

Sent: Wednesday, 31 January 2018 6:12 PM

To: Committee, JCPAA (REPS)

Subject: private submission re project # 19 Australian Government Procurement Control

This is a brief submission from myself a member of the public to the Joint Committee Public Accounts and Audit.

The submission refers to the Inquiry regarding PROJECT NO. 19 (2017-18) AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
PROCUREMENT CONTROL

MY SUBMISSION

I am 63 years of age and am recently retired. I had worked continuously as a public servant since the early 1980s in the area of resource/ environmental management in both research and policy positions.

When I commenced working in the public service in the 1980s there was little contracting out of tasks/projects, but this gradually increased over the years, the effects of which I was able to observe and experience.

Particularly, in the case of policy and management I found there generally to be little substitute for capable public servants. Public servants are more accountable, under public service supervision to perform and are more cost effective than outsourcing. Their use is also more flexible, i.e. they are not necessarily restricted to one particular project or task and can be called on to assist with other issues as required.

They also operate in an environment where they are continually available to other public servants including their supervisors for discussion, debate on ideas and how best to proceed etc.

And many have exceptional knowledge of government/ bureaucratic processes built up over time, and often also critical technical and/or task associated expertise.....and are accessible for expert advice, and so critical to informed decision making.

Ever reducing staff 'ceilings' undermine effective administration.

Ultimately, any well functioning country/state requires a large enough and effective administration to execute the myriad tasks required for effective western government.

The undermining of the size and capabilities of effective public administrations results in a less efficiently run state and poorer functioning utilities.

Bill O'Connor