
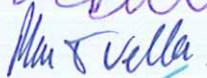





# Aboriginal Participation Plan

Hunter Expressway – Kurri Kurri to Branxton

## Review and Approvals

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## **1. Purpose and Scope**

The Aboriginal Participation Plan (APP) has been prepared by Abigroup and establishes Aboriginal participation management procedures to be followed by Abigroup and its subcontractors during the construction of the Hunter Expressway D&C: Kurri Kurri to Branxton (HEX D&C) project.

This plan is a “working document” and therefore may be subject to change during the project to continue to provide an efficient and cost effective means of delivering Aboriginal participation. Should a revised plan be generated, there will be a corresponding revision number and summary details noted on the document revision table at the front of this plan.

The APP has been developed in accordance with the NSW Government Aboriginal Participation in Construction Guidelines (January 2007 Edition) for Category 3 projects.

The Abigroup APP for HEX D&C applies to activities including, but not limited to employment opportunities as part of:

- Abigroup’s direct workforce;
- The workforce of subcontractors on the project;
- Aboriginal subcontractors on the project;
- Aboriginal consultants; and
- Aboriginal Community and Stakeholder representatives.

All references in this document to Aboriginal people, communities and enterprises should be taken to include Torres Straits Islander people.

## **2. Document Control and Distribution**

### **2.1 Revision Status**

The Senior Human Resources (HR) Advisor will be responsible for the preparation, issue, periodic review and revision of this document.

The Project Director will approve amendments that will appear in the revision table on the cover page, detailing the amendments, the date and approval.

### **2.2 Distribution Register**

A controlled copy of this plan will be maintained in the project document control system, SharePoint. Each revision of the plan will also be uploaded into SharePoint.

Users, including the project’s consultants and subcontractors, who are subscribers to SharePoint, will be notified by email of new revisions to the plan through the SharePoint system.

Copies of the plan are available for download by users, including the project’s consultants and subcontractors, and such copies shall be deemed uncontrolled.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Senior HR Advisor has responsibility for this plan and its implementation. The Project Director has ultimate responsibility. The Contract Manager is responsible for inclusion and implementation of the APP's requirements in procurement.

#### **3.1 Aboriginal Participation**

Aboriginal stakeholders are essential to the success of this initiative. Aboriginal stakeholders operate at various levels and represent different interests and purposes.

Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC) and Aboriginal interest groups and communities provide advice and coordination at a local level. This support may include local input into cultural awareness training, including local history, as well as identifying potential employees and trainees as part of the training and employment initiatives.

Aboriginal employment and training providers and agencies play a central role in implementing these initiatives. Aboriginal employment agencies, such as the Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) in Maitland and WorkVentures, can coordinate with local New Careers for Aboriginal People (NCAP) officers to communicate employment and training initiatives with local Aboriginal people. These organisations provide culturally sensitive recruitment and selection services and provide the best people for the job. They may also provide additional training that may be warranted.

#### **3.2 Government Participation**

Government stakeholders at Federal and State levels provide resource and funding assistance, as well as structured programs that promote and support Aboriginal participation relevant to this initiative. These include the programs described in the following sections.

##### **3.2.1 Commonwealth Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)**

DEEWR manages a number of programs, including Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment, National Indigenous Cadetship Project, Indigenous Business Australia's Business Development Program and the Job Network and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).

DEEWR also manages funding programs such as:

- Indigenous Employment Centres (IECs);
- Wage Assistance; and
- Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEPS).

Abigroup will seek funding from DEEWR to help implement the initiatives detailed in the project's various employment and training programs. Equally, Abigroup will encourage Aboriginal people and enterprises to find funding and other assistance so that they can benefit from working on the HEX D&C.

##### **3.2.2 NSW Department of Education and Training (DET)**

DET administers the New Careers for Aboriginal People (NCAP). DET project officers support employers to source Aboriginal candidates in liaison with Indigenous employment agencies and Job Network providers. DET also administers structured training through its traineeship system.

##### **3.2.3 NSW Department of State Development (DSD)**

DSD provides assistance to Aboriginal enterprises to achieve enterprise opportunity goals, and provides broad guidance and advice on Aboriginal matters.

##### **3.2.4 NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA)**

DAA provides broad guidance and advice on Aboriginal matters.

Discussions will be held directly with relevant Aboriginal interests and government agencies to obtain information on the local Aboriginal skills profile and consequent training needs of prospective candidates for employment.

### **3.3 Training Providers**

Training providers are also key stakeholders. Training providers may include Registered Training Organisations (RTO), and accredited providers of specialist training, such as safety or environmental training or group training providers. These providers will be acting in accordance with the Project Training Management Plan. Training providers may be required to demonstrate their ability to service the needs of Aboriginal people.

## **4. Planning**

### **4.1 Training Providers' Participation**

In consultation with key stakeholders, a strategic approach will be adopted and include:

- Early development and communication of employment positions and job descriptions to key stakeholders, including Indigenous employment agencies such as AES and WorkVentures, NCAP officers and local land councils;
- A recruitment and selection process reflecting the Policy of Aboriginal Participation;
- A recruitment database/application form that identifies people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent to assist in the project actively engaging them;
- Ensure the workplace is receptive with a mentor system in place throughout the project;
- Ensure people on site are provided with appropriate cultural awareness training so the workplace is receptive to Aboriginal participation;
- Development and delivery of appropriate preparatory programs for Aboriginal employees to ensure effective recruitment and maximum retention; and
- Identification of community support services for participants to enhance retention prospects, such as financial assistance for Aboriginal people with transport and family support.

### **4.2 Information**

Abigroup recognises timely access to information is critical to enable maximum lead time for aspiring applicants and key stakeholders. It will therefore provide a general outline of job categories and basic qualifications for employment and training as early as possible. In addition, Abigroup will liaise with the local community to ensure interest groups are well informed of business opportunities and scopes of work.

### **4.3 Pre-employment Training**

Local CDEPs and NCAP officers can communicate pre-employment training initiatives to local Aboriginal people. Training related to work preparation and accredited life skill modules may be critical for some candidates. These skills respond to recognised deficits, which may exist with 'job ready' Aboriginal employees as well as trainees. The uptake of these skills increases the likelihood of employment retention and may positively increase long-term employment and promotional opportunities.

Examples of accredited modules include:

- The world of work;
- Negotiation skills;
- Assertiveness training;
- Time management;
- Vocational numeracy/literacy;
- Budgeting and managing your money;
- First aid; and
- Job-related topics such as:
  - Preparation of job applications; and
  - Interviewing skills.

This training may be in the accredited life skills area or any other area identified as a training need for Aboriginal people in particular.

#### **4.4 Recruitment**

As described in Section 4.1, Aboriginal employment and training providers and agencies are central for implementing these initiatives. These organisations provide culturally sensitive recruitment and selection services and provide the best people for the job.

Abigroup will also consult with local universities and TAFEs, including Maitland, Kurri Kurri and Cessnock TAFEs and The University of Newcastle, as part of the Community Involvement Plan to identify suitable candidates.

#### **4.5 Employment**

Employment opportunities will extend to Aboriginal people seeking employment in occupations and trades required on the project. An affirmative approach to employment for prospective Aboriginal employees will be underpinned by corporate policies. Prospective Aboriginal employees will only be made offers of employment where they have satisfied the project's recruitment and selection procedure.

#### **4.6 Subcontracting**

To ensure Aboriginal business interests have the maximum chance to compete for business opportunities, discussions will be held with key stakeholders to identify the packages that have the potential to provide such an opportunity.

#### **4.7 On-the-job Training**

Training opportunities for all employees will be in accordance with the Project Training Management Plan. Opportunities will be in the form of structured training, such as traineeships or apprenticeships, industry and project-specific safety, environmental or quality training.

As part of its commitment to the National Indigenous Cadetship Project (NICP), Abigroup will seek to identify and employ suitable Aboriginal cadets as part of this program. Suitable cadets would be provided with work experience during vacation periods to enhance their skills and experience and employment prospects on completion of their studies.

#### **4.8 Project Stakeholder Involvement**

The key stakeholders in the HEX D&C project will include Aboriginal interests (organisations and interest groups), training providers and government agencies (both funding and resource).

There are a number of specific elements in the Aboriginal Participation in Construction Guidelines that call for early direct consultation and involvement with Aboriginal organisations. For example:

- Provide input into the appropriate delivery of information about the project;
- Pre-employment training;
- Advise about working conditions;
- Involvement in selection and recruitment procedures;
- Facilitate application days including, if necessary, assistance with completion of applications and provision of information regarding formal qualifications, and medicals;
- Provide employment opportunities to Aboriginal people and communities;
- Involvement with cultural awareness programs either in an advisory capacity or where appropriate as course facilitators and/or deliverers; and
- Provide advice and sourcing of suitable workplace mentors for the project.

#### **4.9 Communication Processes**

Abigroup recognises the importance of communication in the effective management of Aboriginal participation. Its experience has highlighted the need to ensure communications with project stakeholders are accurate and readily available. This experience has also emphasised the importance of communication in maximising the commitment from all stakeholders to participate in Aboriginal employment, training and enterprise opportunities.



The establishment of a consultative mechanism involving stakeholders, including all Aboriginal interests, government agencies, industry and resource/service providers, will form the basis of a communication process aligned with achieving policy objectives.

#### **4.10 Cultural Sensitivity**

Cultural awareness as part of ensuring a harmonious and productive workplace is consistent with the corporate policies, in particular the “Equal Employment Policy”.

In keeping with the stated policy committing to an affirmative approach to Aboriginal training, employment and enterprise opportunities, the following approach will facilitate practices:

- All employees on site (including subcontractors’ workforces) will receive a cultural awareness component in the site induction program or at tool-box meetings.
- Where Aboriginal people are engaged, line management, supervisory and other staff will receive specialised cultural awareness training modules to help them work effectively with Aboriginal people.
- Mentors will be designated and appointed when appropriate. The mentor’s role is most important when Aboriginal people join the workplace.

#### **4.11 Goals and Objectives**

The Aboriginal Participation Plan’s goals and objectives recognise current Aboriginal hardship in accessing training, employment and business opportunities. The adoption of an affirmative approach towards achieving equity in these areas for Aboriginal people requires appropriate measures to address the barriers and that aim to increase participation levels in the immediate and longer term.

The goals and objectives for training and employment address:

- Recruitment and selection;
- Training and support;
- Employment support;
- Career development;
- Cultural awareness training;
- Policy implementation and responsibility; and
- Management and review.

The goals and objectives for enterprise opportunities address:

- Identifying goods and services requirements as detailed in the procurement procedures;
- Developing a process consistent with the affirmative approach that increases Aboriginal participation in business activity;
- Developing a register of Aboriginal commercial and enterprise interests as part of the procurement procedures;
- Liaising with Aboriginal communities and organisations (such as CDEPS) regarding their commercial and enterprise development plans; and
- Ensuring a process where information relating to funding and business support services is sourced, documented and made accessible by Aboriginal people.

Commercial opportunities and practices govern the activities associated with achieving the goals for enterprise opportunities. The two relevant aspects of this are:

- The performance capability of prospective contractors (supply); and
- The availability of commercial opportunities (demand).

The supply aspect translates to:

- Demonstrated capacity of an Aboriginal business or contracting entity to deliver the goods or services on a commercial basis;
- Availability of Commonwealth, State or private sector funds to support the Aboriginal enterprise in the early stages of its development (including preparation of business plans, tender documents) and operation; and

- Ongoing business incubation, support and mentoring services to consolidate and, if appropriate, 'grow' the business.

This approach places an emphasis on the timely provision of information to Aboriginal businesses and organisations plus a pro-active approach to assessing capability with associated remedial action. For example, if a prospective contractor lacks current capability, post-assessment recommendations may be made that skills enhancement in small business study is required or perhaps the applicant should consider a joint venture arrangement in this instance.

#### **4.12 Targets**

To determine the effectiveness of training, employment and business development opportunities, a number of key performance indicators will be assessed.

These include but are not limited to:

- Number of Aboriginal job-ready employees recruited and retained;
- Number of qualifications achieved on the project;
- The number of Aboriginal enterprises engaged on the project;
- Subcontractor participation in all targets; and
- Development of a database of support services and resources.

It is envisaged that fifteen (15) traineeships will be offered on the project and this represents approximately 3% of the expected total workforce. There are no limitations on the number of Aboriginal personnel that may be employed across the wider project in varying roles or contract packages.

## **5. Implementation**

### **5.1 Human Resources**

Abigroup will assign professional staff to the implementation and monitoring of the Aboriginal Participation Plan on the HEX D&C, under the leadership of the Senior HR Advisor.

Abigroup may also engage external human resources through the use of professional providers, such as a group training company, training provider, consultants, workplace mentor and professionals to ensure they contribute towards the achievement of the project's goals and objectives.

### **5.2 Financial Resources**

Financial resources devoted to the implementation and monitoring of the strategy include the professional time of the project management team and human resource input, as well as:

- Investments in internal and external training;
- Wages costs for trainees/apprentices, supervision of trainees/apprentices;
- Development of training programs and resources;
- Engaging Aboriginal consultants/professionals to provide cultural awareness training;
- Engaging workplace mentors;
- Assessing workers;
- Administering training systems; and
- Certifying skills.

Certain recognised financial investment can be offset by State and Federal Government funding from, for example, DEEWR and DET.

Abigroup will also hold discussions with government funding agencies. Funding may be provided to assist:

- Cultural awareness training;
- Workplace mentoring; and
- Traineeships/apprenticeships.

Funding for Aboriginal business support may also be accessed through programs such as DEEWR's Indigenous Small Business Fund (ISBF) and Indigenous Business Australia's Business Development Program.

### **5.3 Physical Resources**

Physical resources allocated to implementing and monitoring the plan includes:

- Project offices and equipment for the project team to use for facilitating training and development;
- Dedicated training facility at the worksite;
- External facilities for off-the-job training and community-based support identified and negotiated up-front and used as necessary, such as NCAP offices for information and job application days.

### **5.4 Subcontractor Participation**

Abigroup will ensure that major subcontractors contribute to the participation of Aboriginal people and businesses in training, employment and enterprise, as set out in the project's policy, goals and objectives.

Abigroup will help subcontractors meet their obligations by providing support and cooperation where possible. This would include resources when training, providing advice and support based on previous project Aboriginal training and employment initiatives and experience.

### **5.5 Project Recruitment**

The Senior HR Advisor will ensure the employment procedures for employment provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people. Once employed, their development will be in accordance with this plan and the Project Training Management Plan.

## **5.6 Subcontractor Involvement**

The Procurement Manager will ensure that procurement procedures for the larger subcontractor packages include a requirement for them to use their best endeavours to maximise employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people.

The tender negotiations for these subcontractors should include advice as set out previously in section 6.4 on the help Abigroup can provide in this area.

Subcontractor involvement will also include reporting requirements.

## **5.7 ATSI Business Opportunities**

The Procurement Manager and the Senior HR Advisor will promote discussions with the key stakeholders to identify suitable subcontract packages for investigation with ATSI businesses.

Once identified, the ATSI business will be encouraged to meet the requirements of the package as set down previously.

The ideal result will be awarding the subcontract package to the ATSI business. If this does not eventuate, the process must identify areas for the ATSI business to improve upon and if possible ways to achieve this.

## **6. Measurement, Evaluation and Review**

### **6.1 Measurement, Evaluation and Review of Aboriginal Participation**

The Project Manager will be responsible for verifying that the Aboriginal Participation Plan has been implemented through the facilitation of internal management reviews. The Senior HR Advisor will be responsible for reviewing the implementation with the Project Manager to ensure the goals and objectives are being achieved and that corrective actions are put in place where they are not. These reviews will be held at least every six months and on completion of the project.

Feedback will be sought from all key stakeholders to ensure collective knowledge is captured and that improvements and innovation is used to improve Aboriginal participation.

The level of Aboriginal participation will be regularly monitored and reviewed. The results of all reviews will be circulated between the key stakeholders to ensure open communication exists. Corrective actions will be recorded and communicated with the responsible party and considered at the following review.

### **6.2 Documentation**

Aboriginal participation management records will be maintained to demonstrate obligations have been fulfilled. Records will include:

- KPIs;
- Host trainee/apprentice details;
- Employment relationship details;
- Engagement under subcontract of Aboriginal persons;
- Individual training records;
- Audit results/reports; and
- Any other records or details pertaining to the Aboriginal participation guidelines.