

'Where Next for Government Buyers?'

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How government can improve social procurement

- The state government social procurement framework has been a great start but in its next iteration it needs spending targets to have real impact.
- The framework is really a change management piece for procurement policy, systems and procedure and it would help to acknowledge that and that the framework itself is only the start of the process.
- Better implementation linked to objectives of the framework, eg. family violence policies, could be better addressed by supplier 'codes of conduct' rather than weighting in tenders.
- Infrastructure and construction has been the key area of impact for social procurement because there have been real targets attached, but where is the next biggest opportunities to expand government social procurement?

How social enterprise can improve social procurement

- Major opportunity for social procurement to play a role in regional Victoria, especially around bushfire and COVID-19 economic recovery, but we need to make it easy for local government to do. Need to build better networks with local government.
- SENVIC Sub-networks and partnerships can support scale and make it easier to engage with social procurement without losing impact. Moving Feast is an example of an alliance that joined SEs to create scale.
- Opportunities around commercial businesses converting to social enterprises given the current economic conditions, but they need guidance to do it well, and for the right reasons.
- "Social return on investment" and impact measurement remain essential to helping government make social procurement choices, but it remains difficult and it is always the research and evaluation budget that gets cut when seeking cost saving measures.

Shared challenges to collaborate on

- Market awareness supports all parts of social procurement. Campaigns (like 'Buy Social', SE UK) can help build consumer demand, not just among individual consumers but also commercial purchasing demand.
- Skills and capability development investment is needed for procurement teams and wider 'purchasing' workforce. Some parts of private sector are more advanced on knowledge and capability than government in this area.
- There is significant opportunity for innovation in procurement process, and practices but dedicated time, funding and permission is required.
- Is there a place for a dedicated incubator and access to patient capital to support growth and development of new social enterprise to meet new areas of social procurement and social innovation.