



# Strengthening the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP)

Consultation and Reform –  
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IntoWork Australia is a leading national provider of services in Employment, Education & Training and Support Services to thousands of individuals annually. As federal government contract holder of multiple services, IntoWork Australia operates in adherence to Mandatory Minimum Indigenous Participation (MMR) Requirements for services delivered by IntoWork and its Group of businesses.

IntoWork Australia demonstrates a comprehensive commitment to fostering an equitable future for First Nations individuals and businesses. Leveraging the Supply Nation Portal through its dedicated procurement team ensures the sourcing of services and goods from First Nations businesses. The varied progress with Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) and the establishment of a national First Nations Advisory Team with state representatives showcase a proactive approach to support and consultation. This team contributes to guiding staff, employers, and service users, aligning with IntoWork Australia's efforts to deliver bespoke employment programs and specialised support for First Nations Apprentices and Trainees. The emphasis on cultural awareness at a board level, manifested through staff training, underscores the organisation's dedication to linking First Nations history and culture with employment, education, training, and support services.

This response paper to the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) Reform Consultations has been compiled with the insights of the IntoWork First Nations Advisory team.

More information on IntoWork can be found at: [www.IntoWork.com.au](http://www.IntoWork.com.au)

## How would these reforms impact on your organisation?

### **Achievability of Higher First Nations Participation Targets:**

IntoWork Australia supports the commitment to achieving a 5% First Nations participation target by 2030. It reflects a proactive approach to inclusivity and diversity, aligning with broader societal goals. This commitment can help integrate Indigenous participation into the economic framework of all organisations and drive normal business practice.

IntoWork Australia believes that the transparency and honesty in reporting requirements is essential for building trust with stakeholders. What gets measured, gets actioned and this commitment ensures that organisations are accountable for their efforts in supporting First Nations businesses, contributing to the economic prosperity of Indigenous communities. Further the reporting should then drive recognition of the social impact provided because of achieving First Nations Participation targets.

### **Good and Bad Impacts on the Organisation:**

#### **Eligibility for Services:**

Increasing First Nations participation will positively influence IntoWork's Australia's eligibility for certain services, grants, or partnerships that prioritise diversity and inclusion. The changes must ensure that any eligibility criteria align with the goals of the reforms and that desired outcomes of service are not impacted due to the reforms, therefore IntoWork Australia would only be supporting procurement activities where expertise to the service outcomes can be provided. IntoWork Australia's First Nations Advisory team support the business to be adequately equipped to handle the specific needs of First Nations participants.

#### **Administration:**

IntoWork's continued commitment to embracing diversity drives enhanced organisational culture and fosters a more inclusive work environment. It is however prevalent to ensure administrative processes support the integration of First Nations businesses without creating undue bureaucratic hurdles. Our ISO9001 and quality

management systems will provide a continuous framework to support this.

#### **Data Collection and Usage:**

IntoWork Australia has internal Business Intelligence capabilities who provide current data and analytics for IPP purposes. Improved data collection from government, will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the reforms. It is recognised the need to ensure compliance with privacy regulations and ethical data usage practices is adhered to.

#### **Procurement:**

IntoWork Australia support the knowledge that Increased diversity in procurement can lead to a broader pool of qualified suppliers, fostering competition and innovation. IntoWork Australia's continuous improvement culture will ensure addressing of potential challenges in procurement processes continue to promote fair opportunities for First Nations businesses. IntoWork Australia is proud to support Supply Nation and currently utilise this portal as part of national procurement practices.

### **Do you consider the proposed reforms will increase confidence in the First Nations business sector?**

IntoWork Australia believes that the proposed changes, by setting clear ownership and control standards is likely to see increase in buyer confidence. Buyers often seek assurance that they are supporting authentic First Nations suppliers. Requiring 51% ownership and majority control establishes clear criteria for identifying First Nations businesses. IntoWork Australia believes this will enhance transparency and build trust among buyers, ensuring that that are engaging with businesses that are established and / or supported by First Nations communities.

Further to this, IntoWork Australia supports the introduction of the model should it generate healthy competition among First Nations businesses. This competition will lead to improved quality, innovation and ultimately will benefit buyers by providing a more dynamic market.

IntoWork Australia does believe that the following factors will remain critical in the effective increase in buyer confidence:

1. Consistent and Accessible education and communication on the identification of authentic First Nations businesses
2. Promotion of fair opportunities for all First Nations businesses
3. Ongoing evaluation via feedback mechanisms to ensure that the criteria is supporting the genuine goals of the reforms.

### **What suggestions do you have to ensure successful implementation of the changes?**

IntoWork Australia supports a collaborative approach between all key parties to ensure successful and measured implementation of proposed reform changes takes places. Four elements should be considered in this. Actively involving stakeholders, including First Nations communities, in the implementation process to ensure a well-rounded perspective and avoid unintended negative impacts.

#### **Delivery of Education Sessions:**

Providing comprehensive education sessions to all stakeholders ensures a shared understanding and respect for the reforms. This involves communicating the nature and intent of the changes, fostering awareness, and promoting a unified understanding of the goals. For businesses, approaching these reforms with a proactive and adaptive mindset, they can contribute positively to achieving higher First Nations participation targets and reap the associated benefits as a result.

### **Industry-Specific Sessions:**

Tailoring education sessions to specific industries enhances relevance and engagement. By addressing the unique impacts of reforms on each industry, connections and networks can be built more effectively within targeted sectors. This approach promotes a deeper understanding of how reforms directly affect stakeholders.

### **Transparency in Timelines and Reporting:**

Transparency in timelines, reporting, and impact assessments is crucial. This ensures that all stakeholders, especially First Nations Businesses, have clear visibility into the progress and outcomes of the reforms. Open communication builds trust and facilitates informed decision-making. Regularly monitoring of the impacts of the reforms allows for adjustment strategies to be adopted based on feedback and outcomes.

### **Meaningful Timeframes and Targets:**

Establishing meaningful and achievable timeframes is essential for progress. Implementing progressive targets that are monitored and governed by organisations like Supply Nation provides a structured framework. This approach ensures accountability, allowing for the continuous evaluation and adjustment of strategies to meet set goals.

## **How could the proposed reforms be improved to deliver greater benefit to the First Nations business sector, or economy more broadly?**

IntoWork Australia remain committed to providing benefit to First Nations Businesses. In support of the proposed reforms, IntoWork Australia believe that the following elements should be considered to ensure support of the broader economy and delivery the anticipated benefits to the First Nation economy as a result.

### **Readily Accessible Data for Stakeholders:**

Providing easily accessible data to all stakeholders offers oversight on reform outcomes. This data serves as a valuable tool for identifying gaps and areas for continuous improvement. By sharing relevant information openly, stakeholders can actively contribute to the refinement of strategies and approaches.

### **Ongoing Consultation and Surveys:**

Continuous engagement through consultations and surveys is essential for gauging the effectiveness and efficiency of the reform. Regular feedback from stakeholders helps in adapting strategies in real-time, addressing concerns, and ensuring that the reform aligns with the evolving needs and expectations of those involved.

### **Transparency in Proof Validation Processes:**

Transparency in the processes for validating proof of Aboriginality and proof of business control is crucial. Clearly outlining these procedures fosters trust and understanding among stakeholders. This transparency ensures fairness in the application of such criteria and helps prevent misunderstandings or disputes.

### **Utilising RAP Plan Pillar 4 for Monitoring:**

Leveraging the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Plan Pillar 4 as a monitoring measure can provide a structured framework for organisations to track their progress in implementing the reform. This aligns with a broader strategy for reconciliation and adds an additional layer of accountability in assessing how organisations are integrating the reform within their overall initiatives.

## **Do you have any other suggestions to ensure the IPP contributes to Closing the Gap economic participation outcomes?**

IntoWork Australia believes that there should be the approach taken that any outcomes should be broken down to be place based to determine the true effectiveness of the reform in closing the gap.

Breaking down outcomes to be place-based involves analysing the impact of reforms in specific geographic locations. This approach recognises that looking at results holistically may not provide a nuanced understanding of successes and challenges. By focusing on place-based data, you can evaluate the reform's effectiveness in addressing local issues and circumstances. This ensures a more accurate comparison of outcomes, allowing for tailored strategies that consider the unique challenges and opportunities within each community or region.

In summary, IntoWork Australia demonstrates a robust commitment to Indigenous participation, aligning with federal requirements. The organisation supports a 5% First Nations participation target by 2030, emphasising transparency, diversity in procurement, and cultural awareness. The proposed reforms are seen as likely to boost buyer confidence, and suggestions for successful implementation include stakeholder involvement, tailored education sessions, transparent reporting, and achievable timeframes. To enhance benefits, ongoing accessible data, continuous consultation, transparent validation processes, and leveraging RAP Plan Pillar 4 are recommended. IntoWork Australia advocates a place-based approach for evaluating the reform's impact on Closing the Gap economic participation outcomes.

