

MANUKAU BUS INTERCHANGE 2016-2018



Trades employment for young people in a major transport interchange

In partnership with



The story

The Manukau Bus Interchange is a major piece in the South Auckland transport jigsaw, connecting with the train station and central Manukau from across Auckland. The scale of the project offered a prime opportunity for social procurement to be tested by Auckland Transport, working in partnership with TSI.

The impacts

By August 2017, eight young people (four male and four female) were recruited through TSI and MPPT to many of the site subcontractors, including in electrical, carpentry and scaffolding. Up to another seven will be recruited by the time the project is complete. In the context of South Auckland, where its people are over-represented in general labouring, and climbing the ladder from general labouring is the exception not the rule, these opportunities provide a vital springboard.

For the subcontractors, TSI secured a supply of work ready young people, who are receiving guidance and support to instil and maintain a work ethic. The tailored training that TSI provides its graduates has also saved the subcontractors some time and expense as well.

The young people employed were paid at above minimum wage rates, with pay increases on reaching milestones such as training completion. This created a progression towards living wage rates and ultimately higher pay rates in the longer term. TSI staff could see positive impacts on young people's lives.

“The kids that I’ve placed have turned their lives around from being at risk, in courts. Then they come through us and it takes a couple of people to just be that sounding board, to coach them and mentor and without judgement.”

Dale Williams, TSI



“The Southern Initiative gave us a different way of looking at things, thinking about what we could achieve with our lives rather than just seeing work as a way to get money,” says Inoke.

“It helped us see it is about having a plan, working towards goals and going out of our comfort zone to achieve bigger and better things than we might have imagined before.”

Inoke Kava, Manukau Bus Interchange worker and MPPT graduate

Sustainable Procurement Approach

Auckland Transport’s entry to social procurement was in part prompted by industry feedback during engagement on their own procurement strategy, about the lack of credence given in contracting to the sustainability of services being contracted. This prompted Auckland Transport to engage with TSI on how to proactively bring social procurement into its practice.

“A lot of the feedback was what are you guys doing about sustainability? ... They said we are being required to do a lot in that area ourselves and it’s costing us money and we’re having to hire people... [They said] you take no notice of what we do in that area and you don’t give any credence or weighting to it in your tenders.”

Dave Colquhoun, Auckland Transport

The Manukau Bus Interchange provided the first major opportunity to test a new procurement approach. Drawing on past experience, TSI worked with Auckland Transport to develop a range of non-price attributes in the tender that tenderers were asked to respond to:

- Reducing the carbon footprint of the construction activity
- Reducing waste to landfill associated with the construction activity
- Submitting a Targeted Recruitment and Development Plan to demonstrate how the tenderer and subcontractors will “provide quality, new entrant, paid employment opportunities to South Auckland candidates at no cost to the Principal under the tendered price.”

This approach, built into procurement from the outset, meant that tenderers needed to make clear their intentions, and this contributed to 5% of the overall assessment. Some were keen to grasp the opportunity in their responses, and met with TSI to discuss potential approaches, and the support TSI would be able to give them on the ground in recruiting young people to the site.

TSI helped AT assess these responses as part of the overall evaluation of approaches, and this helped speed up the overall process.

The successful contractor, NZ Strong, was an enthusiastic supporter of this approach, and worked constructively in connecting TSI and MPTT with the subcontracting companies on the site.

TSI’s work with MPTT graduates includes site safe training, drug testing, and CVs. TSI connected graduates from MPTT with subcontractors to fill opportunities on site. TSI has a staff member regularly on site to provide pastoral support to the placements, as well as access to training such as for heights, harnesses and elevated work platforms.

“My role is mainly getting involved in meeting with the subcontractors, and figuring out what some of their needs were. Far too often you see too many people with skills gaps when they’re placed, so my job really is to fill that void, and to provide them with that pastoral care support, post-placement but also make sure they have the training element that each subby needs.”

Dale Williams, TSI

The ongoing pastoral support is important for maintaining employment, and helping navigate the inevitable bumps in the road that many young people with complex family circumstances often face.



“It was the first AT infrastructure procurement tender that actually went out with evaluated attributes around carbon, waste and social and economic outcomes.”

Dave Colquhoun, Auckland Transport



“ We know that if somebody is not supported, some things happen at home that’s going to change dynamics, so we’ve got to help them build that resilience, to be able to cope with that. Mentoring and pastoral care post-placement is key, and the relationship with the employer, so you’re going to need someone who’s going to talk to the subcontractor and the trainee.

Dale Williams, TSI

The lessons

Key to the success of the Manukau Bus Interchange was the early and proactive engagement of Auckland Transport with TSI and the procurement team. This enabled:

- A scoping of what could be possible from a project of this scale
- A specification of the non-price attributes that could drive additional social outcomes
- Liaison with prospective contractors on the opportunity this presented.

Once the contractors (and subcontractors) are in place, there is also the need for ongoing engagement with both workers and contractors. The investment that TSI placed in mentoring and guidance to the MPTT graduates on site was widely seen as key to the continued success of the initiative. TSI’s own vision of social transformation, rather than as a work placement organisation, drove this ethos. This also required a reciprocal relationship on the part of the contractors to monitor the recruits and keep in touch with TSI.

“ It’s not just here’s a student thank you, you tick the box with social procurement. It’s more like, I’ve given you my student, so can you give me reports on their progress from time to time, via email or drop me a text, or can I come and visit you once a month. Building that rapport and relationships are important, you can’t just do it from the comfort of your office, you have to be down here sometimes, or even travelling to them.

Dale Williams, TSI

Social procurement is something that can work at a range of scales, it simply needs active consideration of what the feasible additional benefits might be able to be secured. Each has its own unique challenges and requirements, so a ‘cookie cutter’ approach to social procurement is unlikely to be feasible. Over time however, the learning from different settings will help inform practice and build a growing sense of what can be achieved.

“ It can work at any scale, you’ve got Fale Kofi where you’ve just got the small kiosk, versus Manukau Bus Interchange where you’ve got you know major multimillion dollar investment happening. You can do something that’s suitable for what it is you’re trying to procure and to get additional local benefits.

Dave Colquhoun, Auckland Transport



Joe Coffey, MPTT Graduate



“You can teach ability but you can’t teach ethic, and so to have the support around that in particular is great.”

Jimmy Corric, NZ Strong

