



APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINEESHIP COMPLETION PROJECT PILOT EVALUATION REPORT TEMPLATE

Pilot project name	Civil Construction Industry – Pilot Project - Recruitment and Selection
Pilot host organisation	Civil Contractors Federation - Victoria
Person completing this report	Sonya Casey
Date report completed	

This reporting template sets out the key information each Apprenticeships and Traineeship Completion Project (ATCP) pilot project is required to provide in your final evaluation report. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the success of your pilot project in:

1. contributing to the evidence base regarding the key enablers and barriers that influence rates of successful completion or apprenticeships or traineeships in your sector and
2. developing, trailing and implementing a treatment with the potential to improve completion rates of apprentices or trainee's in your sector.

Urbis will be using the information you provide in this report to inform our overarching evaluation of the ATCP program.

This report template comprises the following key sections:

1. Pilot Project overview
2. Data collection and analysis
3. Pilot outcomes
4. Pilot implementation and reflections
5. Sustainability
6. Additional insights

We have included brief instructions on how to complete each section. If you would like additional support, or clarification on data collection and reporting requirements, you can contact Urbis for assistance. The Urbis evaluation team can be reached at:

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Submission instructions

To submit this report – send a word version of the report, along with any supporting documentation to ebrophy@urbis.com.au and frankland.mark.s@edumail.vic.gov.au.



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I. PILOT PROJECT OVERVIEW

I.1. PILOT DESCRIPTION

The piloting of a *Recruitment and Selection Pack* for sub-contractors engaged in various sub-sectors of the Civil Construction Industry is founded on findings of research of reports, employer responses to interviews, follow up interviews and broader consultation with government agencies and industry representatives.

The magnitude of infrastructure construction being carried out, and in the pipeline of development work is unprecedented in Victoria. Challenges associated with sub-contractors, small to medium enterprises, (SMEs) identifying and employing entry level workers as apprentices in the civil construction industry are significant. Given the urgency and high demand for entry level workers, who nominate Civil Construction as a career of choice, and the lack of supply, the ATCP Civil Industry Advisory Team agreed to focus on Recruitment and Selection Practices. The “product” is designed to support human resource activities of sub-contractors of the Civil Construction Industry.

To deliver Victoria’s planned infrastructure development projects, one of the challenges facing the civil construction industry is to find and recruitment adequately trained employees who have the ability to work safely. The focus of this Industry Pilot Project is on the recruitment and selection of entry level employees with the option to become apprentices and participate in the Certificate III in Civil Construction (General).

Civil Contractors Federation Victoria, commissioned BIS OXFORD ECONOMICS to facilitate the completion of a report titled, 2018 Victoria Infrastructure Report. The Executive Summary, (page 5) states: *The main challenges for Victoria from here are Two-fold: Firstly, sustaining stronger rates of growth in the economy and employment beyond the current cycle, and, secondly, planning to ensure that the construction industry – and the broader economy – avoid capacity and capability constraints that are likely to emerge as non-mining investment continues to grow. The second challenge is arguable more difficult, and requires sensible policies being put into place to ensure sufficient skilled labour, materials and equipment are supplied timely to meet future investment demands.*

The procurement process and resulting business structure of the Civil Construction Industry are complex. Civil and industrial infrastructure works (excluding the erection of buildings), includes the following activities: road construction, plant operation, pipeline construction, trenchless technology, bridge construction, rail construction and tunnelling. Small businesses (SMEs) as sub-contractors are the most common type of employer, representing the private, small scale construction businesses that service the large Tier One, Two and Three major contractors. Typically, most SMEs do not have the human resources and administrative staff to facilitate a sound and systematic approach to recruitment and selection. It is commonly believed that recruiting an individual who “fits” the organisation, whether large or small, will assist with ensuring the individual commits to a career in civil and completes an apprenticeship and further study.

The decision to develop and pilot the Recruitment and Selection Pack is further supported by an URBIS prepared APTC Baseline and Options Analysis Report in May 2017. The Executive Summary provides the following overview: *Several studies indicate that improving recruitment practices can have a positive effect on completion rates (Dickie et al., 2011; Mitchell et al., 2008). One suitable strategy we would promote for consideration by the ATCP is to assist employers in designing and delivering effective recruitment processes. This may include development of key selection criteria, as well as completing recruitment interviews and making better candidate decisions.*



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The Recruitment and Selection Pack is a step by step, guidance process, supported with adaptable templates at each step. The “user” of the Pack is systematically taken through the step by step process. For the pilot, users were provided with one on one briefing sessions. Template examples were presented and suggestions for customising, including logos and messages proposed. Selected SMEs piloted the recruitment practices/processes over a one-month period. Follow up interviews were conducted with minor changes to the Recruitment Selection Pack. Users provided positive responses for the purpose and step by step approach taken for the Pack. Results and successes of implementing the Recruitment and Selection Pack for new, entry level employees are not validated as yet.

CCF Victoria, will offer the completed Recruitment and Selection Pack as part of the CCF Management Code. The Recruitment and Selection Pack supports Section1 - BUSINESS SUPPORT, I.1 - Competence and awareness as a best practice model. This will be available on CCF Victoria’s website, which is an open field site.

1.2. PILOT TARGET GROUP

The membership data base on CCF Victoria provided the contact details for the implementation of the initial interviews and request to pilot the Recruitment and Selection Pack. Forty-five CCF Victoria members were interviewed. These organisations ranged in size from Tier One, Two and Three, to very small enterprises.

The “type” or Civil Construction organisations included three Councils, earthmoving, pipelaying, land engineering, road building, rock crushing, large machinery maintenance and equipment hire.

Tier One organisations are major contractors to the significant Government infrastructure projects. These organisations employ large numbers of staff, usually contract management, safety and compliance management, monitoring and reporting, human resources and engineering. Generally staff responsibilities are at the professional level.

Civil Sub-contractors’ to Tier One Two or Three range from family owned and operated businesses or three to four employees to organisations that employ over 20 individuals.

Category	Interviewed	Location	Gender
Tier one, Two and Three	6 businesses	6 Metro	Balanced
Established businesses – more than 20 employees	6 businesses	4 Regional Vic 2 Metro	Male dominated
Local Government - Councils	3 businesses	1 Northern 1 East 1 West	Balanced
Owner operator (SME)	23 businesses	Regional & Metro Vic	Male dominated Female admin
Specialist supplier businesses (SME)	7 businesses	Regional & Metro Vic	Male dominated Female admin



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Six of the organisations interviewed have been engaged with civil construction for over 25 years and have lived through the ups and downs of the civil industry. These organisations commented that nothing has really changed, it's just gotten harder to do the work and young people so not know what it's like to work! Recruiting was easy.

Ten organisations have identified the current business opportunities and "put up a shingle" as an owner operator and established themselves as a valued sub-contractor to Tier Two and Three levels. The remaining thirteen, established owner operators have extended there services to Tier One, Two and Three major contractors.

The specialist owner operators are service providers to the civil industry. The target for this project were SME's. Note: There are major specialist service and product providers as global players in the civil and infrastructure sector.



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2. DATA COLLECTION

The aim of this ATCP Pilot Project was to better understand the extent to which SME businesses use structured recruitment and selection methods to engage entry level employees. The following study questions guided the collection and analysis of information.

- Do Small to Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) and subcontractor businesses of the Civil Construction industry sector have in place recruitment and selection processes to assist with engaging apprentices?
- Would SME Civil Construction businesses implement a Recruitment and Selection Pack prior to engaging apprentices?
- Would a nominal group of SME businesses of the Civil Construction industry sector partner with CCF to “Pilot” the CCF Recruitment and Selection Pack?

The data collection process were implemented using the following stages:

- Establishment
- Facilitation
- Review
- Design and development
- Pilot
- Finalisation
- Report and communicate.

Establishment - Baseline		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Scope of ATCP for Civil Construction Industry Sector	In consultation with Urbis Group, completed Project Logic document. Developed Scope of Study with clear project questions and objectives.	August 2017
CCF & ATCP Advisory Group	Established the CCF & ATCP Advisory Group. Representation from Tier One organisations, Lend Lease, BMD, John Holland, Fulton Hogan and Vic Roads. A series Industry Group meetings scheduled, every two-months, beginning January through to December 2018. Formal agenda and minutes will be maintained.	
Synthesise Research Findings	Completed a review and desk audit of (related) research studies and discussion papers to identify barriers to apprenticeship completions within the civil industry sector. Completed an analysis of international papers and policies to source information on completion rates of European countries, specifically Germany and Switzerland experiences. Developed a Working Group Discussion Paper – Completions for Civil Construction Industry.	



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	To seek endorsement of the focus – Recruitment and Selection for SMEs of the Civil Industry, this paper was discussed with CCF & ATCP Advisory Group at the meeting in January 2018. Endorsement received.	
Project Logic and General Methodology	Attended workshop with Urbis to drill down, and clarify the Civil Construction sector's ATCP, research questions and assumptions.	Last week September 2017
Develop Interview Tool	<p>Feedback as provided by Uris and DET incorporated into the Draft Guiding Interview document.</p> <p>Draft guiding interview proforma trialled with four employers in regional Victoria. Minor changes made to the document.</p> <p>Guiding interview tool approved by URBIS and DET</p> <p>Final interview tool completed and ready for implementation.</p>	September 2017
Identify CCF Vic members to be interviewed	<p>Review CCF Vic data base to select organisations to be interviewed.</p> <p>Identify businesses that have employed apprentices in the past or currently have apprentice(s)</p> <p>Focus on SME's in Gippsland, Geelong, Horsham, Bendigo, Metro and Murray regions.</p> <p>Initial telephone contact to seek level of interest and suggest appointment to meet face to face.</p> <p>Initial contact list of 125 CCF members.</p> <p>Commitment received from 45 CCF member organisations.</p>	October 2017
Facilitation		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Schedule meetings	Appointments with organisations at office or at a convenient location. (Home office after hours or the local McDonald store over a coffee)	September 2017 to February 2018
Organise itinerary and accommodation	Travel to regional and metro locations to facilitate meeting with SME business	
Preparation for meetings	Investigate business connection and contact with CCF from both membership services and training programs	



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Facilitate meetings	Present overview meeting process. Purpose and context. Hand over paper based guided interview document. Ask questions as per the Interview document. Confirm and discuss any points of clarification with interviewee.	
Data entry	Record comments and suggestions aligned to each question.	
Review		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Review comments and suggestions collected from 45 businesses	Collate all information onto master sheet. Research additional information to assist drafting the Recruitment and Selection Pack.	February 2019
Design – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Develop first draft – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack	Draft the step by step process for the Recruitment and Selection Pack.	February to March 2019
Develop first draft – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack	Design and develop the Recruitment and Selection Pack.	
Facilitate industry round table discussion	Present Draft Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack for guided discussion and feedback with Civil Industry Advisory Group.	
Pilot – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Request civil industry SME employers to pilot intervention	Identify and request to 20 SME (from the 45 interviewed) civil industry employers to pilot the Recruitment and Selection Pack	April to July 2018
Confirm pilot commitment from each SME business	Contact each employer to “convince” them of the value of being engaged with the pilot. 12 SME business confirmed their participation in the pilot process	
Briefing session with each pilot SME business	Appointments with SME businesses at office or at a convenient location. (<i>Home office after hours or the local McDonald store over a coffee</i>)	



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	Travel to regional and metro locations to facilitate briefing session with SME business (average 1 hour per briefing)	
Maintaining contact with each SME business	Regular telephone contact to support. Sensitive to pilot organisations intense workloads	July to August 2018
Follow up interview(s)	Appointments with SME businesses at office or at a convenient location. (Home office after hours or the local McDonald store over a coffee) Travel to regional and metro locations to facilitate meeting with SME business (average 1 to 2 hours per interview) Record comments and suggestions	September to October 2018
Seek industry endorsement	Present pilot Recruitment and Selection Pack to CCF Advisory Group for discussion and endorsement	October 2018
Review feedback	Update Recruitment and Selection Pack as required Complete word version of document.	October 2018
Finalise – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Complete Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack	Produce final (word) version of Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack.	November 2018
Communicate outcomes and “product” to CCF Vic members	Presentation made to CCF members at regional forums linking to the CCF Management Code workshops. Raise awareness of the value to workforce development through apprenticeships and reduce the level of caution in relation to SME civil employers recruiting entry level employees Document feedback and comments	November 2018
Publish Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack	Desk top publish final Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack aligned to Government funded projects publishing requirements	November 2018
Report – ATCP Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Attend Urbis and DET briefing sessions	Collate findings of the pilot of the Recruitment and Selection Pack.	November to December 2018
Write and submit report		



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	Prepare Final Report and recommendations for implementation within the civil sector and transferability across other industry sectors.	
Promotion and Communications – How To – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Facilitate a series of How To – Briefing Sessions Schedule into 2019 CCF Vic Event Calendar	Revisit previous regional areas (6) to provide a briefing and demonstration of how to use various templates and guidance papers within the pack. SME civil employers who attend the briefing sessions will be provided access to the Recruitment and Selection Pack electronic (via CCF website) free of charge Employers are able to customise the templates and insert their logo and adapt the contents as required	January onwards 2019
CCF Management Code (update)	Place Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack as a resource, linked to Chapter 1 – Business Management, 1.1 Competencies and Skills	

The data collection methods applied to this project required coercive and tactical communication skills by the CCF Project Officer. Building a supportive relationship with and being able to sell the value of being engaged with ATCP to the SME employer was critical to gaining traction and receiving feedback.

The tools and techniques implemented for this project are considered sound and provided qualitative and quantitative data to be reviewed and synthesised.

To gain commitment and engagement of SME employers was a significant challenge. This situation is understandable given the amount of infrastructure projects currently in progress. Individuals are very time poor, therefore there was a need for the Project Officer to interview and brief employers after normal working hours and at locations that were suitable to the interviewee.

Keeping interviewees focused on the guided questionnaire, especially demographic data was difficult at times. Given they are time poor, they just wanted to talk about their experiences with apprentices and entry level labourers, the procurement process and sub-contracting to Tier One, Two or Three major contractors and general concerns in relation to the significant compliance responsibilities, accountabilities and reporting. Deeper information was (at times) gathered through “having a conversation” with the interviewee.

The data gathered provided information to understand the level of experience with recruitment and selection processes. Based on this information, the design and structure, the language and readability levels, and general guidance in relation to templates and suggestions the Civil Skills Recruitment and Selection Pack was drafted.



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2.1. DATA ANALYSIS

The findings presented are a combination of information gathered throughout the facilitation of initial guided interviews, telephone conversations, follow-up interviews and a review of marked up drafts of Civil Industry - Recruitment and Selection Pack collected from pilot SME businesses.

The methods used to interpret and analyse the information gathered included; conducting high level review of similarities and differences, documenting similarities and questioning significant differences and presenting summary of findings and draft Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack to the CCF Industry Advisory Group for feedback and validation.

The table below provides an overview of approaches taken to analyse the information gathered at each stage of the ATCP Pilot.

Establish - Baseline		
Activity	Description	Approach and analysis
Synthesise Research Findings	<p>Completed a review and desk audit of (related) research studies and discussion papers to identify barriers to apprenticeship completions within the civil industry sector.</p> <p>Completed an analysis of international papers and policies to source information on completion rates of European countries, specifically Germany and Switzerland experiences.</p> <p>Developed a Working Group Discussion Paper – Completions for Civil Construction Industry.</p> <p>This paper was discussed with CCF & ATCP Advisory Group at the meeting in January 2018. To seek endorsement of the focus – Recruitment and Selection for SMEs of the Civil Industry. Endorsement received.</p>	<p>Based on research questions, identified information that would validate and inform the development of the Civil Industry – Recruitment and Selection Pack.</p> <p>Facilitated Civil Industry Working Group meeting with key agenda items and questions posed for discussion.</p> <p>Recorded meeting outcomes and advice as meeting minutes. Integrated this information into development of the structure and language levels of the pack.</p>
Review		
Activity	Description	Approach and analysis
Review comments and suggestions from pilot businesses	<p>Update Recruitment and Selection Pack as required</p> <p>Complete word version of document.</p>	<p>Collected hard “marked up” copies of Recruitment and Selection Pack from each SME pilot employer.</p> <p>Worked through comments and feedback.</p> <p>Updated first draft Recruitment and Selection Pack.</p>



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Follow up interview	<p>Appointments with SME businesses at office or at a convenient location.</p> <p>(Home office after hours or the local McDonald store over a coffee)</p> <p>Travel to regional and metro locations to facilitate meeting with SME business (Average 1 to 2 hours per interview)</p>	Presented first draft Recruitment and Selection Pack to SME businesses for comment and validation of process and template examples.
Seek industry endorsement	Present pilot Recruitment and Selection Pack to CCF Advisory Group for discussion and endorsement	Facilitated Civil Industry Working Group meeting with key agenda item Review – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack.
Review feedback	Identify similarities and differences of feedback received.	Integrated this information into development of second draft, including comments on the structure and language levels of the pack.
Design – Civil Industry Recruitment and Section Pack		
Activity	Description	Approach and analysis
Develop first draft – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack	Draft the step by step process for the Recruitment and Selection Pack.	Edit second draft, by sifting through marked up versions and comments from Industry advisory Board.
Prepare style guide – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack	Design and develop the Recruitment and Selection Pack.	
Facilitate industry round table discussion	Present Draft Civil Industry recruitment and Selection Pack for guided discussion and feedback.	
Seek industry endorsement	Present pilot Recruitment and Selection Pack to CCF Advisory Group for discussion and endorsement	Email draft two to CCF Advisory Group Members requesting feedback.
Review feedback	Update Recruitment and Selection Pack as required	Email response provided validation of the stepped approach and supporting templates of the Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack.
Finalise – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack		



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Activity	Description	Approach and analysis
Complete Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack	Produce final (word) version of Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack	Edit and check for completeness.



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3. PILOT OUTCOMES

As a SME sub-contractor, an owner operator, a new entity in partnership with a couple of mates, or as a well-established small business, engaging with the infrastructure and civil construction sector can be complex. Many SME civil businesses are experts with drainage, excavation or building roads. However, they have not had the opportunity or experience to understand, deal with Government procurement processes, compliance and safety requirements and the legal and legislative issues when sub-contracting to a major contractor or consortium. It's a tough business to get a foot in, competitive, all-consuming and if the sub-contractor is not operationally/business savvy, can return limited profits.

The piloting of the Civil Industry – Recruitment and Selection Pack, has identified the need to guide and support small sub-contractor businesses to implement a systematic approach to recruitment and selection. It is considered that an improvement to recruitment and selection practices would have a positive impact on apprentice completion rates.

The outcomes and answers to the three key questions and evidence of change are summarised below:

Questions	Pilot Outcomes	Evidence of Change
Do Small to Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) and subcontractor businesses of the Civil Construction industry sector have in place recruitment and selection processes to assist with engaging apprentices?	<p>Sub-contractors do not have the physical and human resources to implement a structured recruitment and selection process.</p> <p>Strong evidence that employees/employers of small businesses have little experience to engage with sound recruitment and selection processes.</p>	<p>Employers are more aware of the purpose and impact of applying the step by step approach for recruitment and selection.</p> <p>All 12 pilot sites identified the significant value of implementing a systematic recruitment and selection process.</p> <p>Impact on completion rates of apprentices cannot be measured at this stage.</p>
Would SME Civil Construction businesses implement a Recruitment and Selection Pack prior to engaging apprentices?	<p>Sub-contractors would definitely use a Recruitment and Selection Pack. Specifically when there is a product available for small businesses in civil construction.</p> <p>Generally have not employed apprentices as it's too confusing. Very little success as they leave for all sorts of reasons. Don't like the work and the rate of pay is not enough. They often cannot afford to have a car.</p>	<p>Understanding, application of the process and customisation of various templates to reflect the small business, such as logo and address.</p> <p>Greater appreciation of the positive impact of understanding the skills required for the entry level role required and the operational tasks of the contract.</p> <p>Employers agreed with the need to "match" roles (skills needed), individuals and general fit into the business.</p>
Would a nominal group of SME businesses of the Civil Construction industry sector partner with CCF to "Pilot" the CCF Recruitment and Selection Pack?	From the original interview group (45), a small number of sub-contractors (12) committed to pilot the Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack.	Employers or employees participating in the pilot have gained the skills required to implement a recruitment and selection process.



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	<p>All small businesses within the civil construction sector are extremely time poor, commented that they want to do the right thing...but surviving (at that time) was more important.</p> <p>All interviewed and requested to participate, understand the need to create career opportunities.</p>	<p>The step by step approach, descriptions of each step and generic templates provided the SME businesses with the confidence and competence to formalise and put in place a recruitment and selection process, whether for entry level new employees, or skilled technical workers.</p>
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In addition to responding to the key questions, information relating to business structure and past engagement of apprentices, there was a need to gain a sense of where the small (SME) business/employer saw themselves fitting into the overall Civil Construction and Infrastructure Sector in Victoria.

The Recruitment and Selection process cannot be considered in isolation from other business practices. The *human resources* component of a small business is often the last thing to be considered. The employer is usually a fantastic machine operator, (for example), however, has not had the opportunity to experience and usually cannot justify employing a HR practitioner.

SME businesses are classified as sub-contractors to the larger, Tier One, Two and Three major contractors for the significant infrastructure projects within Victoria. Expectations to deliver the (sub) contract on time, within budget and within all compliance requirements, often are cascaded down to the sub-contractor.

The opportunity to be engaged with the ATCP project, CCF Victoria has gathered information from SME civil contractors that supports the initial assumption; *improving recruitment practices can have a positive effect on completion rates (Dickie et al., 2011; Mitchell et al., 2008)*. The key achievement of the pilot project are:

- Creating the opportunity to lead pilot organisations through the step by step Recruitment and Selection process. To build their confidence and skills, therefore raising SME civil construction business owners awareness of the need to select individuals who are suited to the role and the business.
- Acknowledging the challenges that SME civil businesses experience as sub-contractors to major contractors. Challenges include SME's taking more responsibility for reporting and other compliance requirements. Recognise that SME employers need to build and maintain their business, including human resources, administration and operational competencies, as well as maintain technical skills and aware of innovations and updates in the civil construction sector.
- Building a "product", Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack, to be used as a guide for businesses without dedicated HR resources. The Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack supports the CCF Management Code, and will be available as a resource for sub-contractors via the CCF Victoria website. The product is generic and could be adapted to other vocational/trade areas, where SME businesses employ entry level workers.



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4. PILOT IMPLEMENTATION AND REFLECTIONS

4.1. PILOT DESIGN

Assuming that SME civil construction businesses have the resources and time to be interviewed, one on one, to discuss issues relating to recruitment and selection of entry level workers or apprentices, with an external project officer should have been “investigated” prior to selecting this approach. Consideration could have been given to a series of regional focus groups. Perhaps a more efficient method to gather data would be for small groups of employers to come together, later in the day for a guided discussion with light snacks provided.

Given the interviewees were all extremely time poor, communication skills used required coercive, sensitive and tactical approaches. Building a supportive relationship with and being able to sell the value of being engaged with ATCP to the SME employer was critical to gaining traction and receiving feedback.

The tools and techniques implemented for this project are considered sound and provided qualitative and quantitative data to be reviewed and synthesised. Consideration could have been given to regional focus group sessions.

The data gathered provided information required to understand the level of experience with recruitment and selection processes, the structure, language and readability levels and general guidance in relation to templates and suggestions.

4.2. REFLECTIONS ON PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

4.2.1. Project activities

Keeping interviewees focused on the guided questionnaire, especially demographic data was difficult at times. Given they are time poor, and wanted to talk about their experiences. Consistent examples were with apprentices and entry level labourers, the procurement process and sub-contracting to Tier One, Two or Three major contractors.

In addition interviewee talked about their general concerns in relation to the significant compliance responsibilities, accountabilities and reporting. Deeper information was (at times) gathered through “having a conversation” with the interviewee.

4.2.2. Lessons

Implementing the activities as planned were a challenge, as many SME civil business were very busy carrying out their day to day operations and achieving project deliverables.

To gain commitment and engagement of SME employers was a significant challenge. This situation is understandable given the amount of infrastructure projects currently in progress. Individuals are very time poor, therefore there was a need for interviews and briefing sessions with employers to be held after normal working hours and at locations that were suitable to the interviewee.



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5. SUSTAINABILITY

CCF Victoria is committed to ensuring that the learning from and product developed as a result of the ATCP project does not get “left on the shelf”. The table below provides planned action for 2019:

Promotion and Communications – How To – Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack		
Activity	Description	Timeframe
Facilitate a series of How To – Briefing Sessions	Revisit previous regional areas (6) to provide a briefing and demonstration of how to use various templates and guidance papers within the pack.	January onwards 2019
Schedule into 2019 CCF Vic Event Calendar	SME civil employers who attend the briefing sessions will be provided access to the Recruitment and Selection Pack electronic (via CCF website) free of charge Employers are able to customise the templates and insert their logo and adapt the contents as required	
CCF Management Code (update)	Place Civil Industry Recruitment and Selection Pack as a resource, linked to Chapter 1 – Business Management, 1.1 Competencies and Skills	



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6. ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

All SME civil businesses understand and recognise the need to provide a safe working environment, interesting work, and skills development for employees. The opportunities for sub-contractors to contract to major contractors has provided many SME civil businesses with a comfortable pipeline of work. There is anecdotal evidence that, some SME civil businesses have engaged external consultants to develop tender responses on their behalf. Having won the tender, the SME civil business finds that they need to employ workers immediately to fulfil the requirements and deliverables of the contract. Finding workers who want to work and are available is extremely difficult. Poaching of “good workers” from competitors is common.

Most SME civil businesses provided negated comments of their experiences of the apprenticeship and traineeship system.

Comments such as:

- Too hard. The system is too complex.
- I don't really understand apprenticeships.
- Don't want to commit if work drops off we have to let people go.
- Young people don't want to work. Don't know what it's like to work physically. It's too easy to get government support and stay on the couch.
- School needs to change a lot. There's no self-discipline.
- Apprenticeship went out in the 80's. There is no such thing as master servant now. It has to be a partnership.
- I was an apprentice and it worked back then, but needs to change now. We must have workers with the skills, that are needed as we deliver each milestone of the contract.

The Civil Construction sector must have stronger representation and engage in a significant review of the current training package. The streams and units of competency need to be upgraded to reflect the application of new technologies and more efficient and effective ways to work in high risk workplace/site situations.