

Using procurement to turn workforce participation targets into real outcomes

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A group of Indigenous women are performing a traditional dance on a sandy beach. They are wearing patterned dresses and have their arms raised, throwing flower petals into the air. The background shows a clear blue sky and a white tent.

Acknowledgement of Country

Infrastructure NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we walk, work and live, and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge and respect their continuing connection to the land, seas and waterways of NSW, and the continuation of their cultural, spiritual and educational practices.

We acknowledge the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's unique history of land and water management, and of art, culture and society, that began over 65,000 years ago.

NSW Government Women in Construction Program



VISION: A more gender-balanced construction industry



GOAL: Increase the number of women working in construction trade and non-traditional roles



Kaitlyn at the Western Sydney International Airport project

Program strategy



Removing
Obstacles



Creating Desire
& Awareness



Fulfilment /
Retention



Accountability



Partnership with Industry

Industry Innovation Program

\$5.9 million funding allocated to 34 initiatives



BESIX Watpac 'Lending Leaders a Hand'

Provided leadership training to mid-level employees as well as upskilling and supporting female subcontractors.



It's Possible campaign (ACA)

Encouraged mid-career women, particularly those from construction adjacent industries, to consider a career in construction via site tours.



National Association of Women in Construction

Led research into understanding and improving the transitional experiences of women in and out of parental leave the NSW construction sector.



A W Edwards 'Bias to Balance: Rewiring Equality'

Unconscious gender bias training to address stereotypes, unequal representation & cultural challenges.

Piloting targets in NSW Govt projects

- **Increased targets** for women in trade and non-traditional roles on 23 major government infrastructure projects.
- **Funding** to the principal contractor for an on-site Women in Construction Project Officer

We achieved:

Women in non-traditional roles:
6.3% (target 7%)

Women in trades:
4% (target 4%)



Construction workers on-site at Westmead

Updated program strategy

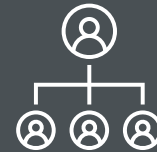
Leveraging NSW
Government
Procurement Power



Attraction
&
Retention



Increasing Women in
Leadership roles



Accountability



Partnership with Government and Industry

Reflecting on our learnings

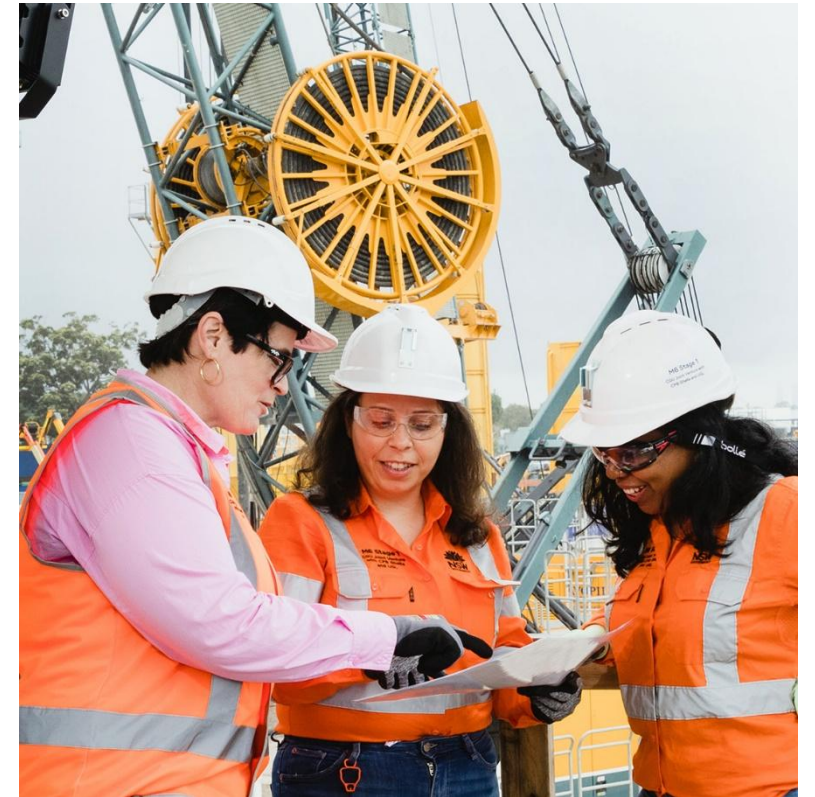
After grants and pilot projects delivered positive outcomes, we asked:

- What more can we do?
- How can we push the needle even further?
- How can government use its influence differently?



This led to a bold idea

Using government procurement power to aim for having women make up 50% of the workforce on a project.



Teresa, Nagham and Loshika at the M6 Stage 1 project

Finding the right project



Bank Street Park artist impression

A project we could influence
delivery from the very
beginning

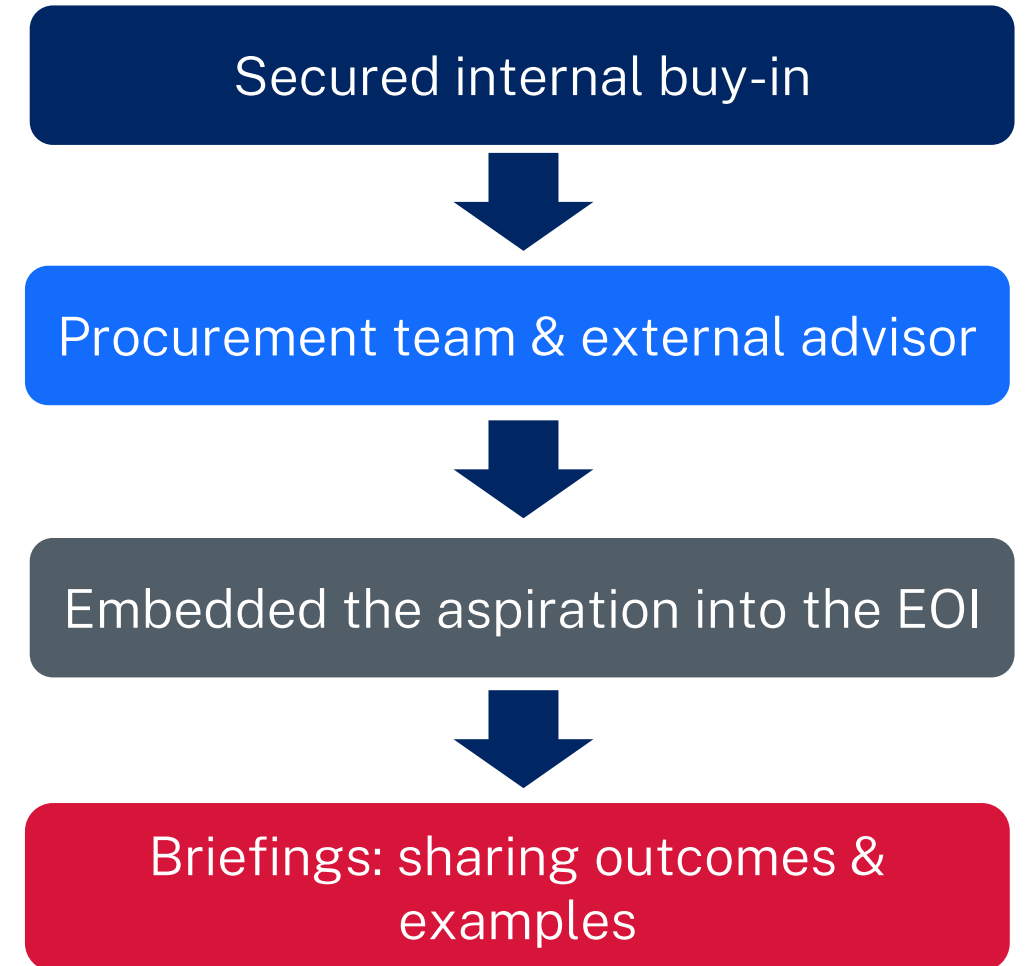
Manageable project size

Variety of roles and trades

Converting ambition into procurement

Desired outcomes:

- more women working in the industry after the project
- to demonstrate what's possible when workforce outcomes are considered from the beginning
- to inspire industry to think differently



How the market responded



Eden at the new Sydney Fish Markets project

Some contractors struggled to translate the aspiration into practical delivery ideas.

Others embraced the opportunity, submitting proposals with initiatives and implementation plans already developed.

Bank Street Park sod turn



Making ambitious targets practical



Site amenities

- Equal toilet facilities and change rooms with privacy curtains
- Multi-purpose wellbeing room
- Kitchens, on-site laundry and storage



Placing women in roles

- Pre-employment program
- Internships
- Apprenticeships
- New-to-industry mentoring program



Training for all staff

- Lean-in circles
- Unconscious bias training
- Male Allies training



Workforce Coordinator

Stakeholder
engagement

Clear KPIs and
aligned outcomes

Bank Street Park – site amenities



Bank Street Park female amenities

Bank Street Park wellbeing room



Bank Street Park is testing how the right environment can reshape the experience of all workers on site, and has introduced modern, inclusive site amenities such as:

- equal and accessible toilet facilities
- changerooms with full-length mirrors, privacy curtains, seating and access to personal hygiene products
- a multi-purpose wellbeing room
- kitchens, on-site laundry, and storage.

Pre-employment program



Measuring what is being achieved



An independent research partner is measuring workforce, industry and community impacts.



Regular reporting across key workforce indicators: women trades, non-traditional roles, leadership roles, women-owned businesses.



Jade and Christina at the Mosman High School redevelopment

How do we ensure the targets remain a priority despite project pressures?



Accountability

Steering Committee oversight and meetings with key stakeholders to review progress, address challenges and identify opportunities to strengthen outcomes.



Evidence

Independent evaluation and workforce reporting to measure progress, identify challenges and inform decision-making.



Visibility

Ongoing communications, media and storytelling through the Bank Street Park video series to showcase progress and outcomes.

Early insights



Pre-employment program graduates at Bank Street Park

Ambitious goals change the conversation

Leadership commitment is critical

Outcomes require investment

Procurement is a powerful lever for change

Workforce outcomes don't happen because we hope for them - they happen when we intentionally design them

Thank you for joining me today. Connect with the NSW Women in Construction team:

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