



As the terms of reference for this inquiry are quite broad this submission does not endeavour to set out the types of content that should be included in a more rigorous set of procurement guidelines. Instead it intends to outline why a proper triple bottom line procurement model that factors in economic, environmental and social considerations should be taken into account when a Government signs a new procurement contract with a private enterprise.

The Australian Government's current procurement guidelines do a decent job of ensuring government departments and statutory agencies achieve cost effective

outcomes when engaging with the private sector. The guidelines also are starting to at least attempt to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account when procurement choices are made through tender processes. The guidelines do not however enable those evaluating tenders to consider local job creation and social enterprise benefits that can be gained through the Government supporting businesses that not only employ Australian workers but also deliver benefits to the community through their employment structures and community engagement.

Employers that employ workers from disadvantaged communities or offer apprenticeships to recent refugees or long term unemployed people can deliver a greater overall economic benefit to the government than a lean operation that provides a more cost competitive bid. More rigorous triple bottom line based guidelines around procurement are required to ensure government can better manage the tax payer dollars it puts back into the economy through its major projects and its more general procurement.

According to the Australian Government Office Occupancy Report 2009, Australia's 613 Statutory Government Agencies occupy 2,552,335 square meters of office space. Each of these buildings requires maintenance and utility upgrades and replacements. Each tender process for this work could contribute to substantially changing the nature of Australian enterprise by including social guidelines around not only the type of employment arrangements at play in the enterprises bidding for the tenders but also the broader social benefits an enterprise may offer a local community or the wider community.

Nation building projects like the National Broadband Network and the Building the Education Revolution School Building Project put billions of Government dollars back into the community. Each of these projects is dependent on the procurement guidelines when determining which companies should be involved in such projects.

Earth Worker Cooperative welcomes the purpose of this inquiry and would be keen to contribute to the development of a more rigorous procurement process.