creating better pathways for Indigenous economic participation in the construction industry. This report will inform the future evaluation of the Parklands Project's Indigenous Participation Plan

A literature review of participation strategies that facilitates the engagement and transition of Indigenous people into employment within the construction industry was undertaken. Given the limited nature of research literature particularly in relation to the construction industry currently available it was decided that this review would be augmented by consultations with prominent practitioners, academics and policy influencers.

Eighteen people with significant Indigenous economic participation or social procurement experience from industry, government and academia were subsequently consulted for this report, participating in either a survey, interview, or both activities. Approximately 70% of our sample has experience of Australia's construction industry (See Appendix A for selection criteria) and approximately 44% percentage have Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. For ease of reference, we will refer to the people we consulted as contributors.

Contributors offered their perceptions of an Indigenous Participation Plan (IPP) which closely resembles Grocon's 2016-2017 Parklands Project IPP. This could be considered illustrative of the sorts of plans that may be currently used by Tier I construction companies on large development projects within Australia.

They also shared with us their experience of what they have seen work well, and what they know are factors that undermine the success of Indigenous participation.

This report is funded by Grocon's Parklands Project. We would like to thank the contributors to this project, who made this report possible. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and we hope that your insights can lead to improved workplace practices. Special thank you to:

Professor Marcia Langton, University of Melbourne
 Professor Jo Barraket, Swinburne University of Technology
 Professor Martin Loosemore, University of NSW
 Professor Sherif Mohamed, Griffith University
 David Higgon, Brookfield Multiplex
 Ricky Garbutt, DATSIP
 Duncan Kerslake, DATSIP
 Linda Biunaiwai, DATSIP
 Michael Limerick, MOU Coal and CSG Indigenous Participation Group
 Tony Sharpe, Substation YFS
 Seraphine Bray, CPB Contractors
 Mark Kucks, Hutchinson Builders
 Dean Patterson, Lendlease Group
 Matt Ralph, Origin Energy
 Bruce Fyfe, Construction Skills Queensland
 Matt O'Sullivan, GenerationOne
 Mark Daniels, Social Traders

A special thank you is also extended to the contributor who wished to remain anonymous.

The statements and opinions expressed in this report may not represent the opinions of all or any given contributor and does not imply their full endorsement of the content.

Executive Summary

Method

This report contains practice insights from 18 people with significant Indigenous economic participation or social procurement experience from industry, government and academia. Contributors were asked about (a) the characteristics they observe in organisations that are doing well in the Indigenous participation space, and conversely, (b) what they notice about organisations where their IPPs fail and (c) where across the lifespan of a construction project they typically see Indigenous participation.

Lastly, contributors offered their perception of an IPP which closely resembles Grocon's 2016-2017 Parklands Project IPP. This could be considered illustrative of the sorts of plans that may be currently used by Tier I construction companies on large development projects within Australia.

Findings

When reflecting upon what they notice about organisations that are doing well in the Indigenous participation space, contributors noticed that:

- They tend to be driven by intrinsic motivation
- They have strong leadership support and a supportive workplace culture
- They have a dedicated resource driving participation
- They make use of partnerships
- They have a connection to the local Indigenous community

When reflecting upon times when they have seen IPPs fail, contributors typically noted the converse of the success factors (e.g., tokenistic motivations, lack of consistent leadership support, etc). Other factors included risk aversion, use of ineffective strategies, lack of accountability, and lack of capacity building activities for Indigenous businesses and subcontractors.

In summary, most contributors who were asked to comment felt the IPP examined in this report represents 'best practice' or is "on the right track". Contributors' minds quickly turned to the implementation of the IPP, and some key suggestions for making the plan work include the following:

- De-bundle contracts so smaller Indigenous businesses may be able to meet the contract
- Pay Indigenous businesses on a shorter pay cycle given they are typically smaller businesses
- Make it easy for your sub-contractors to engage Indigenous businesses and hire Indigenous employees – either do the leg work for them by providing a list of appropriate businesses or absorb the risk yourself by taking on-board Indigenous employees and subleasing back to the subcontractor
- Invest in capacity building of Indigenous businesses
- Make the tendering process as painless as possible and support businesses through this process
- Consider the way in which sub-contractors are supported and held accountable for their IPP contractual requirements
- Consider placing IPP activities or targets in managers' performance reviews/ KPIs
- Assess how Indigenous recruitment strategies balance cultural appropriateness with fairness to all candidates

Conclusion

The key in moving forward now will be to further refine IPPs on the findings from this report, and then build an evidence base for how best to implement the strategies. In addition, there is the need to continue to engage in knowledge dissemination to co-create a greater place for Indigenous participation within the Australian construction industry.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Context | 5 |
| What works | 6 |
| Why IPPs fail | 7 |
| Indigenous participation across the construction value chain | 7 |
| IPP Practice insights | 10 |
| Community engagement | 11 |
| Committee | 12 |
| Schools/Universities | 13 |
| Training | 14 |
| Employment | 16 |
| Subcontracting | 18 |
| Procuring from Indigenous Businesses | 19 |
| Preparing the workforce | 21 |
| Evaluation | 23 |
| Overall perception of IPP | 24 |
| Take Home Messages and Conclusion..... | 25 |
| References..... | 26 |
| Appendix | 27 |

Context and Challenges to Indigenous Participation within the Construction Industry

At first glance the construction industry may seem incongruent with the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the challenges to increasing Indigenous participation may come all too readily to mind. The work can be cyclical, *“you could be working 12 hours a day, six days a week, and other times you have got nothing on”*. It also may require you to travel away from your home and community. Furthermore, projects are typically tightly budgeted and under time pressure, which is not conducive to flexible work practices and making space for cultural obligations. But perhaps a key incongruence is the paradigm of mainstream economy itself:

“As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we never took more than what we needed, but that’s not white fella way. White fella way is to take all you can...we didn’t go out and shoot, or hunt 20 kangaroos and kill them and then leave them hanging around in the trees so we’ve got a feed; we went every day and hunted and gathered and collected food...[we] only took what we needed”.

Similarly, the motivation of those in the construction industry to take on board Indigenous participation initiatives has been questioned - *“Construction companies are money making machines - they wouldn’t be engaging in Indigenous businesses unless they had to”*.

However, through talking with our contributors, it is clear that there is a call and growing interest for the construction industry to think about the legacy of their work and how they impact the community:

“Construction projects come and go but communities stay. How does the construction industry engage more effectively with the communities in which it builds and how does it ensure its projects...leave a positive legacy for future generations?” (Loosemore & Higgon, 2016: pxiii).

An alternate narrative to this perceived incompatibility of cultures is seen through the eyes of an Aboriginal person who identifies the common rhythms between the construction and Indigenous Australian cultures that are apparent to them. Through their lens, employment for young Indigenous Australians in construction is seen as a chance to strengthen a positive cultural identity, and foster self-determination and self-esteem. In essence, it provides “a place”:

“The construction industry is hugely male dominated.... We have more females coming into non-traditional roles and that sort of stuff, but at the end of the day it’s still hugely male dominated. Now, the construction industry has been around forever and it has developed its own culture, its own way of doing things, its own protocols.

There’s a process for people. You come in as a ‘wet behind the ears’ young person and do an apprenticeship who virtually goes into a trade; that tradie spends his time, eventually goes into a more supervisory role... So there’s a process and there’s a culture... it’s not documented and it’s not really spoken about. It is the way things are. Now, when it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture, it’s the same thing.... there’s stuff that’s just unsaid, not really spoken about, but it’s just stuff that you learn through life.... I learnt when it was appropriate to speak in front of my elders and I learnt when it was time to shut up and listen at the same time.

Now, when you bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into a construction culture, as they start to pick it up, it becomes very natural. It becomes very natural for them to pick up because they’re already part of a culture, they have the unwritten rules thing and they have that sort of element to it.....for tens of thousands of years young Aboriginal men have gone through a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood...

What I tend to find when I have young men who have grown up in households where they might not even know their dads and their dads certainly aren’t around, when their uncles and older cousins or whatever are incarcerated and they don’t have daily and general access to someone who should be showing them the way, then they kind of make it up for themselves....Now you’ve got a young indigenous person growing up in their community, everybody’s telling them that ‘you’re probably going to have a bad education, you’re probably going to be poor, you’re probably going to go to gaol, you’ll probably steal stuff’, so that whole poverty aspect to it, that’s

what Aboriginal identity tends to be and what we find with our young, particularly young Aboriginal men and certain some of our girls as well, is coming into a construction environment and a construction culture for the first time is almost like a rite of passage because they're surrounded by other men and they're appreciated, not because they're black or because they didn't steal anything or stuff like that, they're appreciated because they just did a bloody good job and that's all anyone cares about. Show up every day, do a good job and when someone appreciates you for doing that, then that puts a bit of air in your chest. You become that little bit taller and I see it, I see it every day where we have young guys who are coming through... they've got their hood over their heads, they've got their earphones in, they've got heads down... The next time you see them they seem to be a foot taller....[I can see] the two cultures sort of coming together and mixing".

Researcher: It sounds like an avenue for them to become fully present in their lives and build an identity that is healthy for them and to feel that sense of 'I'm contributing, I've got skills and I'm appreciated and valuable"

"I've got a place. I've got a place and I'm respected for it".

The current project aims to find the avenues and strategies that those in the construction industry can consider to positively increase the place and legacy for Indigenous Australian people.

What works well?

Contributors who participated in an interview for this project were asked about what they have seen work well for increasing Indigenous economic participation. There were some very clear themes regarding their observations:

1. Companies that are driven by intrinsic motivation: *"It needs to be real"*

The most consistent theme that emerged from the consultations in this project was the importance of having *intrinsic motivation* (i.e., a genuine motive to improve Indigenous wellbeing) compare to (or in conjunction with) *extrinsic motivation* (i.e., desire to improve public image or win tenders etc.). Construction companies named by contributors as engaging in best practice or leading the way in Indigenous economic participation were noted for having leadership that is *"genuinely community minded and wants to do the best that they can"*. One of the risks of coming from a position of strong extrinsic motivation is that it may lead to tokenistic interventions which are short-term or unsustainable and which could actually do more harm than good, e.g., *"If you give someone an opportunity they are going to fail at then it's going to be counter-productive"*.

2. Leadership support and a 'culturally safe' workplace

From senior management to the supervisor on the ground, contributors noted that where they've seen Indigenous participation work well is where there has been strong and consistent leadership support for Indigenous participation agendas. Leadership support was seen as hand-in-hand for creating a workplace culture that was culturally competent, safe, and supportive for Indigenous peoples. It was also noted that Indigenous participation activities need to become culturally integrated into business, i.e., *"It needs to just become part of the supply chain thinking at the organisation"*.

3. Having a dedicated resource within the organisation driving Indigenous participation.

Contributors agreed, driving Indigenous participation cannot be someone's 'spare time' job. It needs to be the right person and ideally someone who either has authority or is connected to authority within the organisation. Furthermore, the Indigenous participation activities need to be adequately resourced. It was further noted that this person who is driving Indigenous business needs support the self-efficacy of those in the organisation to be able to achieve Indigenous participation, such that, for example, people feel confident talking to Indigenous Businesses.

4. Making use of partnerships: *"No one organisation has all the answers"*

Contributors observed that organisations that are doing well in the Indigenous participation space are those that collaborate and partner with organisations, agencies, consultants and/or academics with Indigenous participation experience and connection to local Indigenous communities.

5. Having a connection to community

Lastly, the value of building genuine relationships with the local Indigenous community was noted: *"Seek the advice and council from Indigenous people"*. It was also noted that there needs to be *"actions beyond consultation with local Aboriginal communities; (they should be involved in advising on strategy design and implementation, and implementation should be linked to community where culturally/geographically relevant)"*.

For what reasons have you seen Indigenous Participation Plans fail?

Contributors who participated in an interview were also asked to share their perceptions of the factors that have undermined the success of Indigenous participation plans. Most factors identified were the converse of the drivers for success just mentioned, including:

- Tokenistic or extrinsic motivations: *"They'll do what they have to then they'll stop"*; *"Lip service to contractual obligations"*; *"It's just 'black cladding'; they don't deal honestly and are deceptive about sharing the profits"*.
- Lack of consistent leadership support: *"Senior leaders may say it, but the project manager may have other concerns which is apparent through their behaviour [on budget, on time]"*
- No one or the wrong person driving it: *"There are some people out to make a quick buck who raise expectations of success and then don't deliver, and then organisations are left thinking 'We tried that before and it didn't work'"*.
- Lack of connection to Indigenous community, e.g., using mainstream recruitment methods: *"It's important to have access to the local Indigenous community grapevine and make yourself known"*
- Ineffective strategies (e.g., work task-based mentoring without pastoral care mentoring)
- Lack of accountability *"If no one is asking the question then you don't have to give the answer"*
- Risk aversion or not wanting to step away from *"cosy supply chains"*
- Lack of capacity building or support for Indigenous businesses and subcontractors: *"Has anyone measured how difficult this is for sub-contractors to meet such [IPP] targets in the construction industry?"*

Where is Indigenous Participation typically occurring across a Construction Project?

A value chain representing the primary activities, supporting activities and major stakeholders that would be involved in a large construction project was developed in order to investigate where Indigenous participation is typically occurring.

Contributors who participated in an interview with a construction background perused the value chain (Figure 1) and were asked where they typically see Indigenous participation occurring. In addition, contributors were asked if they can identify any gaps that could be targeted. Contributors were also asked about how construction organisations could address any barriers to increasing participation in these areas.

Contributors agreed that Indigenous participation is typically not observed in the early stages, and may start to feature in the 'earthworks' or 'building works' activities. Contributors felt that people think about Indigenous participation too late and need to be thinking about it earlier. For example, at the earliest possible stage, subcontractors need to be aware that there are Indigenous participation requirements, otherwise what you will hear is: *"Look, we've already got our workforce, we might be able to take a guy if you've got someone who's qualified as a bricklayer but that means I've got to let one of my blokes go"*.

"A lot of the supply stuff, steel, concrete, tiles, all that sort of stuff, a lot of that happens even before the subbies get on board but no-one seems to think about hitting up the suppliers. We do....even when we're back at tender... we're talking to them about, 'Here's the job, here's the specs, come back with your best price", and...'By the way there's an indigenous participation element on this project, we'd like to know how you can contribute to that'"

Contributors clearly saw an opportunity for more Indigenous participation in the primary activity 'subcontractor procurement': *"[There] has to be an agreement for every subcontractor that goes through the procurement process to look at Indigenous employment, and it needs to be a question that is asked as part of the process"*.

It was also suggested that Indigenous participation can occur in (or even before) the 'tender' and 'design development' phase through accessing the use of consultants: *"[Indigenous participation is] absent from consultants role early on, even before head contractor comes on board...[Indigenous businesses can assist] getting the project to the point where it can be tendered... There's no reason why...Indigenous companies can't contribute there either."*

Although contributors typically acknowledged that Indigenous participation may be occurring in the 'earth works' phase, one contributor felt that there may be an even greater opportunity to increase participation at this point for entry level employees who may come through a VTEC or other employment readiness service. This contributor noted that Indigenous employees have been observed to have exceptional manual dexterity abilities which have led to a reputation for quality work in earthworks roles in the resources sector.

In conceptualising where involvement of Indigenous businesses tends to occur, one contributor noted that at this stage, participation tends to be in peripheral or 'non-critical' roles due to the perception that Indigenous businesses are 'risky':

"You'll probably find that indigenous businesses are operating in areas like landscaping, finishing, cleaning, security, the soft small package areas. The low risk. Anything that's high risk on the critical path you won't find any indigenous businesses there because they're high risk. But, anything on the critical path I would say you would very, very unlikely be able to break into that".

Researcher: Why is that?

"Well, because the critical path is the path that if one thing goes wrong on the critical path the whole project goes. So, they're not going to put a high risk business in there. What you've got to do is de-risk indigenous enterprises. That's the objective. It's only when you de-risk it that you actually break into the industry. And, at the present moment indigenous businesses are risky. Any social enterprise as well. It's not just indigenous business".

Advice for using the Value Chain diagram.

Many contributors felt it would be useful to make use of the value chain diagram in relation to an organisation's IPP:

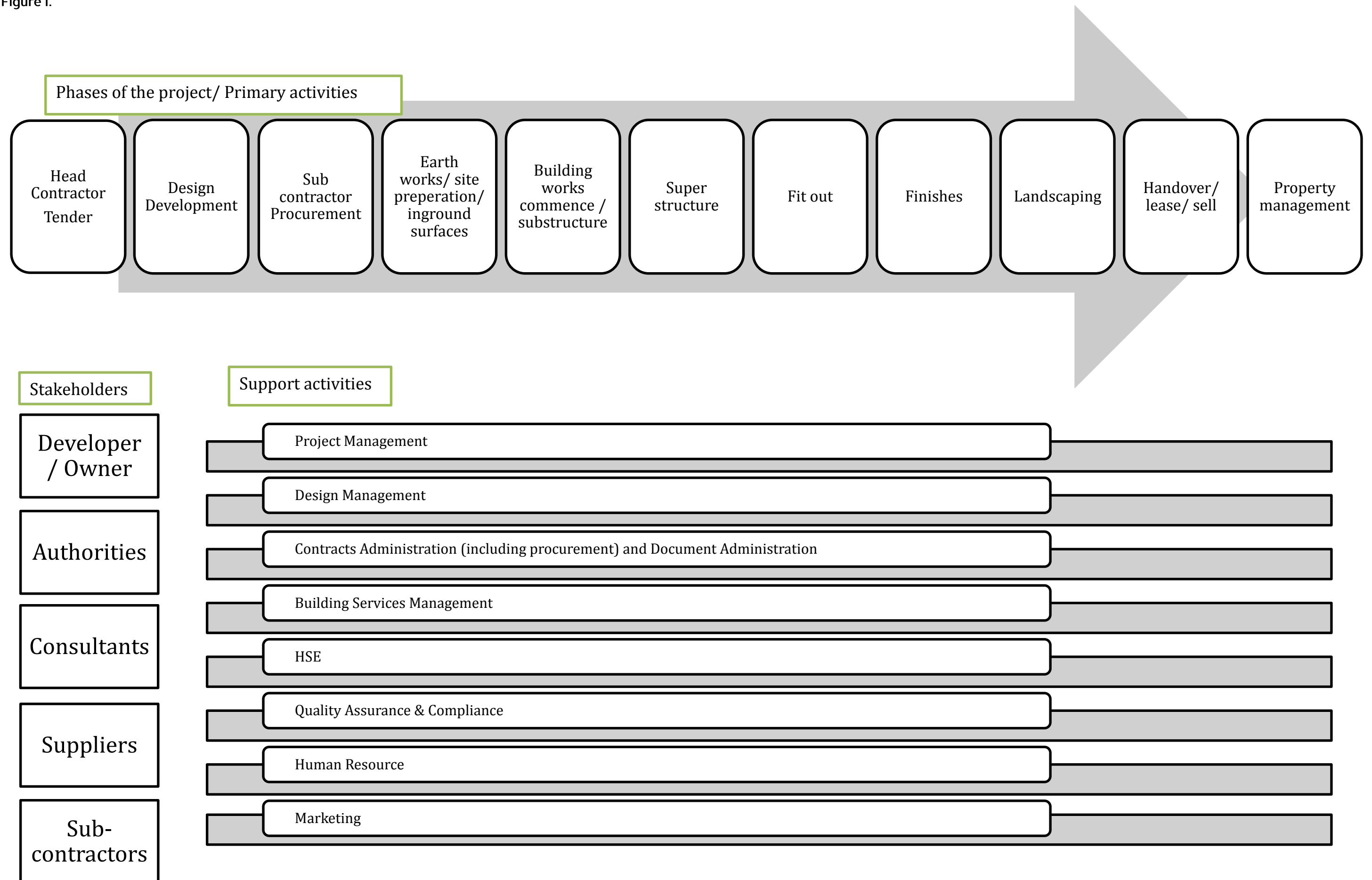
"Within all the activities, ask how are we embedding the IPP and making it accountable?"

"Do a map of all the indigenous businesses. Look at what they do and map it against those first".

"Look at the local Indigenous businesses, where would they actually fit along this".

However, one contributor noted that there may not be much that any one organisation can do to increase Indigenous participation across the value chain, explaining that it comes down to access: *"If I don't have access to Indigenous businesses in 'fit out' phase then it just won't happen"*, suggesting that there may not be a role for the organisation to stimulate the fulfilment of this gap.

Figure 1.



Indigenous Participation Plan Practice Insights

The following segment of this report breaks down each section of an IPP that closely resembles that which is being used on the Grocon Parklands Project (2016-2017). This IPP template could be considered illustrative of the sorts of plans that may be currently used by Tier I construction companies on large development projects within Australia. The following segment summarises what contributors had to say in relation to these strategies and their overall perception of the IPP that is being used.

There are 25 strategies covering 9 sections:

1. Community engagement
2. Committee
3. Schools/ Universities
4. Training
5. Employment
6. Sub-contracting
7. Procurement from Indigenous Businesses
8. Preparing the workforce
9. Evaluation

Section I: Community engagement

Parklands Project's community engagement strategies:

1. Identify and consult with local Indigenous community stakeholders
2. Develop an internal communication strategy to ensure all organisational employees are aware of our commitment to increasing Indigenous participation on the project
3. Build relationships with local indigenous community in order to celebrate Indigenous cultural events

What contributors said:

Community engagement was noted in the consultations as an “essential cornerstone” of Indigenous economic participation. Contributors noted the importance of building genuine relationships with community that engage their expertise, and ask “*what they want, without making assumptions*”.

It was also put forward that engagement with an Indigenous community should aim to be long term and sustainable, in order to build real trust. Trust within the local community is seen as essential for the success of an Indigenous participation plan.

Literature:

In terms of available literature on community engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Rio Tinto's “Why Agreements Matter” offers a comprehensive overview and may be a useful resource to the construction industry. They note that engagement means “*the active exchange of information, listening to each party's concerns, suggestions and aspirations, and taking them into account...Engagement is more than communication and consultation; it's the active consideration of other perspectives.*” (p.36). Rio Tinto require all projects to have an engagement plan, thus avoiding a ‘piece-meal’ approach.

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of Parklands Project's community engagement strategies, contributors offered several pieces of advice:

- Start engagement early on in the project
- Adopt a collaborative mindset
- Have an Indigenous staff member involved with community engagement and make sure this is not tokenistic - “*I can't emphasize enough how much I feel it is important to be guided and have this done by an Indigenous person. Only they can understand the protocols and read the situation on what is appropriate and what is not. Also if you are spruiking that you support Indigenous engagement and participation, then the question will get asked, 'Where are your Indigenous people then?'*”
- Use partnerships to help you with engagement if unsure: “*Businesses might not know how to do this [community engagement], that's where a VTEC can help*”.

Suggested Improvements:

In terms of suggested improvements to these community engagement strategies, suggestions included:

- Acknowledge the expertise and needs of the community: “*Until the expertise and requirements of local Aboriginal communities are recognised as indivisible from effective strategy, it will not be comprehensive*”
- Use engagement as a chance to build understanding and cultural competence within your organisation: “*Strategy 3, not just to celebrate cultural events but to develop understanding of culture and issues*”.

Lastly, although not mentioned in the consultations, in light of the key finding of this research (the importance of *intrinsic motivation*), Strategy 2 may benefit from revision. The purpose of internal engagement should not be just to make staff ‘aware’, but to take actions that foster the attitudes, values, and beliefs that are necessary for creating a culturally competent and culturally safe workplace [See Section 4 and Section 8 for further discussion].

Section 2: Committee

Parklands Project's committee strategies:

4. Establish IPP Liaison Committee and meet quarterly

What contributors said:

Seeking the guidance and input of local community elders and relevant, experienced industry practitioners with expertise in Indigenous participation who hold links to the local community was acknowledged as a valuable strategy by a number of contributors. A liaison committee cannot be tokenistic and collaboration over consultation may be preferred. One contributor noted that there need to be *"actions beyond consultation with local Aboriginal communities, (they should be involved in advising on strategy design and implementation, and implementation should be linked to community where culturally/geographically relevant)"*.

In addition to this, it was noted that the IPP Liaison Committee *"must have business leaders and decision makers"*. Throughout the consultations, it was noted that actions cannot be tokenistic and that the people driving the IPP plan internally to the organisation must be in positions of leadership and/or be linked to organisational decision makers. This is considered essential for creating the right internal organisational culture and for making it possible for the IPP to be a top priority for the organisation.

Literature:

Although there appears to be no direct literature available on the factors that facilitate effective IPP Liaison Committees, there is related literature (typically from the resource sector) recommending the use of reference groups or local committees (e.g., Barclay et al., 2014) which is applicable. This literature notes the importance of involving local Indigenous representatives as well as organisational staff, and that these committees are considered a useful way to keep track of organisational activities, highlight upcoming requirements, and link to external resources, therefore supporting the inclusion of this strategy in the Parklands Project IPP.

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of this strategy, the following may be useful:

- Establish the committee early and use their expertise to help design the IPP
- Spend time achieving clarity on the role and responsibilities of the committee
- Collaboratively estimate the workload and try to anticipate the commitment that is required. Remuneration or reimbursement costs may be required.

Suggested Improvements:

In terms of suggested improvements to these community engagement strategies, one contributor felt that quarterly meetings may be too infrequent for what may be required.

Section 3: Schools/Universities

Parklands Project's schools/universities strategies:

5. Build relationships with student bodies and liaise with universities to scope, develop and implement an Indigenous internship, scholarship, secondment program, cadetships and work experience etc.

What contributors said:

Taking action to expand the existing Indigenous labour pool was noted as an important activity. The majority of contributors agreed that the same criticism levelled at the resources sector is relevant for the construction industry – it tends to employ those who are already job experienced, in preference to expanding the Indigenous labour pool. The majority of contributors also agreed that most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples employed in the construction industry are in entry level positions (such as labourers) and experience limited career development opportunities. Therefore, Strategy 5 (in part) aims to address these trends and may help to make actual inroads into not only increasing Indigenous participation, but getting more Indigenous workers into specialised positions through bridging the pathway between education institutions and employment.

One contributor noted that there are 94-95 thousand Indigenous job seekers registered with Centrelink, many of whom are stream B or C meaning that a vacancy 'now' is not accessible for them. Utilisation of pre-employment programs and planning ahead is required.

Literature:

Barclay et al. (2014) guide for good practice for Indigenous participation emphasises the importance of strategies that make sustainable contributions to increasing Indigenous economic participation. Strategy 5 therefore aligns with the sentiments of the available literature by addressing these sustainability goals.

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of this strategy, the following may be useful:

- Make use of culturally appropriate recruitment strategies to identify candidates
- Integrate the key principles of or make use of readiness for work programs if required (holistic approaches are considered best practice. Myuma and GCSC were noted by some contributors as incorporating best practice).
- As with all programs, success may not come straight away and investment may need to be long term (See Section 9 for more detail)
- Remember that the Indigenous candidate may still benefit from the same cultural supports accessible to other Indigenous employees (readiness for work, mentoring, etc.).

Suggested Improvements:

Rather than relying upon the University to supply the Indigenous candidate, organisations could look into finding ways to increase Indigenous attendance at University, such as through accessing their existing Indigenous labour pool or the clients of partnering organisations and co-creating pathways for candidates to achieve relevant university education. Given that this may be a long term process, this strategy may need to be independent of any one project but sit across the organisation's projects and activities.

Section 4: Training

Parklands Project's training strategies:

6. Set targets for Indigenous training and implement strategies for meeting those targets
7. Identify training opportunities in consultation with DATSIMA, Construction Skills QLD, RTO's, subcontractors and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and agencies
8. Implement employment and training programs in partnership with local education and training organisations
9. Select staff from organisation and select staff from subcontracting companies will attend a 2 day cultural awareness training workshop delivered by an Indigenous business
10. Implement employment and training programs in partnership with local education and training organisations including "white card" course for 6 Indigenous job seekers (paid for by organisation) and paraprofession/supervision training for 2 Indigenous employees.

What contributors said:

As with most of the categories addressed in Grocon's IPP, contributors saw training as a non-negotiable option. It was noted that it is essential to work with local training organisations that are Indigenous or have strong connections with the Indigenous community. Also, that the use of culturally appropriate selection processes to choose candidates likely to succeed is also important (for example, involving family members in the interviews to ensure they are supportive of the candidate's work aspirations).

It was noted that *"firm and public targets do seem to drive behaviour (although they can also lead to 'gaming' the system in order to demonstrate compliance)"*, therefore suggesting that targets are useful, but cannot be implemented in isolation. Furthermore, approximately half of those contributors who completed the survey agreed that currently in the construction industry there can be a bit of a 'tick and flick' mentality to Indigenous training which is likely to be linked to unrealistic targets or a lack of quality monitoring. As illustrated by one contributor: *"Setting targets usually results in organisations setting targets that are unachievable because they often don't understand the challenges in Indigenous training and employment at the outset"*. Similarly it was noted that: *"training requirements should be aligned with work needs, and not just to be seen implementing the strategy"*.

Literature:

The importance of cultural competency training appears well established in the literature. A study at Rio Tinto Iron Ore Australia (cited in Barclay et al., 2014) found that most trainees felt the training led to a better work environment, and increased capacity for working with Aboriginal people. Of particular value, the majority of trainees also reported that the training stimulated them to think about their own culture and behaviour, potentially reducing prejudice.

Barclay et al. (2014) propose that it is valuable for all employees to receive general cultural awareness training and for those in roles that liaise specifically with Indigenous employees and business to receive more in-depth training. They report that businesses that do this have better Indigenous recruitment and retention outcomes.

In addition, Barclay et al. (2014) suggest that cultural awareness training schedules should include re-fresher training which incorporate new material, training for supervisors, and that training outcomes need to be evaluated.

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of this strategy, the following may be useful:

- 'Implement strategies' is a generic and broad term that will need to be underpinned by a lot of clarity and expertise; intra-organisational knowledge sharing may be required – *"Most organisations don't even know where to start with such a broad statement' or what type of 'strategy' to plan, let alone even 'how' to do it"*.

- There was agreement amongst those contributors who completed the survey that organisations need to allow for training to be during work hours, unless it is a 'once off' occasion.
- It is important to choose providers who use a culturally appropriate learning methodology- E.g., self-directed online learning is not recommended (which is a popular method in white card training).
- While some contributors saw the value in providing *all* staff cultural awareness training, others did not feel this was necessary if there are key people within the organisation driving a culturally supportive workplace.

Suggested Improvements:

In terms of suggested improvements to these community engagement strategies, some contributors noted that Strategy 9 may need to specify that it is cultural *competency* training and not simply cultural heritage training or general cultural awareness (such as historical facts about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures). Further to this, it may be necessary to perform a Training Needs Analysis to determine the training needs of the organisation – for example, will the training need to challenge attitudes and beliefs to help foster a supportive culturally safe organisation? In addition, one contributor noted that additional specific 'supportive supervision' training may be required for supervisors of Indigenous employees.

Section 5: Employment

Parklands Project's employment strategies:

11. Minimum of 5% Indigenous employment for this project
12. Committee to determine deemed labour hour requirements against 10% Training Policy and allocate a suitable percentage for Indigenous workforce.
13. Develop and implement Indigenous recruitment strategy
14. Develop and implement an Indigenous retention strategy policy including on-site mentoring program
15. Collect from Group Training Organisations and Sub Contracting Companies a list of Indigenous apprentices, trainees and job seekers
16. Investigate the employment of any out of trade Indigenous apprentices by either head contractor or subcontractors

What contributors said:

The strategy that generated the most amount of discussion was the 5% employment target. There was some discussion around how achievable a 5% target may be, that having a reward/risk incentive may encourage stronger commitment, or the potential value in alternately setting a minimum target. Although one contributor doubted the value of having a target at all, most contributors noted that targets drive behaviour, acknowledging however, that the target needs to be *achievable*:

"I think setting set targets like 5% is too high. It needs to be achievable particularly for organisations very new to the space. With no research on the level of qualifications of people who actually have the right qualifications to work in construction in the first place, this can be problematic. i.e. Organisations attempt to recruit and realise there are very few Aboriginal people with the right qualifications and skills already prepared and able to work in a particular industry. I've seen this happen with corporate organisations in very specific fields. They announce big targets then realise that there are virtually no qualified Aboriginal people in the field who are qualified to meet the target and timeline. Then often the training takes years anyway! It puts people off. The research into the size of Aboriginal populations in the community where the organisation is working needs to be done and knowledge developed of the numbers of people versus the types of jobs on offer and the skills required. Not everyone is going to be capable of undertaking qualifications and not everyone who is unemployed may want to work in the sector i.e. taking a job for the job's sake just because it's available. I.e. fitting the unemployed person into a job because it's there rather than fitting the person into the job or career they are interested in".

Amongst this category of strategies, mentoring was noted as an *"absolutely imperative"*. One contributor noted that *"We have an in-house Indigenous mentoring program and our retention rate sits above 90%. New employees and their supervisors need to feel supported and know someone is there while they establish their working relationship. The level of support tapers off as capacity is built"*.

Although there were some who disagreed and felt that non-Indigenous mentors who have cultural competence can be an effective mentor, the majority of contributors who completed the survey tended to feel that it was best practice that mentors employed for Indigenous employees be also Indigenous and the same gender as those they are mentoring. It was noted that technical mentors need not be Indigenous but pastoral care mentors should ideally be Indigenous. Additional comments noted that *"mentorees should choose the mentor that best suits them"* and that *"it is ideal to have mentors of different genders but this may not be possible if a company can only afford one position"*. The value of having mentor-like relationships with non-Indigenous staff was also emphasised: *"Role models are important but so are non-indigenous mentors since they hold the power and can best help Indigenous people get on in the industry"*.

Similarly, approximately 60% per cent of those who completed the survey agreed that it is desirable for a mentor to be contactable 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, as the majority of problems arising for Indigenous employees happen outside of work hours. It was noted that *"home and family issues seem to be the most significant factors in whether an Indigenous employee is retained in work"*. However, there were some contributors who disagreed: *"If this is the case, you won't have many willing mentors"* and *"hard to*

implement! Unrealistic". The importance of working from a self-determination and empowerment framework with mentoring was also highlighted: *"It's also imperative that the mentor is providing the skills and capacity along the way for the mentoree to start dealing with issues and barriers for themselves - eventually standing on their own two feet"*.

Literature:

Barclay et al. (2014) underscore the importance of using culturally appropriate recruitment and selection practices and offers suggestions for what may be appropriate strategies. Congruent with the comments of our contributors, they also emphasise the importance of setting realistic employment targets, based on research of the available local Indigenous labour pool. This best practice guide also provides advice on using pre-employment programs to target non work-ready Indigenous youth.

Bainbridge et al (2014) in their review of the quantity, quality and characteristics of Australian Indigenous mentoring literature note that the most important elements of mentoring success appear to be:

- Duration (length of relationship)
- Intensity (frequency of contact)
- Extent of integration with other services
- Match with target group
- Focus on approaches (formal or informal and cultural appropriateness)
- Sustainable funding arrangements
- Community buy-in

Bainbridge and colleagues (2014) and CSRM (2010) also echo many of the points raised by contributors to this project, such as the need for mentoring to foster self-determination (rather than dependency) and to involve pastoral care and a holistic approach. To add to the comments of our contributors, Sánchez et al. et al. (2014) report that the practice of matching on race, and gender should not be expected to be a robust predictor of relationship quality: *"Looking beyond race/ethnicity and at the cultural nuances and processes taking place in the relationships might be more important for understanding effective youth mentoring"* (p.147).

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of this strategy, the following may be useful:

- Recruitment strategy will need to draw upon practice insights into what is culturally appropriate. In addition, contributors underscored the importance of using local Indigenous communities and agencies to connect with potential employees. It was noted that: *"It will be important to identify and counter the barriers to Indigenous people in the company's usual recruitment processes (e.g. jargonistic descriptions of jobs in advertisements, requirement for online application only, psychometric tests that are culturally alien to Indigenous applicants etc)"*.
- However, another contributor pointed out that these strategies must be very well thought through so as not to create perceptions of inequity or division: *"I want to create pathways for my mob but I don't want anyone to say 'You only got that job because you're Aboriginal or 'You only got the job because you got the black fella program'"* – [They need to be able to say] *"I took the same exam as you!"*. An example of how this might work in practice is to provide a pre-employment program which builds capacity for Indigenous employees. In addition, rather than use a rank order for accepting candidates on an entry exam, make use of a minimum cut-off score.
- It was also noted that it is important to have adequate planning and a strong collaborative relationship with your employment partners: *"[Where I have seen organisations fail is when there is] a lack of planning with recruitment – they use service providers like a recruitment agency rather than longer term collaboration. For stream B&C, a vacancy 'now' is not relevant, they are not ready 'now'. If an employer just treats it like a recruitment service then we're not going to break through those 3/4 quarters of Indigenous job seekers. They need to see them as more of a 'partner' than a 'provider'"*.

Suggested Improvements:

Contributors offered the following suggestions to consider:

- Use a minimum target
- Consider having a reward/risk incentive

Section 6: Subcontracting

Parklands Project's subcontracting strategies:

17. Include Organisation's expectations concerning Indigenous employment opportunities and targets into all contractual agreements with contractors.

18. IPP Liaison Committee to provide subcontractors and other providers with advice and support that maximises Indigenous participation and retention

What contributors said:

Contributors saw that an agreement of activities and targets between Head and Subcontractors as a crucial ingredient in a successful IPP. Further to this, the majority of contributors agreed that in reality there needs to be ramifications for companies (including subcontractors) who do not comply with Indigenous economic participation plans in order to motivate them to comply. For example, *"Most companies will avoid this unless they have to do it and are monitored"* and *"What's the point otherwise? The community already thinks the whole system is flawed and most of the industry thinks it's a joke. Until someone is held accountable for their actions (or lack of) nobody is taking it seriously"*. Suggested ramifications included financial penalties or loss of future contracts. However, a minority cautioned that this was the wrong approach, and that *"you can achieve little with compliance enforcement"*, suggesting that this methodology may encourage short-cuts or poor quality of intervention.

What was *unanimously* seen as essential by all of those contributors interviewed was the role of supporting and building the capacity of subcontractors to take on board IPP strategies: *"You need to make it easy for your subbies"*. One example of 'making it easy' is to absorb the risk and responsibility of hiring Indigenous employees (see implementation). Responses from the majority of contributors who completed the survey suggested that Australian organisations do not do a good job of creating intrinsic commitment for their subcontractors to take on board Indigenous economic participation commitments, suggesting this could be a potential additional strategy.

It was also noted that there could be incentives for achieving targets, so the use of rewards as well as, or instead of punishment should be considered, although one contributor noted that international research has shown that incentives can also lead to dishonest behaviour.

Literature:

The importance of establishing contractual requirements with subcontracts and supporting subcontractors to achieve IPP strategies is highlighted in the literature. For example, Barclay et al. (2014) provides a set of recommendations for working with subcontractors (p.12) and emphasises that Tier I companies need to take the lead. Relevant to the comments from our contributors, this guide suggests considering *"escalating performance payments for escalating success"* (p.12).

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of these strategies, the following may be useful:

- An example from one construction company was provided wherein they utilised a group training organisation to hire Indigenous employees, taking on board the responsibility (e.g., training) and risk themselves as head contractor – these Indigenous employees worked for the subcontractors and their labour was back-charged to the subcontractors. The subcontractors had a positive experience working with the Indigenous employees, and in future projects felt more confident to directly employ Indigenous workers.
- Work collaboratively with subcontractors and allow them to choose how they can contribute to the IPP – [Rather than be prescriptive], outline that *"this job has an IP component, please have a think how you can contribute towards that"*. Provide subcontractors with options of what they could do and how you can support them but, let them choose what would work for them, thus helping to foster ownership of the intervention.

Suggested Improvements:

- Consider ramifications or incentives which may motivate and hold subcontracts to account
- Support may be provided by sources other than the IPP Liaison Committee (such as HSE or HR).

Section 7: Procuring from Indigenous Businesses

Parklands Project's procuring from Indigenous businesses strategies:

19. Develop joint ventures and consortia that involve Organisation and Indigenous small to medium enterprises
20. Offer business mentoring, training support and skills development for Indigenous small to medium enterprises
21. Establish partnerships and provide a forum that identifies and provides access to local Indigenous businesses to learn about project and opportunities

What contributors said:

Contributors consistently underscored the importance of increasing the capacity of Indigenous businesses, with some proposing this is the key to creating real shifts in Indigenous participation. Many contributors noted that most Indigenous businesses do not have the capability to work on larger projects: *"Many of the Indigenous businesses have worked successfully in residential areas but lack the knowledge to move to work with major contracting companies in terms of prequalification, management systems, etc."*

Some contributors agreed that joint ventures may help increase Indigenous business capacity which could offer stability and support smaller Indigenous businesses. However, caveats also quickly came to mind, *"...you don't want JVs where indigenous owners are in tokenistic roles. There is potential for a power imbalance between a corporate and an IB"*. It was noted that there needs to be intrinsic motivation present in forming a joint venture and strict definitions of what defines an Indigenous business, otherwise relationships could become ineffective or tokenistic. In addition, one contributor questioned that *"it is not clear why the Organisation would develop joint ventures with Indigenous businesses. Should this be encourage subcontractors to seek Indigenous joint venture partners for work on the project?"*

An interesting point was raised by one contributor regarding the competitive landscape Indigenous businesses have been positioned to operate within: *"The government has created monetary value on being Indigenous... it's not a sustainable way of building the capacity of the Indigenous businesses - they need to compete and they can't at the moment. [We need to] make these organisations sustainable and competitive - so they are not competing on their 'Aboriginality' as this is a vulnerable position to be in from a business perspective"*. This need to be competitive was noted by other contributors who reported that in reality, decisions to award tenders in the construction industry are still based on cost rather than social impact. Similarly, one contributor noted that although their research shows that intrinsic motivation amongst senior organisational leaders is a factor in social procurement from Indigenous businesses and enterprises, commercial concerns are the primary driver of activity.

Literature:

Research underscores the value of procuring from Indigenous businesses, identifying that an Indigenous business is around 100 times more likely to employ an Indigenous Australian than non-Indigenous businesses (Hunter, 2014), therefore illustrating the potential to increase Indigenous participation. Concerning guidance on how the construction industry can engage with Indigenous businesses, the work of Loosemore and Higgon (2016) is relevant; these authors review latest research into social enterprise and present guidance for how construction business can engage effectively with social enterprises.

Research (Loosemore & Denny-Smith, 2016) also highlights the challenges that Indigenous businesses face operating within the Australian construction industry which may provide insights into how these businesses can be supported.

Barriers identified through a large survey of Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses include:

- Adjusting to industry's unique practices and cultures
- Ability to break into industry networks
- Being undercut by industry competitors
- Negotiating with suppliers

Unique barriers to Indigenous construction businesses included:

- Accessing finance to start their business (may reflect the risk associated with construction)
- Accessing government support (surprising – may mean that new policies are yet to gain “real traction on the ground”)
- Competitive nature of the industry
- Industry focus on low prices – Aboriginal businesses may not be competitive on price as many are still in start-up stage
- Awareness of Indigenous enterprises/social enterprises
- Cost of entry
- Demanding clients
- Existing supply chains
- Difficulty tendering for large work projects (break them down into smaller packages)

The identification of these barriers would suggest several possible interventions. For example, assistance/capacity building to “...*understanding of industry regulations and protocols and the resources to be able to comply with them is clearly important to securing work in the construction industry*” (Loosemore & Denny-Smith, 2016, p.672). In addition, the researchers suggest: “*Start-up assistance to build their business in the form of finance, knowledge about how the construction industry works, early resourcing to overcome high costs of entry and opportunities to compete on a level playing field with industry incumbents*” (p.673). Similarly, dividing work into smaller packages that can be taken on by micro-small businesses may be an additional useful strategy.

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of this strategy, the following may be useful:

- Implement 14 day payment cycles for micro-small Indigenous businesses who may not have large cash reserves
- Divide tender packages into smaller packages that could be managed by a micro-small Indigenous business
- Mentor Aboriginal businesses and provide them with preferred supplier status

Suggested Improvements:

Contributors made the following suggestions including:

- Strategy 19 to include micro businesses
- Strategy 21 – one contributor felt this strategy could sit with Supply Nation rather than the organisation
- Include social clauses in contracts to require subcontractors to employ Indigenous Businesses in their supply chain (and support the subcontractors to identify appropriate businesses)
- Include a minimum target for the amount of procurement from Indigenous businesses for the project

Section 8: Preparing the workforce

Parklands Project's preparing the workforce strategies:

22. Develop and implement an internal communication strategy so all employees are aware of our commitment to increasing Indigenous participation
23. Design or customise an induction package
24. Celebration activity during NAIDOC Week – including catering from an Indigenous catering company

What contributors said:

Many contributors noted that the success of an Indigenous participation plan is dependent upon creating a *“receiving environment that is culturally safe and culturally competent”*. That is, a workplace that is genuinely supportive of Indigenous participation initiatives, and where this is *“embedded”* in all that they do. It was further noted that the most successful organisations in the Indigenous participation space are those that have an identity as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The importance of senior leadership support for an Indigenous participation agenda was a strong theme throughout the consultations. Similarly, all contributors who completed the survey agreed/strongly agreed that one of the most successful strategies for Indigenous economic participation is to have an executive leadership team publicly committed to improving Indigenous economic outcomes and in providing adequate financial and human resources to back this commitment.

Contributors often talked about the need for an organisation to have someone driving the Indigenous participation plan. Furthermore, this person cannot be isolated or disconnected from the power structure of the organisation: *“Authority needs to be attached to the driver”*.

As noted in Section I, a communication strategy that simply creates awareness of a commitment to an IPP may not be enough. It may be necessary to challenge attitudes and beliefs. Contributors also noted that *“People need to understand the reason why the organisation is investing in Indigenous employment”*. Leaders may need to reflect upon the intrinsic versus extrinsic nature of their motivations, *“We thought it would win us tenders”* vs *“we want to do our part to make a difference”*.

An important point was raised at this time in the consultations by many contributors – that is, the importance of having a respectful attitude, not operating from the position of ‘benevolent helpers doing charity work’, and the importance of providing adequate support:

- *“We just want to be treated as people, not as a charity case”;*
- *“I don’t want to be accommodated, I want to be a part of it, an equal part...we want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be provided with the opportunity”*
- *“The single biggest factor that assists you being successful is having relationships with Indigenous people and having advice from Indigenous people - they get really resentful with someone coming in and taking responsibility for their welfare”*
- *“Don’t waltz in there talking about giving people opportunities. If you give someone an opportunity they are going to fail it is going to be counterproductive [make sure there are the right supports in place]”;*

There was also some discussion amongst contributors about the value of incorporating targets and goals into managers’ performance evaluation plans: *“All managers should be connected to the outcome...At [organisation] it’s actually tied to their bonuses”*. One contributor explained that using intrinsic motivational drivers just don’t work for all people, so using extrinsic motivation such as bonuses is about finding a way to make Indigenous participation motivating: *“At the end of the day you have got to work out, when you’re yarning to people, what their trigger is, and some people you can ...pull on their social responsibility sort of strings ...Other people are just going to sit there and look at you, and they’re just like, ‘man, I’m here to build a project, and I’m here to do it under budget, and quickly and that’s all that drives them”*.

Literature:

Research identifies that workplaces that are perceived by Indigenous employees as more supportive have better retention rates (Barclay et al., 2014) and therefore more successful Indigenous participation. Learnings from the safety culture literature are also relevant here, in that people's hearts and minds need to be engaged, and leadership should be *visible* (i.e., leaders should verbalise statements of support backed up by congruent behaviours – *"Leaders need to walk the talk and do what they say"*).

In addition, comments from the available literature echo the sentiments of our contributors, observing that *"there is a tendency for senior managers and other employees to regard responsibility for this work as sitting solely with the Communities department, rather than being a whole-of-business undertaking"* (Rio Tinto., 2016; p.48).

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of this strategy, the following may be useful to consider:

- Simply sending an email and making announcements at meetings are communication strategies unlikely to be enough to create a culturally safe workplace and given *"racism is present in wider Australian society, it is likely to be present in construction organisations as well"*
- Invest in a passionate person to drive the IPP who has authority or is attached to authority
- Talk to Indigenous employees about their perception of the organisation and the support they receive. Conduct exit interviews with Indigenous employees to learn about factors that affected their retention.
- Check/audit that content on Indigenous participation is indeed being delivered in induction training and use methods to assess the effectiveness of the messages imparted.
- Be mindful of not creating division or perceptions of special treatment – e.g., celebrations for NADOC Week are for everyone – not just key or Indigenous employees.

Suggested Improvements:

Improvements could include the following:

- Measure the supportiveness/extent to which the workplace is culturally supportive
- Include Indigenous participation targets or activities in managers performance systems (i.e., visible leadership activities)
- Consider an additional strategy wherein key employees within the organisation participate in practice insights activities such as industry peer learning groups (e.g., industry Indigenous Reference Group).

Section 9: Evaluation

Parklands Project's evaluation strategies:

25. Evaluate the IPP in order to share learnings and avoid pitfalls on future projects

- (a) Did the project deliver the identified Indigenous participation objectives?
- (b) What Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation opportunities for employment, training and business procurement were achieved?
- (c) What were the main success factors or impediments?

What contributors said:

There was less discussion regarding the evaluation of IPPs amongst the contributors, perhaps because this activity is less common for businesses due to time, resources and logistical issues. For those who did comment upon evaluation, the view expressed was that *"Knowledge management is a must so that others can benefit from the experience"*. Many contributors offered more of their time to assist in the future when the implementation of the Parklands Project IPP is evaluated, explaining that *"[it is] really important and we need to have open and frank conversations about it and sort of start to build our understanding and how we're going to do it better, because no one else is doing this, so if we can actually come up with something that's comprehensive and actually valuable, not only for Grocon but for other businesses [then that will be really worthwhile]"*. The research questions proposed in the Parklands Project evaluation strategies call for an evaluation that is comprehensive and non-tokenistic.

One of the barriers to developing best practice understanding that was acknowledged by contributors was a lack of knowledge sharing around Indigenous participation within the construction industry. For some, Indigenous participation is seen as a competitive advantage and commercial in confidence. South-east QLD appears to be more progressed than other areas in this regard, for example, by hosting an Indigenous Reference Group which reportedly involves peer-to-peer learning; this model may be effective in other states. One contributor talked about this tension between competitive advantage and improving Indigenous participation, illustrating that a 'connection to cause' may combat the reluctance to share practice insights: *"I could keep this knowledge to myself, but then it's my people who suffer"*.

Evaluation is likely to be a very valuable activity, especially in the early stages of organisations implementing IPPs as Indigenous participation is complex and *"one size does not fit all"*. Contributors noted that change can take time, and even the best designed and well implemented strategies can take a few iterations before they gain traction, citing examples from the corporate and resources sectors. Contributors also emphasised the importance of taking a long term view: *"A lot of our mob will 'wait and see'...we've had so many programs pushed down our throats that are there to 'save us' and 'close the gap', that they're hit and run, they expect instant results. They don't get them [results] so all the funding is pulled"; "At first the success might be small, but from this it will build"*.

Implementation:

Regarding the implementation of this strategy, the following may be useful:

- Start planning for the evaluation early (i.e., while IPP is being developed) as pre-post measures may be required in order to measure change before and after an intervention is implemented
- Utilise external experts who are willing to collaborate and design a methodology that will meet business needs and adequately answer the research questions.
- Use culturally appropriate research methodologies
- Agree on scope and the extent to which the proposed evaluation methodology can answer the research questions
- Do not underestimate the commitment required to evaluate (i.e., making staff available for interviews on work time).

Suggested Improvements:

The following may be of consideration:

- Stipulate in the strategies a commitment to making learnings public and investing in dissemination activities

Overall Perception of the IPP

Of the 14 contributors who made comment on the IPP, eight (approx. 60%) felt that it represented what could be considered 'best practice'. These contributors felt that the IPP was comprehensive and some noted that there was inclusion of long term as well as short term goals.

Three contributors felt the IPP contained good elements and was *"on the right track"* but may benefit from some adjustments: *"I think the IPP is good but I think it needs more teeth"* (e.g., accountability for sub-contractors and targets for procurement).

In contrast, three contributors did not feel that the IPP was best practice. One explanation for this perception was that there appeared to be no innovation (although this contributor was hamstrung due to commercial in confidence agreements to provide examples of what could be innovative in this space). In addition, it was noted by one contributor that more may need to be done to build the internal readiness of the organisation as well as doing more to collaborate with Indigenous community members: *"While containing some good elements, there is still a flavour of 'strategy on' rather than 'strategy with'. Until the expertise and requirements of local Aboriginal communities are recognised as indivisible from effective strategy, it will not be comprehensive. Further, the strategy is very focused on the participants and not on the workplace and wider workforce which affects participation of all people"*. Similarly, one contributor noted the importance of including external communication strategies: *"This is extremely important so the rest of the community understands what the org is doing and why. There are many external stakeholders just as important as the internal stakeholders. Communication across all areas is key"*.

But across the discussions with contributors regarding their overall perception of the IPP were comments regarding its implementation: *"It's all well and good to have a nice plan, but it needs to be backed up by action"*; *"[There is a lot to some of those strategies]...when you develop the recruitment strategy that's where you would get down to the detail of how you would do that..But, it's not necessarily going to explicitly state how you're going to do that in this document"*. It was noted that having a good plan is only the first step, and there is still the call for significant knowledge and expertise to implement it successfully.

¹ bearing in mind that Indigenous participation does not have an established body of empirical research evidence concerning the efficacy of strategies, so the phrase 'best practice' should be used tentatively. 'Good practice' may be a better term.

Take Home Messages and Conclusion

In stepping back and reflecting on the key practice insights that has emerged from this consultation project, a few consistent messages are apparent and will be briefly mentioned.

Firstly, contributors felt that it is important to approach this work with intrinsic motivation which perhaps has not received significant attention in Indigenous participation reports or literature to date. Contributors proposed that significantly better outcomes will be achieved if intrinsic motivation is present. Secondly, the importance of leadership support and having a dedicated internal driver were commonly noted. Related to this point, it is arguable that an Indigenous participation agenda needs to be conceptualised as a project-wide cultural change project, where internal and external capability and commitment is built. An additional theme that resonates throughout the report is that interventions need to be long-term and take a sustainable approach. Similarly, collaboration with Indigenous peoples rather than consultation may lead to better outcomes (strategy 'with' rather than strategy 'on').

In summary, most contributors felt the IPP examined in this report (which is likely to be similar to plans currently being used by Tier I construction companies within Australia) represents 'best practice' or is "*on the right track*". The key in moving forward now will be to further refine such plans based on the findings from this report, and then build an evidence base for how best to implement these strategies, to co-create a greater place for Indigenous participation within the Australian construction industry.

References

- Barclay, M.A., Parmenter, J. & Barnes, R. (2014) *Guide to good practices in indigenous employment, training & enterprise development*. Report to BG Group, CSR: Brisbane
- Bainbridge, R., Tsey, K., McCalman, J., & Towle, S. (2014). The quantity, quality and characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian mentoring literature: A systematic review. *BMC Public Health*, 14, 1263-1288.
- Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining [CSR: M] (2010). *Good practice in mentoring of indigenous employees*. University of Queensland: Brisbane.
- Hunter, B. (2014). *Indigenous employment and businesses: Whose business is it to employ Indigenous workers?* Working Paper No. 95, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research [CAEPR], Australian National University, Canberra.
- Loosemore, M. & Denny-Smith, G. (2016). *Barriers to indigenous enterprise in the Australian construction industry*. In: P. W. Chan and C. J. Neilson (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 32nd Annual ARCOM Conference*, 5-7 September 2016, Manchester, UK, Association of Researchers in Construction Management, Vol 2, 667-676.
- Loosemore, M., & Higgon, D. (2016). *Social enterprise in the construction industry. Building better communities*. Routledge: New York.
- Rio Tinto (2016). *Why agreements matter*. CSR: Brisbane.
- Sánchez, B., Colón-Torres, Y., Feuer, R., Roundfield, K., E., & Beradi, L. (2014). *Race, ethnicity, and culture in mentoring relationships*. In: D. L. DuBois and M. J. Karcher (Eds.) *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.). Sage: CA.

Appendix A

Selection criteria for participation as a subject matter expert:

- In-depth knowledge of and/or considerable experience with overseeing, advising, implementing or studying Indigenous economic participation desirable
- In-depth knowledge/or considerable experience with social procurement policy and practices, Indigenous focus desirable
- Can provide commentary on Indigenous economic participation strategies within the mainstream economy in cities and larger regional centres desirable
- Knowledge/ experience of Indigenous economic participation in construction industry desirable