



contentgroup **WORK WITH  
PURPOSE**

## **TRANSCRIPT OF PODCAST**

*WORK WITH PURPOSE*

EPISODE 156

**FROM PAPER CLIPS TO SUBMARINE:  
WHY PROCUREMENT MATTERS IN  
GOVERNMENT**

# TRANSCRIPT

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**Kate Driver (00:09):**

Hello and welcome to *Work with Purpose*, the podcast about the Australian public sector and the people who keep it running. My name is Kate Driver and today we are talking about something that quietly shapes almost every part of Australian life. Even if none of us really spend that much time thinking about it, it's procurement. Now stay with me because this is the story about how government actually gets things done. It's every pen in a school. It's every ambulance, every new bridge hospital, the professional services that keep our departments running, the tech systems, research projects from submarines to paperclips. Someone has to buy it at some point, someone has to decide who makes it, who supplies it, how much it costs, whether it's safe, whether it's ethical, whether it provides value, and genuinely serves the public. That's procurement. And when it works well, we all benefit often without noticing when it doesn't work.

(01:20):

Well, we definitely notice. Now, before we dive into this conversation today, we are recording on Ngunnawal country here in Canberra, and I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land that we are recording on today and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which you are listening to this podcast. I pay my respects to the first peoples, the families connected to those communities, elders, past and present. Now, procurement isn't just paperwork, it's how we turn public money into public value. It's how trust is built and it's a skill, sometimes high pressure, and when it's done well, it can be incredibly impactful and valuable. Now, it's not just the responsibility of the procurement team. Almost every single public servant either in the Commonwealth or the ACT public sector or those involved in the supporting those public servants will either manage, approve, or respond to a procurement at some point in their career.

(02:29):

This is frankly something that touches everyone. Now, you may not have seen the headlines, but let me tell you, there were changes to the Commonwealth procurement rules that came into effect on the 17th of November. This is a timely conversation now for anyone who buys contracts, negotiates signs off or works with suppliers across government. So let's get into it because I'm sure you don't want to hear me talking about procurement for the next hour. I think we need some experts in the discussion. Joining me today is Richard Windeyer, who is the head of the APS Procurement and Contract Management Profession. Also the Deputy Secretary of the Commercial group in the Department of Finance. Welcome Richard.

**Richard Windeyer (03:15):**

Thank you.

**Kate Driver (03:16):**

I'm also joined by Andrew Marsden, partner at O'Connor Marsden and Associates, also known as OCM with over 20 years of experience in procurement, probity and assurance. Welcome, Andrew.

**Andrew Marsden (03:29):**

Thank you.

**Kate Driver (03:30):**

And welcome Kim Hunter, a procurement and commercial leader at OCM with more than 25 years of experience across technology sourcing and transformation spanning a career both within the Commonwealth public sector and now in the private sector. Welcome, Kim.

**Kim Hunter (03:47):**

Thank you.

**Kate Driver (03:48):**

So Andrew, Richard, Kim, welcomed Work with Purpose. Now, listeners may have gained from my introduction that I'm probably more of a boffin than the average person, but I'd like to actually ask a little bit around the basics and Richard, I'm going to start with you. So what is procurement? Why do we care?

**Richard Windeyer (04:08):**

Well, it's sort of hard to put it better than the introduction you've given frankly, but procurement, it's the way we go about acquiring things in government for goods or services that are then used to deliver things in the national interest for the Australian public. Sometimes as you indicated in the introduction, it's for helping government agencies do their job. Sometimes it's about directly procuring things that are going to be helpful to deliver things directly to citizens. And it's also more than just the process of buying. It's kind of not just going into a shop and saying, that's the thing I want to buy. The processes we think about it is a combination of understanding your needs through to working out who to acquire it from. Again, as you suggested in the introduction. And then managing the engagement with whoever it is you are acquiring something from through the life of the contract.

(05:06):

So it's not a thing that sort of is a point in time start and stop thing. And it's big and important. It's on recent figures, it's a sort of 104 billion big. That's quite a lot of taxpayers money that's going through the procurement system. It's not the only way governments spend money. One of the other ways that it's often contrasted with the process of grants, but through the procurement framework itself, more than a hundred billion dollars of taxpayer's money is spent from, as you said, paperclips to submarines, pet food, musical instruments. There's all manner of things acquired as well as seemingly quite mundane or conventional things like consultancy services to support policy development or evaluation of policies or design of implementation of policies and frameworks. So it's a core part of government business. It touches lots of people. It probably touches more people than they realise.

**Kate Driver (06:05):**

Thanks, Richard. Now I'm actually curious as the head of the procurement profession, I imagine that the answer to this question is everybody, but who actually should be caring about procurement? Who should be focusing on this?

**Richard Windeyer (06:21):**

Well, I think you're right. In some respects, the answer of who should care about it is everybody the who should focus on it perhaps gives scope for a slightly narrower answer. I mean, the thing from the public servant's perspective, from the government workers' perspective, anyone that does find themselves having to acquire something, whether you are using the credit card to go and buy some pens or pencils from office works or whether you are involved in working out where Australia is going to acquire its next naval ship from you are involved in the world of procurement and you should therefore pay some attention to it. I think the piece and you need to pay attention to it because frankly if you don't do it well or you don't do it properly, you can inadvertently find yourself or find your agency or find your organisation in some pretty tricky and uncomfortable situations.

(07:20):

It's also a thing that the private sector, the potential suppliers to government should care about as well. We under the Commonwealth procurement rules are spending more and more time focusing on the integrity of the process. And I guess that's really about ensuring there's some trust in the process. I mean, to jump around a little bit, I mean I see what we are trying to do in government with respect to procurement is we're trying to make sure we've got a system that delivers for Australians that does so with a whole lot of integrity and that provides opportunities for Australian businesses to participate. But you need to stitch all those three things together. So I guess the point being that suppliers or potential suppliers should care about this as well. It's not a just knock on the door and say to government, we've got a thing to sell that you might want to buy, please procure from us. It's a process and a system and a framework that they need to take seriously and invest time and understanding. And then as a consequence, and hopefully we have a framework that does deliver with integrity and does provide opportunity.

**Kate Driver (08:31):**

And it's that framework and that process that you speak about, Richard, which the language is not about transactions.

**Richard Windeyer (08:39):**

No,

**Kate Driver (08:40):**

It sounds like it's a much more evolving, an ongoing process. There's a framework to guide you beyond the transactional conversation, and that conversation has two sides to it. So turning to Andrew where you've often sat on the non-public service side of those conversations, I'm really interested to hear from you and your experience of how private sector partners thinking about that broader process can add value to the bigger process, not just the transaction in front, drawing on market insights, how you actually engage with integrity without necessarily falling a foul of any probity rules, but showing up with integrity and engaging as a private sector provider. Can you talk a little bit about your experience there in this collaboration and integrity part of the process?

**Andrew Marsden (09:39):**

Yeah, sure. I think picking up on some of the things that Richard has said as well, it's about if you position procurement in the concept of, or for us, the way we've tried to position it and the concept of it's about decision making. So when we can work with anyone first who we're trying to work on, what is the decision you're trying to make, what is it? In other words, what's the outcome you're trying to achieve? And then from a private sector perspective, one of the ways we can try and do is say bring forward is say, well, this is where we've seen that done elsewhere. This is where we're seen it done another agency. Because a lot of the time people are procuring, they don't actually have the time to then make the conversations or the connections with where else it's been done. And so the integrity part then is firstly about understanding what it is, what's the integrity you're trying to achieve so that there's a common goal.

(10:25):

Second part is then saying if you're a private sector, I think private sector people have to be clear. We are the private sector. We are trying to sell the service. So we've got to be very transparent about that and then be very clear to engage again, back to what is it the public sector's trying to achieve? What's the outcome here? So if we bring those two, just that fundamental core concepts to the table, that's the first piece. Second piece is then being really clear as a consultant in the private sector, what is the remit beyond all the bandwidth and the experience that that party has? So you wouldn't come to me and talk to me about the technical requirements of a software as a service solution. It wouldn't be much help to you.

And I think the important thing is then making sure that a similar consultant wouldn't try and tell you that they can.

(11:15):

So it's knowing what is the remit of that consultant as well? What is their specialist area? So I think that's the other part. The other part I think for us is it's the active listening that's really important. So if people can come forward on that basis, then in other words, particularly for consultancy here, then they can share those experiences back out. And then obviously you've got to put that in some kind of commercial framework so it's clear, it's transparent and the basis in which the parties have been engaged or if it's pre commercial engagement again, what might be the future so that people are very clear. They're not just setting themselves up for future work, but also actually what is that knowledge sharing et cetera is going through. So integrity is consistency, behaviour, and if you think about it in the ethical sense, it's consistent ethical behaviour and that's what we're trying to always drive through.

(12:02):

So the commonwealth government now is doing a supply code of conduct, which is great, and I was actually talking to someone today this morning about how do you make sure then each supplier is more, they're onboarded their own staff about what that means and it's taking those sorts of pieces, but they're questions that the public sector can ask before you even start a conversation. Are you aware of that supplier code of conduct? Yes. What's your views on it? So it's just been really open and transparent and keeping those kind of lines of communication going, a lot of knowledge that can be shared.

**Kate Driver (12:33):**

Thanks Andrew. Now Kim, 25 years experience in the sector as a procurement leader. And I'm hearing both Andrew and Richard talk about that kind of consistency of behaviour and that common purpose really understanding particularly in that pre-transaction stage, the pre-process where you might be going to market. Can you share a little bit from the depth of your experience around what that actually looks like from the private sector's perspective? I imagine it's quite a complex process to navigate.

**Kim Hunter (13:06):**

So yes, as a supplier, I mean I spent the first 15 years of my career in government and I do recall the very first set of commonwealth procurement guidelines being released. So it really was 25 years ago and now a new version. But as a supplier, I think if I understand your question, navigating that process, I think it's a lot to do with what Andrew was saying is understanding where your expertise lies and reading those approaches to market, getting an understanding of who the client is and what their objectives are and understanding where you've got value to add. So being selective about those processes. But I think the question you asked earlier around engaging with industry and how agencies are doing that, there's a few different ways that we see them doing that in practise and early market engagement and to apply that integrity, we're seeing open approaches.

(13:59):

So you can use AusTender to go to open market to seek ideas and best practise and how agencies can consider to answer their problem. But you've got central agencies as well that are doing a lot of market research and engaging across industry and testing concepts like artificial intelligence and then putting out guidance for agencies to help them as well navigate the industries. But there's a lot of research that agencies can do online. I think for me, the important test if you're going to do early market engagement is to have a genuine open mind about what the answer to the question is rather than looking for the answer and then trying to run a process after that.

**Kate Driver (14:43):**

Yeah, it's about being able to share that expertise without necessarily giving away the trade secrets or the competitive edge, but being able to have what I've heard described as a really informed client. Is that something that you've seen over that time both in the public sector and in the private sector change?

**Kim Hunter (15:07):**

I think government has always been the expert in what they need to deliver to their community, and that comes back to who's involved in procurement and programme managers are the people that are closest to their clients in Australia, so they know what they need. Expertise comes in, I guess in how you articulate that and how you decide your method of procurement and how you navigate the policies which are just growing all the time. There are new policies being released that public servants need to understand and apply in processes. So yeah, I think government has always done that really well. There are really large programmes of work that have been run as long as for 2025, probably a lot longer than that, and they generally do a really good job.

**Kate Driver (15:53):**

Yeah, fantastic. Richard, did you want to add something there?

**Richard Windeyer (15:55):**

I was just going to say, I mean I think the government side of this point about engagement with the market and engagement with the public, the private sector is really important. And it's one thing that I think is, it's a thing we talk about quite a lot through the procurement contract management profession. It's a thing we talk about in all the various capability work that we lead from the Department of Finance, and it's sort of about encouraging public servants not to be afraid of engaging with the private sector. So I think, I'm not sure whether it's changed and others here have been playing in procurement for longer than me, but I certainly worry or I think we need to be alive to the greater focus on integrity doesn't result in people feeling the safest way through is to take a compliance type mentality and a cautious type mentality. And fear talking to potential suppliers is somehow going to cause them to get into hot water. And so I think there is a confidence and willingness by the public service to realise you can talk, look to understand the market, you can look to understand what's available, who's around, how we should think about solving a problem before we even get to what might be described, the commencement of the process.

(17:21):

Sometimes in the public sector, we do know what we're trying, we do have a pretty good grip on what we think we're trying to deliver, but we might not have a great grip on the various ways you could go about it. And to put it really simplistically, it seems to me over as the world has digitised, we've faced increasing choices. Are we buying a thing or are we buying a service? And knowing that and understanding how you can think about it is quite important. Or we risk going to market asking for the thing actually is not the thing we really want if only we knew and you only know by being open to talking early.

**Kate Driver (17:56):**

And it's that openness, that transparency that to me sounds very similar to the language of stewardship and how you actually show up and perform that role as a public service leader. And how as part of the broader public sector, the transparency of engaging that Kim spoke to before government knows its business, but there's a large private sector that's part of a broader ecosystem in the public sector that also knows how to transparently engage in those conversations as they evolve. Do you think that there's a really good understanding of how transparency looks on the ground in terms of the way that the public perceives how government contracts and supply selections operate? Or do you think we could do more on that front?

**Richard Windeyer (18:49):**

There's probably always more we can do. It's a constant balance or a constant juggle inside the public sector around transparency and accountability, not only around procurement of where is the right point to draw the line and the debates you are seeing play out at the moment, whether it's through things that are or aren't released under freedom of information documents that are or aren't produced under orders for production of documents in the Senate, some of which go to procurement related matters, just show that it's actually very hard to land in the optimal transparency space. I mean, I think we over time have looked to try and drive more transparency into the system, but we are constantly looking for where is the point where there are legitimate commercial in confidence matters to be thought about, legitimate questions about government revealing exactly what it's trying to do depending on the environment you're procuring in. But yes, I'm sure there's always more that can be done. I think inside government we've got an instinct which says transparency is a good thing. I don't know whether government has managed to have a conversation with the Australian public that both sides understand whether appropriate or sensible or right limits should be. I think that's a tricky conversation for us to engage in.

**Kate Driver (20:33):**

And that conversation isn't just the big set pieces either. It's the micro moments, the engagement in every aspect of either Australian government or ACT public service community engagement work. So

**Richard Windeyer (20:47):**

Think so conflicts of interest in a sense goes to an element of transparency in a way and is a thing that we over the past 12 to 18 months have done quite a lot of work around in the commonwealth to kind of make sure that public servants and frankly suppliers to the public service understand how they should think about what might be a conflict, how they should think about the fact that the perception is as important as the reality and how they should think about my understanding of whether I'm conflicted. I might not be the best person to judge whether I'm conflicted, it might actually be the person I'm supplying to that goes, you didn't know you were conflicted, but there's a conflict here that seems to me a pretty critical element of transparency, pretty critical in building trust and confidence and something that we have tried to do a bit of work on.

**Kate Driver (21:31):**

It seems to me Kim and Richard, that confidence is a key part that goes hand in hand with capability. How do you think agencies can actually build both that capability and confidence so that procurement officers feel empowered to make those kinds of decisions but without overly deferring to legalistic compliance models? Kim, I might ask you to answer that one first.

**Kim Hunter (22:00):**

Well, the way that we're seeing agencies doing that now is really about putting tools and templates in place for people. The reality is that there's a lot of turnover in procurement. I've seen that for a couple of decades and we've talked about how business areas are often the party that's leading a procurement and the procurement team is there to advise on process. So in a lot of circumstances, if not all, you're going to have people involved in the process that have never done it before or they haven't done it in a few years and things have changed since then. So we are seeing clients are now building systems, so digitising and trying to bring together the policy that applies to that particular type of procurement, whether it's because of the value of the procurement or the level of risk and trying to just simplify the processes, simplify the tools that they're using, even just the way that the policies are described. They're all shorter templates, plain English so that people can get involved in a process, catch up on some intranet pages and tools and feel their way through the process and go to the procurement teams or the legal teams on an exception basis.

**Kate Driver (23:14):**

And Andrew, have you seen similar things?

**Andrew Marsden (23:16):**

Yeah, it's that and the other one is capability building, but capability building, what does that mean? And if I always try and roll it back to that decision making, so it's how do you actually help build awareness training sessions, get people to practise decisions? Taking Richard's point about conflict of interest for a long time we've been saying, don't you be the person making that judgement in conflict, but at the same time you've got people because we'd see forms and people would go, "nil", write a form, "nil" and next one "nil." And then later on you find out, oh well actual fact that is someone I've known, I used to work with them. Oh, okay, how much did you used to work with them? And you've got to keep layering this. How long ago did you used to work with them? When did you last see them?

(23:56):

Oh, yesterday at the wedding. Oh, okay, maybe that's something we might want to disclose. And that was a little bit of an exaggerated example, but I have seen other ones similar, but people might not even actually know because in their own mind they're saying that's not a conflict because I think I can bring an impartial mind and that's where the transparency test would go, someone external to that person or even external to that agency would say, really that seems like you've got a close association. So you want people in the habit of understanding how do I make a decision, how do I get transparent to disclose my interests? And this happens to the private sector as well. You've got to get people to say, if you're getting paid by the public purse, you are acting in public decision making and so therefore you've got to think the same way. And so be really open to being transparent about our interests and other things. So that's one area and that's training and awareness and being very clear what it is you expect from people. So on large programmes we would say do the onboarding, do the offboarding, do all of those things and keep it ticking over because people come and go as Kim has said, and so you make it, it actually starts to build into the culture and that's one of those.

**Richard Windeyer (25:03):**

Can I just add to that? I think you've picked up on really, really two pieces which we should articulate more frequently. One is it's about interests, not conflicts of interest. It's about disclosing interests. The second thing that strikes me is it's hard to get into trouble for over disclosing. You can only ever get into trouble for not disclosing. So if in doubt disclose and work out how to mitigate. And if it is someone that you see once in a blue moon but did happen to be at the wedding with because they were distantly related to a distant friend of yours, et cetera, that can be mitigated and explained. But you're not going to get into trouble by over disclosing and then just pick up on one other dimension to the question you put to Kim earlier. I think from where I sit, the other part of this is leadership on the public sector side, if we want to avoid falling into the trap of legalistic compliance template driven, I can keep out of trouble if I check all the right boxes in the right order. If we want to avoid that and get great outcomes and not find ourselves sort of in procurement trouble, then I think leadership's part of it and from our perspective training and capability building amongst decision makers, to your point that it's about decision making who don't do it frequently but will do it occasionally and making sure they understand the role they've got in the system is quite critical.

**Kate Driver (26:27):**

I think this also goes to the point around this being a continuous process, which you referred to at the beginning of our discussion today. It's not just ticking the box on the form and moving on. And I'd like to just pause here for a moment and just reflect on your conversations around leadership. Often as Kim says, the delegate who's signing the ultimate procurement at the end may not have done this in a while or indeed ever or perhaps not in this area of expertise. They rely on a number of people, both experts in procurement, legal teams, but also those who are expert in the business of the part of government in

which the procurement's being made. Can we say a little bit more from your perspective as the head of the profession around that leadership role of delegates and how they need to demonstrate how they have taken the care and considered that continuous process rather than just the forms in front of them.

**Richard Windeyer (27:31):**

We run a capability suite or training suite for SES delegate training. And in some respects the challenge there is to sort of try and scare the bejesus out of them. On the one hand that this is serious business and there is a National Anti-Corruption Commission and there is all the various integrity and accountability processes. There's the ANAO, all of whom may decide to look back on what you were doing here. So on the one hand it's sort of, oh my goodness, take this seriously. But then without driving them towards compliance and then the message is very much actually get involved early in a way it's don't delegate all the work to just come back to me when you need me to sign the form as the delegate. It's both to keep yourself out of trouble but also to ensure that there's a chance that procurement actually delivers what you want as the outcome.

(28:25):

Get involved early. Pay attention, consider carefully whether you understand the market or whether your people understand the market. Consider carefully how you're setting up a sort of approach to a market. Consider carefully how you're proposing to evaluate the thing because I think there are times when if you only joined the process late, you sort of get the final documents and going, how did we end up here? Well that was because of decisions we did or didn't make 3, 4, 5, 6 months ago. So in a way the message is pretty simple is it can go wrong and that's not good for you, but get involved early and take this as a serious process with serious decisions that could deliver you great outcomes if you invest the time and effort in it early.

**Kate Driver (29:11):**

And it seems to me that clarity of intent, what are we trying to achieve here through good process. And there are notable examples where the clarity has been absolutely crystal clear, but perhaps the process has been lacking other circumstances in which you would get top marks from the ANAO on your process, but you've completely missed the mark on what you're trying to achieve. And so my question for each of you and Andrew I might ask you to lead off on this is where's the sweet spot between probity compliance and delivering on that outcome?

**Andrew Marsden (29:46):**

Yeah, great, great question. And I think the sweet spot moves around a bit by engagements and by different activities. However, realistically, if you take what Richard was saying, it's firstly at the planning stage if you can get that right. I mean the Commonwealth procurement rules are all about value for money. It's the core objective. So if you think about that, it's about really have we got what we wanted, not just at the point of decision but further down the track. One of the things we find in processes that are quite strict in the sense of no, you can't ask clarification. Some people would say that because it says a clarification can only be if you don't understand something. And some person on a panel might say, I understand another one says I don't. And I go, well, the person who says they do will go that way.

(30:30):

They don't ask the clarification question, they award the contract. And lo and behold, we find that if plays out in contract management because a variation, there's all sorts of other things. So the sweet spot is design firstly then making sure that the tools that Kim was talking about that are available to people, that they are the right tools. And then knowing if you're working with your procurement support, can I amend that tool a little bit while I still keep the core principle right still at design phase. And then we're starting and then it's a question of have I got the right people in the room to make the decision and if not, do they

have the right support during the decision making phases? So again, so there's the ability to keep kind of growing and developing and learning as they go through, but making the decision and keep moving.

(31:15):

And then it's those other points about then we, before we signed this contract comfortable we've, we've selected the right provider we think because what the numbers and other things are telling us, have we now got a framework in place or a contract process again depending on the value and complexity of the procurement that are going to help us deliver. So it's holding those questions about outcome and level of checks all the way through the decision points at every decision point you want to be asking that. I mean picking up on something that Richard was saying earlier with delegates, yeah, get involved early, but if you can't at the very least have a very clear checklist, you go before you put your signature on as let's say a Section 23 delegate that you know exactly what it is you're signing to and why, because the outcome is what we're really after here. So yeah, there's been lots of good examples. I think Richard touched on earlier and we were talking about it outside, well, I was going on FY 24 figures, but it's something like 80 odd thousand, 83, 84 thousand contracts have been let for a \$96 billion spend. And clearly there'll be some big spends in that, but that's a lot of contracts that must be going through going through okay as well.

**Kate Driver (32:29):**

Yeah, that's a salient point, isn't it, that these conversations can often focus on the failures rather than actually the unsung successes of the everyday business. Kim, I'm interested in your thoughts on where that sweet spot between probity compliance and delivering outcome is. And we've heard from Andrew where a really detailed description, do you have other thoughts, a different angle on this?

**Kim Hunter (33:01):**

I think as Andrew said, it'll vary and one of the things we might not have covered is that there's a lot of simple procurement that's happening. It's low value, it's transactional or it's something that we buy all the time. And so we need to be investing a proportionate amount of time in the process. And in some of those you can move fairly quickly through the process. And the sweet spot is really being aware of conflicts of interest at the beginning of the process, deciding on a method of procurement that is proportionate to the value of subsequent contract versus a very large programme with a high value potentially. Lots of parties are interested in participating both internally and externally and where probity and transparency and consultation and agreeing what the requirement is needs to have a reasonable amount of time invested in it. So yeah, there's no one answer for all procurement.

**Kate Driver (33:58):**

No, I think everyone has different interpretations, but the same themes are coming through. And Richard, as one of the heads of the procurement and contracting profession and those 80,000 plus contracts being signed a year, it sounds to me like there's opportunities to really hone the craft right across both APS and of course our listeners are also from the ACT public sector. What would your advice be about really trying to hone those skills and build your procurement muscles, so to speak?

**Richard Windeyer (34:31):**

That's a great question. I think actually that's one of the things that we struggle with a little bit is how do you build the muscle in people that do this infrequently, which is hard I think. So at a broad level, as we said at the outset, an enormous number of people across the public sector at some point in time are going to touch the procurement world. I'm not expecting to be able to train or equip all of those people to be absolute procurement professionals today so that when they encounter or next touch the procurement system in 12 or 18 months time, they're sort of ready to go. I mean partly because we'll probably change the procurement rules again by then, so we'll be out of date indeed. But more to the

point I think. So in some respects for the broad category of people, what I would like is for there to be an awareness piece in a sense.

(35:24):

If there is a thing called a set of commonwealth procurement rules and you understand that those are a: what you need to be aware of, and b: that they give you some flexibility in how to approach things and c: that this is not about just the moment you walk into the metaphorical shop, it's actually about the planning, the journey to the shop, as well as managing the use of the thing that you have bought. If people are aware of those things, then hopefully they know what questions to ask or when to seek help when they get to the procurement. And I think for the people that work in bits of government, which actually encounter procurement all the time, the procurement professionals, whether they are working in an area that is doing lots of procurement, so there would be areas in the defence department for example, that fall into that category or even in the procurement teams and departments.

(36:10):

I guess really there we are encouraging people to look for opportunities to undertake further training, to join professional procurement associations to, in a sense, to start thinking of themselves as professionals to start thinking of how can I develop that profession and for their leaders and managers and supervisors for them to understand this is something worth investing in their people for. Can I just come back to the question you asked previously around the probity compliance outcome thing? I suppose I feel obliged to say I wouldn't like people to think that compliance is a trade-off, so I don't want to go, let's go hard on outcome and less on compliance. My message I guess would be, I guess the sweet spot for me is to say you can do compliance in lots of different ways. There are lots of ways of behaving which will deliver an outcome that is compliant with the various rules. And good probity and good probity advice will kind of help you navigate that safely. So yes, I feel obliged to suggest, I don't want to suggest compliance is optional, but I think the key point is, and as Andrew and Kim have both said, it moves around a bit and that's where it seems to me keeping an eye on the prize, namely the outcome, keeping the probity piece and advice there to help guide you safely means that you will find a path to a compliant delivery of your outcome, which could be, will differ in different circumstances.

**Kate Driver (37:47):**

Well wise words from the head of the procurement profession and some fantastic stories and thoughts to wrap up the conversation today, as I said at the beginning, I'm a bit of a boffin, we could probably continue all day. I'd like each of you though to give me a top tip for those excited listeners who now know that there are new procurement guidelines available and the head of the procurement profession and our partners from OCM have been speaking to us about how to bring this to life because the framework and the process is only part of how we procure. So Kim, what's your top tip?

**Kim Hunter (38:26):**

I think public servants do a good job in procurement. I think a lot of the concepts that apply in procurement apply broadly in their roles and in their personal lives. So they should have confidence. And I think the Australianism that I think of in probity in procurement is to be conscious of giving parties a fair go.

**Kate Driver (38:47):**

Great words. Andrew, what's your top tip?

**Andrew Marsden (38:52):**

My top tip is just, I often say to people just again, I've said it a few times today, but it's a decision you're about to make. So think about it in that context of a decision and as public servants from the ACT or the

Commonwealth, there's a lot of tools and templates around how you make the decision and there's a lot of precedent. So you can draw back and lean on those as part of the process you do for your decisions and then you design it in. Good probity. Again, compliance isn't something you have to be scared of. It's actually built into the system and you're following most of the tools and policies and procedures or templates you provided. They're actually designed to be compliant with the legislation. So just follow that.

**Kate Driver (39:31):**

And Richard, what's your parting message for all of these new procurement boffins? Having listened to our conversation today?

**Richard Windeyer (39:40):**

I think I've got two comments. One is get involved and go and find the training and capability and support that is available probably in through the APSC website or coming through the Department of Finance website or just sort of search Commonwealth Procurement rules. And you will find a whole lot of stuff that will start taking you down what we've got to offer. So get involved is number one. And the second thing is have confidence in approaching the market. I think that I do, as I said earlier, I worry that that's the thing that could get lost and without doing that well, that really will affect the quality of the outcomes. So have confidence.

**Kate Driver (40:21):**

Well, in building that confidence, I'd encourage you, dear listener, to go and have a look at the Department of Finance website or if you're in the ACT public service, have a look at your directorate guidance on good procurement. I also would be remiss if I didn't give you a little prompt to look at the APS Academy, ACT Public Sector Directorate training, and of course IPAA ACT's offering in this field. Richard, Kim and Andrew, thank you so much for joining us today. Work with Purpose is produced in collaboration with ContentGroup and the Institute of Public Administration Australia. We have now moved past our 150th episode, and I think we're heading into a new realm of discussions and opportunities. If you haven't listened to all of those episodes, you can find past episodes on Spotify, apple Podcasts, or wherever you get your podcasts.

(41:21):

Now, our usual host, David Pembroke, would be right on the phone if I didn't say, I encourage you to also leave us a review. It does help us to be found and there is actually a whole community of people out there who are interested, engaged, and want to talk about the things that we've been talking about here. In the meantime, keep up with all the latest IPAA ACT news and events by signing up to our newsletter at [www.act.ipaa.org.au](http://www.act.ipaa.org.au). And finally, you can follow us on social media, including some of the background pictures, including our dog friendly workplace, event preparation and important speakers. So please join us, follow us, tag us, and thank you for listening.