

Victorian Universities Procurement Forum*

Update Presentation

to

Australian Universities Procurement Network Meeting (AUPN) and
2nd Annual General Meeting of Australian University Procurement Managers

Monday 6th July 2009

Vupf

The Victorian Universities Procurement Forum (Vupf) was established in May 2006, originating from a travel forum VUTF (Victorian Universities Travel Forum) which had emerged mainly to deal with Qantas. The travel forum was rolled into the Vupf, which was formed with the support of the Victorian Universities Finance Managers. Participating Institutions in the Victorian Universities Procurement Forum are Deakin University, La Trobe University, Monash University, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Ballarat, University of Melbourne, and Victoria University. Between 4-6 meetings of the Vupf are scheduled to be held each year, with special meetings called as necessary.

Activity

Since the report given to the previous conference, four scheduled meetings were held with invited guests including Bill Aukett along with one special meeting with Cynthia Hansen. As previously reported; the Vupf has shared information, developed networks and mutual trust amongst members. It is based upon collegiality of procurement interests, maximising the outcomes that can be brought back to our respective member institutions. We have developed credibility with suppliers and supplier groups. As the Vupf we have achieved the common application of significant deals between members, many originating with our "Open Use" provisions, which stand the legal test of the ACCC provisions. Deals include: Office Supplies, Furniture, Water- (Palm Springs) Neverfail, Rental Cars – Hertz, On-line Merchandising, Open Windows (Contract management & eTendering), Accommodation – The Excelsior Hong Kong, Vupf Melbourne Hotel deal (deal with Mecure Hotel Welcome - 3.5 stars and The Swanston Hotel, Grand Mecure - 4.5 stars) and Travel – Qantas, and the Virgin deal which has an interim roll over.

Access

In terms of sharing, the Vupf has made available to other universities access to both deals and information and continues to promote this where possible.

Communications

We have had an eNetwork query facility in place which is regularly used. Also a trial Vupf Webpage has been in place although some more implementation work and training is required. There had been a number of items posted covering: Policies and procedures, Printing, Medical Equipment, Probity Auditors, Exchange Rates, and Travel Management Company fees. We share processes and information, provide individual University level updates and can provide support/information /advice to members. We have demonstrated the capacity to provide a collective view and to do the hard negotiating. We have made detailed submissions as a group, such as the submission on the future direction and model of the AUPC and raised concerns upon the need to re-think the "subscription model" proposed.

Vupf Priorities

Priorities for participating universities in 2008 were: 1. Travel 2. Copy/print 3. Spend profiling

Confirmation of "Open Use" provision for Travel Management

Although other uses of the open use provision had previously been reported, the first application of the Vupf "Open Use" provision for Travel Management occurred; via Deakin University with their tendered contract. (The provision for the use of the Vupf Open Use provisions had been accessed by Ballarat University, thus resulting in Campus Travel being installed at Ballarat University).

Victorian Government Contract Access Fee: Purchase of Vehicles

A meeting with the Dept of Treasury and Finance was not able to progress the case for this Fee not being applied to Universities. Other "Outer Budget Agencies" who access the Government rate had lodged protests, but this did not change the position.

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Benchmarking

There was participation by Victorian universities with representation in each commodity. Further interest was registered in regional benchmarking to assist in local deals.

Airlines

Qantas accepted the Agreement with the Vupf as sufficient recognition to implement the NUQA fares effective from 1 December 2008. The Vupf Virgin deal that was made available to other universities has recently been extended for a further period of 3 months while further issues and negotiations are dealt with. This deal is still the benchmark deal, with discounts applying to all fares including specials on the Virgin website. Other airlines are in the process of being engaged for report back to the Vupf.

Construction Projects

Although delayed, there is a commitment on progressing this item. It is agreed RMIT would kick-start this initiative for the Vupf albeit on some small projects. Further, it was agreed that Construction commodity contracts, in view of the positive feedback, the option of leveraging and sharing of workload through the Vupf facility for "open use" or joint tenders is to be explored - it is clear there will be activity in this area, but at this stage not at what level in the first instance.

Vupf Internet Presence and Communication Facility

The Vupf developed a web enabled forum using current resources and open source software. A trial site was established on a server at Swinburne and phpBB3 open source software installed.

Other special items of interest

Reverse Auctions were considered as a tool that may be worth including in Vupf "kit bag". The next meeting of the Vupf is scheduled for 14 July @ Melbourne University,

AUPN Funding

The Vupf has on record support for the AUPN, specifically linked to both communication on a national basis and the national development activities (including the annual national conference and the relationship with CIPSA). However, the funding model was not as readily dealt with and the Vupf engaged the AUPN Executive to enable a position to be developed as a compulsory fee model was not supported based upon the initial case presented. The request required a budget to match the funding model based on the services to be provided, for what projects and the outgoings for these services. In conclusion it was agreed that each individual university member of the Vupf would need to take a decision on the funding model. The "in principle" support already recorded in the original submission made by the Vupf was highlighted. (Nothing had changed on these items which included the subscription concept on the basis of a 50% Flat Fee and 50% Proportional contribution).

AUPN Submission by Vupf for regional benchmarking in Victoria

Besides providing feedback that the Vupf is the regional forum for Victoria, a submission was made that, from the national benchmarking program there was a case for regional benchmarking. As it was understood that this would comply with the original grant requirements, there was support for this, particularly with the Vupf "open use provisions". It was further proposed to commence with three items so all of the Vupf membership could participate, and there was the option for others to join.

AUPN Executive nominations

Joe Arena was joined by Peter Naujoks as a Vupf nomination serving on the AUPN Executive. Peter subsequently took up the position of Deputy Chair of the AUPN Executive.

Acknowledgements

While the Vupf has a state based focus; there is recognition and appreciation of the efforts that both the AUPN and its members make, along with tangible support from HES.



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