



Department of Treasury and Finance
Government of Western Australia

Procurement Reform Stakeholder Survey No. 5 – for 2007

Response period: November - December 2007

Summary Report

This report focuses on stakeholder feedback in respect of reforms to the procurement of goods and services being managed by the Department of Treasury and Finance.

June 2008

1 OVERVIEW

Government stakeholders have reported increased satisfaction with the changes and benefits achieved by the Procurement Reform program to date, while still recognising the potential for future improvements, according to the Procurement Reform Stakeholder Survey undertaken for 2007.

The Procurement Reform initiative stems from the findings of the Functional Review Taskforce that reported to Cabinet in December 2002. The initiative aims to deliver increased savings and better procurement outcomes for government. With the Procurement Reform initiative now in its fourth year, the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) commissioned research to understand the impact of the changes on key stakeholder groups.

The survey process was largely a replica of the research program used for the previous four years. It includes comparisons with feedback from the earlier surveys in order to provide valuable information on:

- The effect that the Procurement Reform has had on government departments/agencies;
- Whether stakeholder perceptions have changed since the reform commenced; and
- Areas where further reform or improvement is required.

Three stakeholder groups were surveyed during November and December 2007:

- In-depth telephone interviews were held with the Directors General and CEOs of the 36 largest spending government agencies.
- An online survey was conducted for agency staff that identified themselves as Buyers, with 529 responses being received.
- An online survey of Procurement Practitioners was conducted, which attracted 136 responses. All the respondents were from the DTF's Office of Government Procurement.

Generally, the improving trends established in the previous survey continued:

- Directors General / CEOs acknowledged the considerable progress and improvements made by the Procurement Reform program so far;
- Buyers within government reported an overall increase in satisfaction with the efficiency of the procurement system; and
- Procurement practitioners recorded an increase in satisfaction in many areas, including Government procurement policy and processes.

This Summary Report is structured to outline the feedback from each of these three groups.

Survey responses were recorded on a seven-point scale where '1' is "Terrible" or "Extremely Dissatisfied" and '7' is "Excellent" or "Extremely Satisfied". Positive scores include the responses recorded at '5' or above. Negative scores include the responses recorded at '3' or below. Responses recorded at '4' are considered "Neutral" or "Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied." In the interest of completeness, "Don't Know" or "Not applicable" responses have also been recorded.

Note that in the tables and graphs that follow, the results of the survey undertaken in late 2007 appear under the year of the report's publication in 2008. Similarly, the results of the 2006 survey process were published in 2007 and are labeled as such. And so on. This convention was established in the first survey report, published in 2004.

Synovate, a private Perth-based market research company that was formerly known as Market Equity, conducted the Procurement Reform Stakeholder survey. The same company conducted the previous annual surveys.

2 DIRECTORS GENERAL AND CEOs

Feedback provided by DsG/CEOs (or in some cases their nominees) regarding the Procurement Reform has become increasingly positive over the five years of the research. A high degree of uniformity is evident in the opinions of DsG/CEOs, with nearly all expressing that the procurement system has improved considerably since the commencement of the reform program.

2.1 Impressions of the Current Procurement System – Goods and Services

Several shared values are now evident in the responses from the DsG/CEOs in relation to the procurement reform. Most refer to the positive changes that have taken place since the procurement reform began. Nearly all DsG/CEOs acknowledged that the procurement system for goods and services has improved significantly compared with five years ago. In the early years of the reform program, DsG/CEOs referred to the procurement system being 'on the right track.' In recent years, the view expressed is that the system is operating at the optimal level or close to it.

The shared views expressed by those interviewed included:

- There was strong support for the key principles underpinning the procurement reform and the benefits of leveraging whole-of-Government spending power;
- A positive cultural shift within the agencies in terms of enhanced awareness amongst staff of the need to achieve savings and improve procurement practices;
- Noticeable savings in many areas of procurement, attributed to the whole of government approach;
- Significant value was attached to the reports and other communications provided to agencies by the DTF.
- There was continued satisfaction with the way in which the agency-based procurement service delivery model is working; and
- While improvements continue to be experienced through the streamlining of goods procurement, it is perceived that the procurement of services does not work as efficiently. Therefore, a greater focus should be placed on services in the future.

This final issue regarding the procurement of services was raised by several of the DsG/CEOs. Although this is a new issue raised this year, other problem areas identified in previous years appeared to be less pressing. In previous years the calculation of the savings target was an area of concern for some DsG/CEOs. However, in the latest survey the respondents made very few references to the subject.

The DTF is aware of the issues associated with the development, formation and management of services contracts. Several of the Common Use Arrangements established in recent years have focussed on the provision of services such as training and human resources consultancies. The DTF has developed the Professional Advisory Services (PAS) course to assist agency staff to more effectively scope and manage service contracts. The DTF recognises the challenges associated with contracts of this type and will continue to work with agencies to ensure improved outcomes for future services contracts.

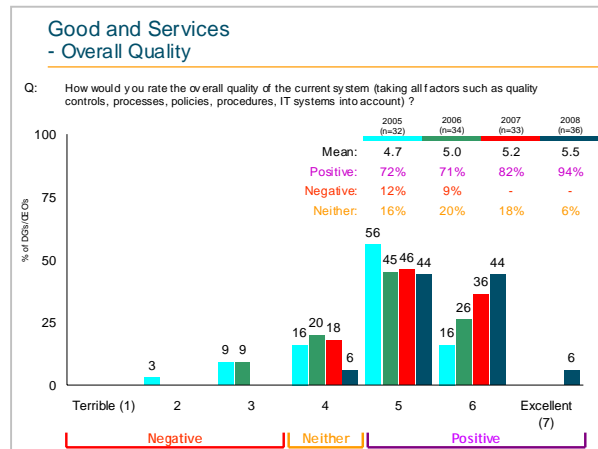
Most of the changes noted by DsG/CEOs over the last five years have been positive in nature. It is widely acknowledged that the whole of Government approach has led to significant savings in a range of areas and that the procurement system is functioning more efficiently than ever before.

The majority of DsG/CEOs were satisfied with the overall quality and value for money of the goods and services procurement system, as shown in the following graphs.

Ratings for the **overall quality** of goods and services procurement were more positive this year, with a mean score of 5.5 out of 7, compared to 5.2 last year.

There was a significant increase (12%) in the number of positive ratings, up from 82% in the previous survey to 94% this year.

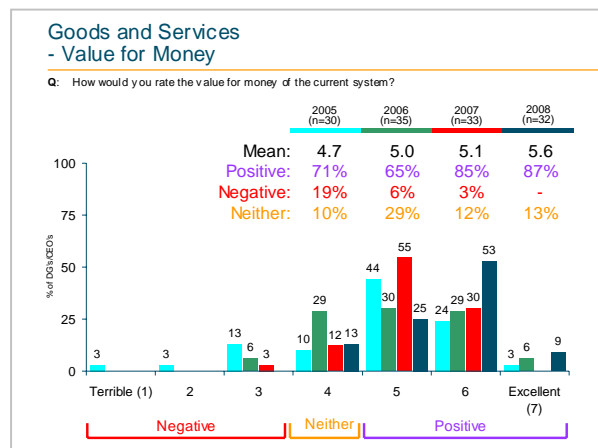
None of the DsG/CEOs gave a negative score, continuing the trend from the previous survey.



Ratings for the **value for money** of goods and services procurement were marginally more positive this year, with a mean score of 5.6 out of 7, compared to 5.1 last year.

The high level of positive responses continued with a positive rating of 87%, close to the score of 85% in the previous survey.

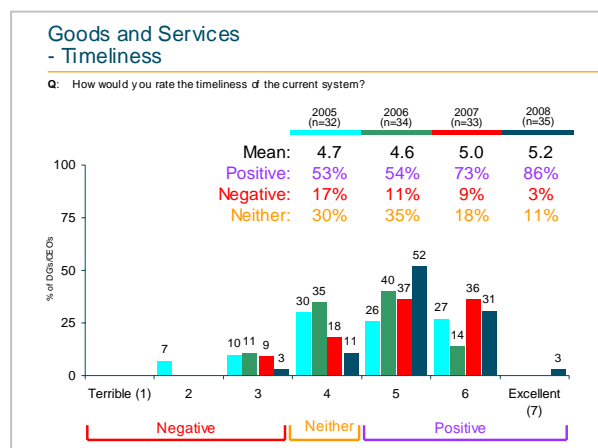
While 3% of DsG/CEOs provided negative scores in the previous survey, no negative scores were recorded this year.



There has been a noticeable improvement in the scores for the **timeliness** of goods and services procurement. Previously this was a significant concern to DsG/CEOs. However, comments regarding timeliness were uncommon this year.

Ratings for the timeliness of goods and services procurement were more positive this year, with a mean score of 5.2 out of 7, compared to 5.0 last year.

There was a significant increase (13%) in the number of positive ratings, up from 73% in the previous survey to 86% this year.



The proportion of negative ratings decreased from 9% last year to 3% this year.

2.2 Quality of the Communication and Information Provided by DTF

Continuing the trend from last year, DsG/CEOs found the information and communication provided by the DTF to be both useful and valuable. Most DsG/CEOs were satisfied with the information available to them on the progress of the procurement reform.

Several of the DsG/CEOs were able to provide suggestions for additional information that the DTF could provide in future. In particular, it was suggested that lower management levels should receive more information of a detailed nature.

The DTF will continue to explore the possibilities of presenting more detailed information to agencies and will continue to work with the agencies to deliver more effective and targeted procurement reporting, where possible.

2.3 New Client Procurement Services Framework

Building upon the sentiments expressed last year, nearly all DsG/CEOs were overwhelmingly positive toward the new contract development and management service delivery model. The support provided by the agency based DTF staff was particularly valued, especially their in depth knowledge of procurement issues and responsiveness to queries.

While sentiments were very positive towards the model, some DsG/CEOs provided suggestions for improving the way that the system operates. A common message related to the need for the DTF to retain experienced procurement people and cultivate a more detailed understanding of agency operations.

Several DsG/CEOs observed that the new arrangements provided a better career path for people in the procurement profession and that the DTF had demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the development of the agency based team members.

2.4 Regional Buying Centres

Over the last three years, DsG/CEOs have been asked their opinion regarding the Regional Buying Centres where specialist teams deliver procurement services to agencies in the regions. Three offices were initially established and a fourth office opened in Albany in early 2008. Similar to last year, the majority were aware of the initiative. However, there were several agencies that were not in a position to comment because they have no dealings with the Regional Buying Centres.

In general, DsG/CEOs were positive in their assessment of how the Regional Buying Centres are performing and those that expect to use the service in the future could see the benefits the specialist teams would bring.

There were some comments provide on how the Regional Buying Centres could improve their services to agencies, including better marketing to raise agency awareness of their services and the need to further research supplier capacity and availability in regional areas.

2.5 How has Goods and Services Procurement changed over the last 5 years?

This year, DsG/CEOs were asked their opinion of where the biggest changes have been seen across the life of the program in order to gauge the effectiveness of the procurement reform. The majority of DsG/CEOs provided very positive comments to this question.

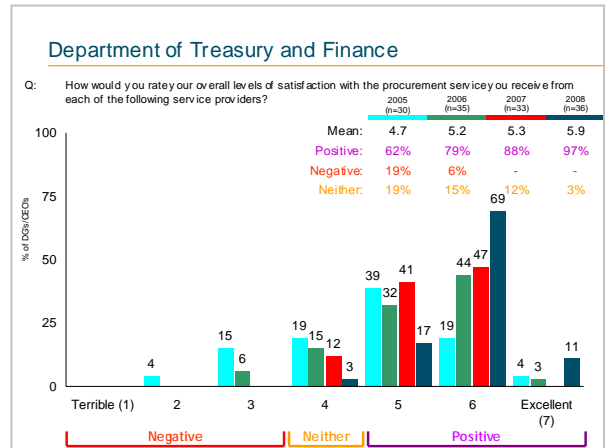
The main changes that have been experienced are:

- An increased professionalism in the procurement process;
- A greater vigour and discipline now embedded in procurement practices;
- Savings and efficiencies created by the whole-of-government spending power and common use arrangements;
- A rise in the number of suppliers on the common use arrangements; and
- Increased recognition of the importance of procurement in contributing to the achievement of service delivery objectives.

The Department of Treasury and Finance’s performance ratings as a **procurement service provider** support the perception of steady overall improvement in the procurement of goods and services.

Satisfaction with the service provided by the Department of Treasury and Finance increased again this year, with 97% of DsG/CEOs providing positive ratings.

None of the DsG/CEOs gave a negative score, continuing the trend from the previous survey.



3. BUYERS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

Consistent with the previous four years, Buyers satisfaction with the State Government procurement systems has once again improved significantly.

The following graph responds to the question: From your experience, overall how would you describe the way in which the State Government buys things?

Buyers' **overall satisfaction** is the highest in five years, with 58% providing positive ratings for this measure, compared to 39% in the first year of the research. Negative ratings have also significantly decreased from 33% in 2004 to 22% in 2008.

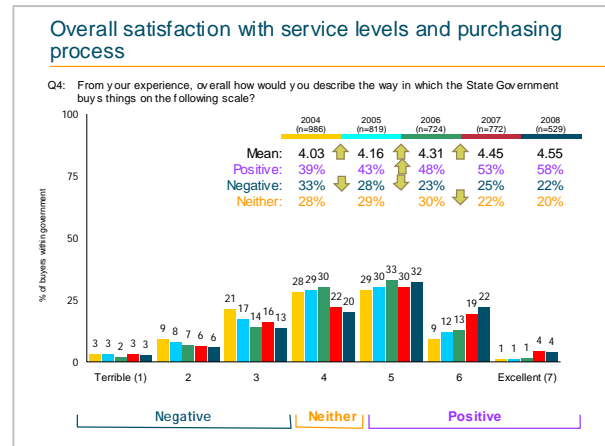
Furthermore, the mean overall satisfaction score increased significantly over the course of the survey. These factors clearly indicate Buyers' improving perception of the procurement system.

In particular, there are a few aspects of the procurement system that have significantly improved over the past five years in the minds of Buyers. These include:

- The flexibility of the processes and policies, as well as satisfaction with the policies themselves;
- The time required to make a purchase;
- The user friendliness of the forms and documents;
- Awareness and usage of common use arrangements;
- Satisfaction with specialist IT systems; and
- The usage of online catalogues.

Despite improvements in Buyers' overall satisfaction, there are still a few perceived weaknesses with the procurement system. Similar to previous years, these include the need for greater flexibility in the procurement system and the ability to purchase from non-contracted suppliers. It should be noted that these opinions expressed as to the weaknesses of the procurement system reflect a minority of views.

The majority of Buyers provided positive comments regarding the procurement system. Feedback improved significantly over the past year and satisfaction with most aspects of the procurement system are at their highest since the survey began. The perceived strengths of the process continue to be the ease of use, transparency and time efficiencies. The area where Buyers would most like to see improvement is in the flexibility of the system.



3.1 Policy and Process

Buyers are satisfied with policy and processes, with the current system being given an overall positive satisfaction rating of 51%, accompanied by a significant decrease in negative ratings from last year. Overall satisfaction with the current system is at the highest level since the survey began.

Improvements in satisfaction have occurred across almost all aspects of the purchasing processes and policies. This table compares the feedback received from the Buyers on a range of drivers.

Satisfaction levels with various procurement policies and processes have mostly increased this year. Significant increases in the satisfaction levels have occurred for the length of time it takes to make a purchase, the Government policies that have to be followed to make a purchase, the user friendliness of the forms and documents needed to make a purchase and the flexibility of the policies and process of making a purchase.

Risk management continues to be a key area of perceived strength, with 62% providing positive satisfaction ratings.

The flexibility of the policies and processes of purchasing continues to rate slightly lower than other dimensions, although Buyers are significantly more satisfied this year. Satisfaction with the ability to get competitively priced purchases has remained relatively steady across the life of the survey.

Policies and Process					
% Positive Ratings	2004 Report	2005 Report	2006 Report	2007 Report	2008 Report
Overall	36%	37%	46%	47%	51%
Risk management	56%	56%	57%	60%	62%
Ease of purchase	51%	54%	60%	50%	55%
Time taken	37%	42%	46%	44%	52%
Competitive prices	48%	48%	51%	52%	51%
Policies	33%	36%	42%	42%	49%
Forms and documents	37%	39%	42%	41%	49%
Processes	40%	42%	47%	44%	48%
Flexibility	26%	31%	34%	35%	43%

3.2 Procurement IT Systems

This year, Buyers’ reported increased overall satisfaction with IT procurement systems, with a positive satisfaction score of 44%. There was also a slight increase in the overall mean satisfaction with a score of 4.3 out of 7 compared to the 4.2 recorded in the previous report.

Noticeable improvements in Buyer’s satisfaction with Procurement IT systems have been recorded during the five years that the survey has been conducted.

A significant component of this improvement relates to an increased awareness and usage of the procurement IT systems.

The number of Buyers who use online catalogues for purchasing has dramatically increased from 38% to 71%.

The use of IT systems to call tenders or find existing contracts has been an area of significant improvement. Satisfaction has increased from 17% in 2004 to 47% in the latest survey.

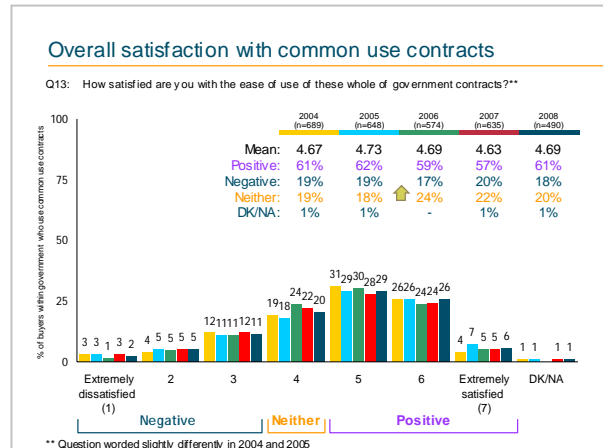
Procurement IT Systems					
% Positive Ratings	2004 Report	2005 Report	2006 Report	2007 Report	2008 Report
Overall	28%	34%	41%	39%	44%
Use of Online Catalogues	38%	50%	63%	62%	71%
Ease of use	49%	51%	50%	55%	61%
Making Payments	36%	35%	47%	52%	56%
Preparing & Sending Purchase Orders	40%	43%	50%	51%	54%
Satisfaction with online Catalogues	44%	48%	46%	49%	52%
Finding existing contracts / Calling tenders	17%	12%	39%	41%	47%

3.3 Common Use Arrangements (CUAs)

The awareness level of government Buyers of Common Use Arrangements has increased from 90% in 2004 to 99% in the 2008 report. The usage of Common Use Arrangements has also increased from 78% in the first survey to 93% in the current survey.

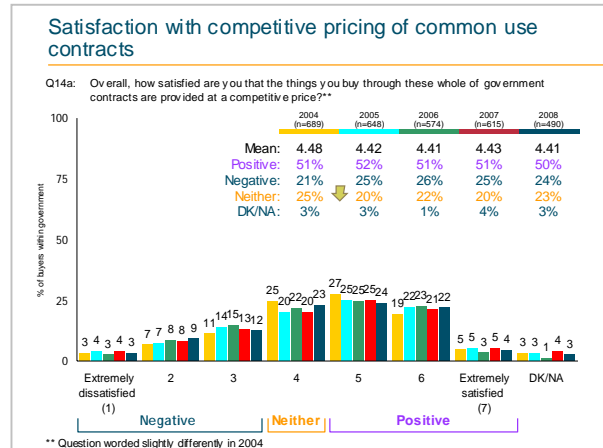
The Buyers’ satisfaction with the **ease of using Common Use Arrangements**, along with their satisfaction that the Common Use Arrangements deliver competitive pricing, has remained relatively steady over the five surveys.

In the 2008 report, 61% of Buyers gave positive satisfaction responses on the ease of using the common use contracts.



Similarly, satisfaction with the competitive pricing of common use contracts has also remained steady over the five surveys, with an overall mean satisfaction score of 4.4 out of 7.

It is worth noting that the results from satisfaction surveys for specific CUAs are considerably more positive than from surveys that ask questions relating to satisfaction with the overall CUA framework. Independently conducted survey of Buyers’ satisfaction with large CUAs during the 2007-08 financial year reported satisfaction scores above 85% for overall satisfaction and value for money.



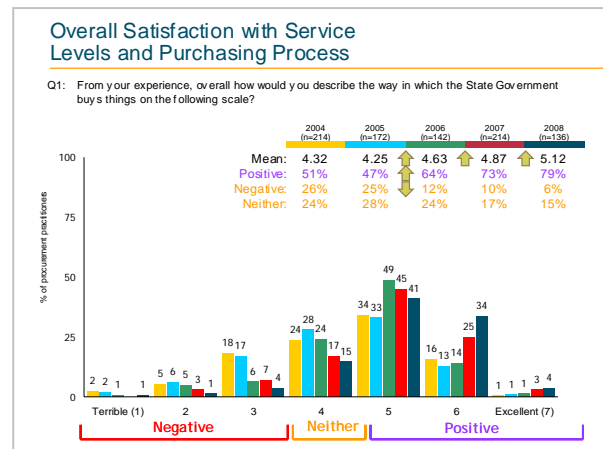
4. PROCUREMENT PRACTITIONERS

Since 2004, Procurement Practitioners' satisfaction with most aspects of the state government procurement system has increased significantly.

Overall satisfaction with the procurement system has increased significantly from a mean satisfaction score of 4.3 out of 7 in 2004 to 5.1 in 2008.

The proportion of positive ratings has also significantly improved from 51% to 79%, while negative ratings have decreased from 26% to 6%.

Satisfaction with all aspects of the system's **policies and processes** has increased over the past five years. The areas of highest satisfaction include the ease of purchasing, ability to get competitive purchasing and risk management. Satisfaction scores for each of these areas were equal to or greater than 70%.



The level of **job satisfaction** reported by Procurement Practitioners increased significantly to 79% this year. A continued high level of satisfaction has been recorded against a range of indicators related to skill development and job satisfaction. In the case of four of the indicators in this area, Procurement Practitioners reported positive satisfaction results over 70%.

Enhanced **knowledge sharing** in procurement continues to improve, with the frequency of knowledge sharing having increased significantly since 2004. Indeed, satisfaction with the level of knowledge sharing has increased, with only 33% providing positive ratings in 2004, compared with 69% this year.

Procurement Practitioners identified only a few areas of perceived weakness in the procurement system. Areas identified for improvement related to the efficiency and flexibility of the system and reducing the complexity involved in making small purchases. It is worth noting that this survey was conducted in late 2007, and that the revised State Supply Commission (SSC) policies were effective from the beginning of 2008. It is expected that the changes to the SSC's Open and Effective Purchasing policy in particular will go some way in addressing these concerns.

Overall, most Procurement Practitioners provided positive feedback regarding the procurement system, and this sentiment continues to become increasingly positive each year.

4.2 Policy and Process

Various aspects relating to the policies and processes of the procurement system have been rated over the five years. The ratings for all of these dimensions have improved over the course of the survey.

In terms of satisfaction with **policy and process**, the current system was given an overall positive satisfaction rating of 70% by Procurement Practitioners. This represents a slight increase in the positive score since last year's positive rating of 67%.

The high level of satisfaction achieved in previous years has been maintained in the 2008 report. Six of the nine policy and process attributes achieved positive ratings above 60%.

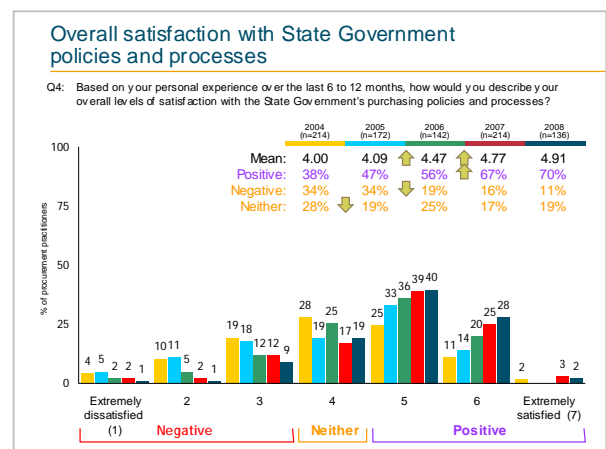
Consistent with previous years, the ability to minimise risk remains one of the key strengths of the current system. The perceived ease of purchase has continued the improving trend from last year and is now rated as a key strength.

Policies and Process					
% Positive Ratings	2004 Report	2005 Report	2006 Report	2007 Report	2008 Report
Overall	38%	47%	56%	67%	70%
Ease of Purchase	49%	46%	56%	72%	76%
Risk management	66%	54%	68%	71%	72%
Competitive prices	59%	55%	60%	67%	70%
Policies	34%	40%	55%	61%	66%
Processes	41%	35%	54%	69%	64%
Forms and documents	39%	35%	40%	61%	58%
Flexibility	24%	24%	43%	46%	51%
Time Taken	28%	24%	43%	50%	50%

The flexibility that the system allows is rated lower than other dimensions, but positive scores increased noticeably to 51% in the 2008 report compared to 46% in 2007.

Over the five years that the survey has run, there has been a significant improvement in Practitioners' experiences regarding purchasing policy and process, with the mean score for **overall satisfaction** increasing from 4.0 to 4.9.

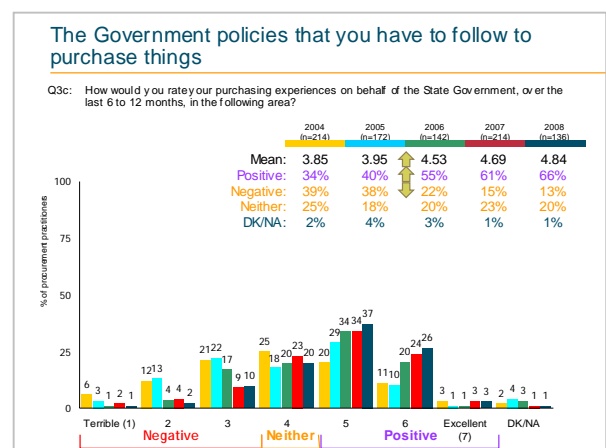
There has also been a significant increase in the proportion of Practitioners who gave positive ratings (up from 38% to 70%), and a decline in those who gave negative ratings, down from 34% to 11%.



Procurement Practitioners have recognised the changes in government procurement policy over the life of the survey. 66% of Practitioners gave positive ratings for Government's procurement policies in 2008, compared to 34% in 2004. The mean satisfaction score also improved from 3.8 out of 7 in 2004 to 4.4 in 2008.

Negative scores decreased over the same period from 39% to 13%.

It's worth noting again that this survey was conducted prior to the implementation of the revised State Supply Commission policies in January 2008.

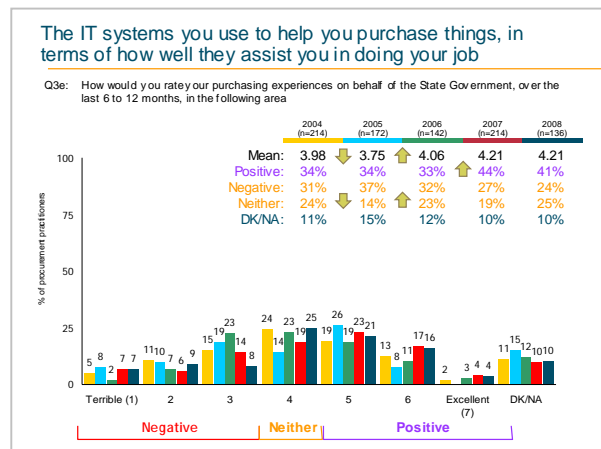


4.3 Procurement IT Systems

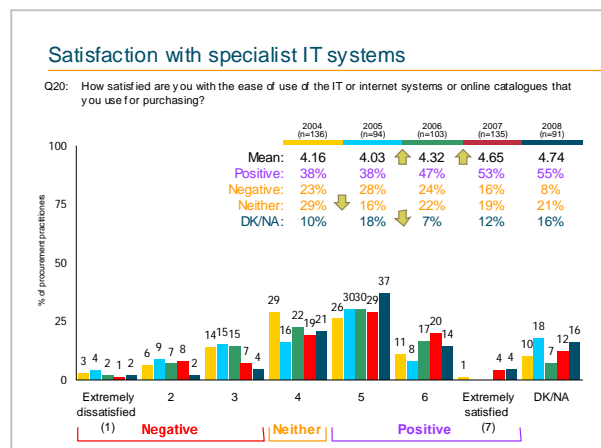
Procurement Practitioners’ satisfaction levels with the online IT systems they use has improved marginally over the life of the survey, although they remain relatively low compared with other aspects of the Procurement Reform.

It is worth noting that whereas most of the Procurement Reform initiatives have now been in operation for several years, the rollout of the whole of government purchasing technology applications has yet to be implemented widely. A new sector-wide e-Procurement module is being progressively implemented in conjunction with the Shared Corporate Services Reform.

There was a slight settling this year in the Procurement Practitioners positive satisfaction levels with IT purchasing systems compared to the score reported in the previous survey. Positive scores decreased from 44% to 41%. However, negative scores have also decreased and the mean satisfaction score has remained steady at 4.2 out of 7.



Interestingly, Procurement Practitioners’ reported slightly higher satisfaction with specialist IT systems such as online catalogues, up from 53% in the previous survey to 55% in the latest report. Negative scores fell significantly from 16% to 8%. The reported use of online systems or catalogues by Procurement Practitioners has remained relatively steady over the life of the survey. On average, 51% report they use these systems.



A new Contract Development and Management System (CDMS) for DTF Procurement Practitioners was implemented during 2006 and is now operational. Many of the Practitioners’ comments in the survey about the CDMS highlighted issues associated with the operation of the system and provided suggestions for improving the system’s functionality.

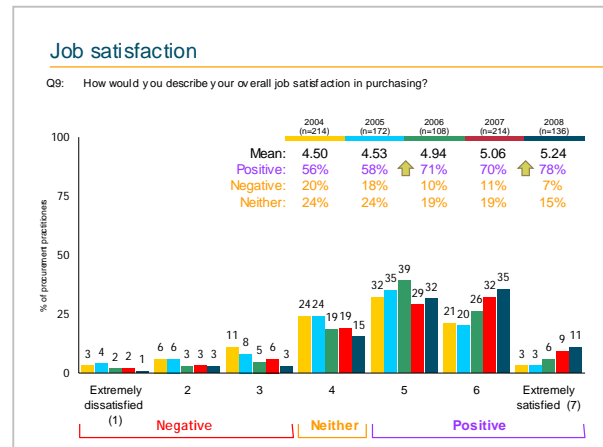
On an ongoing basis, there will be a continued effort to support the use of CDMS by improving the system’s functionality and an ongoing training and deployment program.

4.4 Procurement Staff and Skill Development

Various aspects relating to the Procurement Practitioners’ satisfaction with their personal development and experiences working in procurement have been rated over the five years. The ratings for all of these dimensions have improved over the course of the survey.

In the first year of the survey, 56% of Procurement Practitioners provided positive ratings to the question on overall **job satisfaction**. A fifth of respondents gave a negative rating. In this year’s survey, 78% rated their job satisfaction as positive and 7% gave a negative rating.

It is worth noting that in this year’s report there was a 5% increase in the Procurement Practitioners who rated their satisfaction with a score of 6 or 7.



Given this result, it is interesting to note that there has been a slight decline in some of the other dimensions relating to job satisfaction. For example, there was a significant drop in the positive scores relating to the procurement work itself.

Procurement Environment					
% Positive Ratings	2004 Report	2005 Report	2006 Report	2007 Report	2008 Report
People I work with	73%	73%	81%	84%	80%
Overall job satisfaction	56%	58%	71%	70%	78%
I have access to appropriate resources	53%	59%	70%	76%	73%
Opportunities to use skills and abilities	62%	64%	71%	78%	71%
The Procurement work I do	64%	63%	72%	79%	69%
Manager I work for	58%	68%	73%	75%	69%
Workflow management	56%	54%	59%	70%	68%
Improvements in the Procurement process	36%	54%	69%	68%	67%
Status of Procurement function in Government	33%	39%	61%	61%	66%
Opportunities to suggest improvements	55%	59%	64%	68%	65%

However, the areas of perceived strength remained consistent with previous years. The opportunities to use one’s skills and abilities, access to appropriate resources and the satisfaction with peers and colleagues continued to rate highly this year. The satisfaction with the status of procurement in Government continued to improve.

Procurement Practitioners reported similar levels of satisfaction to last year in many aspects of the skills and development area.

Procurement Staff and Skill Development					
% Positive Ratings	2004 Report	2005 Report	2006 Report	2007 Report	2008 Report
I know what is expected of me at work	77%	80%	79%	90%	84%
I feel motivated to do my work well	68%	63%	78%	81%	72%
In the past year I have had opportunities to learn and grow at work	58%	59%	68%	72%	69%
Someone at work encourages my development	49%	50%	58%	68%	67%
Professional development opportunities	50%	49%	62%	63%	64%
Career path	40%	44%	62%	62%	60%
Feedback and recognition	43%	45%	56%	61%	56%

Although there were significant decreases to the positive scores in two areas (knowing what is expected of one at work and motivation to work well), these were still recognised areas of strength with scores above 70% and 80% respectively.

The level of feedback and recognition once again received the lowest positive score in this area.

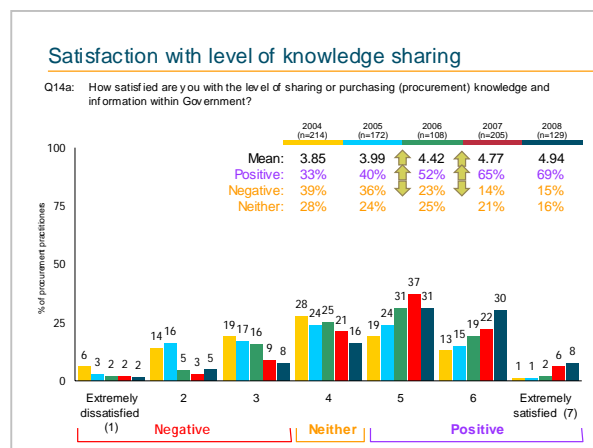
The Office of Government Procurement has recognised the importance of these and other issues relating to the ‘culture’ of the organisation. The senior management group, in consultation and partnership with the people in work teams, is committed to understanding and addressing the concerns expressed through this survey and through other consultative processes.

Knowledge sharing activities were identified in 2004 as a key area for improvement. In the latest survey Procurement Practitioners have reported increased satisfaction with all aspects of knowledge sharing. Over 95% of Procurement Practitioners indicated that they are regularly contacted to provide advice as well as share information with their peers.

In the latest survey, 69% of Procurement Practitioners were satisfied with the level of procurement knowledge sharing and 73% were satisfied with their opportunities to contribute to the exchange of information.

These results represent significant increases for both measures. Satisfaction with the level of knowledge sharing increased from 65% in last year’s survey to 69% this year (up 4%). Since the survey started the mean score has increased from 3.8 to 4.9.

Satisfaction with the opportunities to share knowledge increased from 66% in last year’s survey to 73% this year (up 7%). Over the four years that the survey has run, negative scores with knowledge sharing opportunities have decreased from 32% to 15%.



The Office of Government Procurement will continue to focus on improving knowledge sharing practices and cultivating a knowledge-based procurement culture.

5. WHERE TO FROM HERE?

From the beginning, comprehensive consultation and frank feedback from stakeholders has been a cornerstone of the Procurement Reform program. The views and suggestions of the stakeholders have been an essential and valued input in the development and implementation of the program.

By the same token, the DTF recognised the importance of effective communication and targeted reporting to stakeholders on the progress of the reform. A variety of client committees and working groups were established and continue to meet. The DTF regularly publishes newsletters as well as annual progress and benefits realisation reports on the achievements of the Procurement Reform program. In its own way, the annual Procurement Reform Stakeholder Survey has played an integral role in capturing feedback and measuring the progress of the program.

This fifth stakeholder survey offers an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the program to date and compare the current situation to how things were at the start of the program. It is gratifying to note that most of the program objectives have been successfully implemented and are now delivering better purchasing outcomes for Government, in the opinion of the majority of stakeholders.

The results of the latest survey demonstrates the satisfaction of the Directors General (DsG) / Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) with the progress of the program. This includes satisfaction with the procurement services provided by the DTF and the quality of the reporting information that they regularly receive. There is a recognition that opportunities still exist to improve some procurement practices, such as contracting for services, and to take greater advantage of the Regional Buying Centres. Going forward, the DTF intends to pursue a solution to these concerns and others.

Although there has been an overall improvement in the satisfaction reported by Buyers, the improvements have tended to be modest when compared to the results of the DsG/CEO and Procurement Practitioners surveys. In comparison, other surveys conducted by the DTF reveal a significantly higher level of buyer satisfaction with procurement activities than indicated in the procurement reform survey results. Nevertheless, the buyers have clearly signalled that they believe there are still some opportunities for further improvement. The DTF will continue to work with agencies to communicate the benefits of the procurement reform and will develop initiatives to address the concerns raised.

During 2007 the DTF provided a comprehensive program of procurement education and training. This included the Better Buying Program that provides information to agency staff (especially those who are new to government buying or who only occasionally buy things) on key processes to follow prior to making a purchase. Another successful series was the Professional Advisory Service workshops, aimed at improving expertise across government in engaging and managing consultants. These sessions were well-attended and received satisfaction ratings of over 85%. In addition to the existing procurement training and development program, the DTF will explore other programs to improve the skills of both procurement and non-procurement people.

The development of procurement capabilities across the public sector is an important objective of the Procurement Reform. The Under Treasurer's Educational Development Program (UTE DP) continues to be an outstanding opportunity for people seeking recognised procurement qualifications. During 2007, six people completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Commerce (Strategic Procurement) and ten achieved the Graduate Certificate in Strategic Procurement.

On the national stage, as a member of the Australian Procurement and Construction Council, the DTF has worked with the other jurisdictions to develop the "Building Government Procurement Capability" Guide. This Guide describes a model that outlines the various procurement roles and an aspirational public sector standard for these roles. The aspiration is based on the established approach by other professionals, such as accounting and engineering. In using this Guide agencies should be able to set goals and targets for raising procurement capability and providing a career path to new professional procurement positions.

The results of the 2007 stakeholder survey report demonstrate the ongoing commitment of the majority of Procurement Practitioners to the reform program. This year saw a continuation of the trend for high levels of job satisfaction and the training opportunities available to them. On an ongoing basis, the DTF will consult with Procurement Practitioners on their experiences working in procurement and will support the personal development, networking, teambuilding and other activities to continue to develop their capabilities and the career path for procurement people.

The drive to continually improve and deliver better procurement outcomes for Government has been central to the reform program. The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) will continue to work with agencies to address the areas of concern identified in the stakeholder survey and through feedback received from other sources.