

ANZSOG CASE PROGRAM – TEACHING NOTE

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Part of the process: the role of consultation and collaboration in the development of the Aboriginal Procurement Policy in Western Australia

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Summary of the case

As part of its commitment to Closing the Gap, the Western Australian (WA) Government announced the Aboriginal Procurement Policy to improve employment outcomes for Indigenous people. In 2017, Western Australia's Department of Finance were in a bind. It knew that including indigenous people in policy development was crucial but doing so meant it had to overcome several challenges: The Department had various policy parameters, including fulfilling the newly elected first-term government's election promise within a short time frame. However, it identified that to achieve policy success buy-in was critical from the key stakeholders: The Aboriginal business sector and WA government agencies. The Department was challenged in overcoming entrenched distrust with the government from the Aboriginal business sector and balancing this against broad-based reluctance to change procurement practices within government agencies. It identified that a culturally considered and strategic consultation and collaboration process was critical to achieve buy-in from these stakeholders and for the success of the Policy. However, to employ this process, the Department needed to determine, from the stakeholder groups, whose voices were needed in the consultation process, how the consultation should take place, and at what point in the development of the policy it should occur.

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Learning objectives

- Critically engage with the concept of consultation and collaboration with stakeholders within the policy cycle
- Within the context of the case, strategically consider which stakeholders to include, at what point in the policy development process and the best approach (platform) for engagement
- Understand the benefits and limitations of engaging stakeholders within internal and external parameters
- Understand the strategic importance of genuine and effective consultation and collaboration in policy development

Audience and focus

The audience for this case study may include:

- Postgraduate students enrolled in a Masters (or other postgraduate course) in public policy, management, government, public administration and related areas
- Final year undergraduate students in any of the above areas
- Public sector employees (new to public policy position or middle managers who oversee policy development) on relevant training courses.

This case can be used to facilitate critical and strategic thinking with regards to stakeholder consultation and collaboration and how this informs the development of public policy. This case should encourage discussion on:

- Whose voices inform the development of a policy
- How these voices are consulted with in policy development
- Who conducts the consultation
- At what point in the policy development is consultation required
- How do other factors influence stakeholder engagement and what impact does this have on policy outcomes

Drawing on some of the academic literature (see recommended readings below) about consultation and collaboration (public participation) in policy development should be drawn upon to unpack the approach taken by the Department of Finance.

Teaching approach and strategy

Activities	Instructional strategy	Duration
Watch the short video below, which identifies the importance public consultation in public policy. • ‘How crucial is public consultation on a policy proposal and why?’ (published by the Australian Government, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet) [2.47] 	Class video (Facilitator-led)	~3 minutes
Watch the longer video below, which defines public participation in public policy and the importance of asking the right questions. • ‘Questions change everything in community engagement’ (Published by TEDxStKilda) [15.36] 	Class video (Facilitator-led)	~15 minutes

Activities	Instructional strategy	Duration
Organise into small groups and do the following: - Allocate a stakeholder to each group (except for one group); allocate the role of government decision maker to the remaining group. Allow groups ~10 minutes to discuss the policy from their perspective and prepare discussion points to represent their stakeholder's interest as part of a consultation exercise - Facilitator to lead class in group consultation session. All groups to engage in a roundtable stakeholder consultation exercise with the government decision maker group determining how to consult with each stakeholder ~10 minutes <i>Optional</i> - Facilitator-led class discussion at end of consultation process to discuss outcomes and lessons learned ~10 minutes	Group exercise	~30 minutes
Based on viewing the longer 2nd video above (TEDxStKilda) - Organise into small groups and do the following: - Identify and discuss what the 'right' questions could have been when engaging with the Aboriginal business sector ~10 minutes - Critically reflect on how these questions interact with the policy making parameters ~10 minutes	Small group exercise	~20 minutes
Organise into small groups and do the following: - Consider the role of consultation and collaboration in the policy cycle, including benefits and limitations of including stakeholder voices as part of the process ~10 minutes - Refer to the reflection activity within the case and develop a response ~10 minutes	Small group activity	~20 minutes
Consider the following statement: 'Consultation, while based on the ideals of reciprocity, can reinforce notions of 'winners and losers' and may appear to some as rhetoric.' (Haigh, 2012). Discuss this statement with regards to the case study in small groups.	Small group discussion	~10 minutes
The case study identified tensions amongst key stakeholders in the development of the policy. Consider the following: - How might consultation assist in navigating this tension? - Under what conditions could consultation exacerbate tensions?	Class discussion	~15 minutes
The Department identified the importance of constraining options available for discussion during stakeholder consultation. - Discuss the implications of 'guided' consultation on participation in the development of the Policy. - Could the Department have taken an alternative approach? Why/why not?	Class discussion	~15 minutes

Recommended readings/ further resources

Academic literature

- Fischer, F. (2000). Professional Knowledge and Citizen Participation: Rethinking Expertise. In F. Fischer (Ed.), *Citizens, Experts and the Environment*. Duke University Press.
- Haigh, Y. (2012). *Public Policy in Australia: Theory and Practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Walters, L. C., Aydelotte, J., & Miller, J. (2000). Putting More Public in Policy Analysis. *Public Administration Review*, 60(4), 349-359.

Additional resources

- The Department of Finance used the IAP2 model for consultation:
 - IAP2 International Association for Public Participation. (2019). *About IAP2 Australasia*. <https://www.iap2.org.au/about-us/about-iap2-australasia/>
- The Department of Finance performance report for 2019-2020 provides additional information on stakeholder engagement, policy outcomes and case studies about Indigenous business who have benefited from the opportunities provided by the policy:
 - Department of Finance. (2020). *Aboriginal Procurement Policy: Performance Report 2019-2020*. Government of Western Australia. <https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/Aboriginal%20Procurement%20Policy%20Second%20Year%20Performance%20Report%202019-2020.pdf>

Feedback on Teaching Note use

To assist with continual improvement, if you've used this Teaching Note, we'd greatly appreciate your feedback and suggestions for improvement. To do so, please email caselibrary@anzsog.edu.au with the name of the case and your comments. Many thanks in advance.

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