



WALGA, working for Local Government.

The WA Local Government Association uses e-signatures to accelerate processing of Preferred Supplier agreements allowing Local Governments to acquire tender-exempt goods and services faster.



"Adobe Sign gives us the efficiencies we need to simplify contract paperwork and improve Member services."

Dale Chapman, Acting Executive Manager of Business Solutions, WALGA



SOLUTION

Adobe Document Cloud
• Adobe Sign

RESULTS



FAST CONTRACTS

Reduced average contract signing time from months to just 1.3 hours



IMPROVED VISIBILITY

Improved control over contracts sent with automated tracking, audit trails, and document status updates



HIGH PRODUCTIVITY

Empowered staff to focus on process improvements by reducing time-consuming, manual, and high-volume tasks



SUSTAINABLE

Reduced paper consumption by more than 50,000 printouts by moving Preferred Supplier contracts to electronic signature workflows

Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)

Established in 2001

Employees: 100

West Leederville, Australia

www.walga.asn.au

CHALLENGES

- Award and activate new Preferred Suppliers faster
- Improve employee productivity through efficient contract processes
- Gain visibility and management over contracts

Working for Local Governments

In 2001, Local Governments formed the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) to give a united voice to local concerns with a truly representative organization. In addition to advocacy and policy development, WALGA manages business relationships with hundreds of Preferred Suppliers for its 139 Member Local Governments.

According to the *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996*, Local Governments generally need to submit public tender for any goods or services expected to cost \$100,000 or more. Rather than submitting purchases through a lengthy tender process, Local Governments can make their purchases through a WALGA Preferred Supplier. Under the WALGA Preferred Supplier program, WALGA assesses suppliers using a comprehensive public procurement process and uses aggregate purchasing arrangements to provide Local Governments with great value. By choosing WALGA Preferred Suppliers, Local Governments can streamline the purchase process while still guaranteeing optimal costs and services.

Lengthy, complex paper processing

Two years ago, WALGA officially established a contract management team to process contracts for Preferred Suppliers. "As a new team, part of our role was to challenge the current workflows and make improvements," says Nikki Brennan, Contract Coordinator at WALGA. "We quickly realized how complicated and time-consuming the existing process was."

Preferred Supplier contracts are incredibly detailed, running 50 to 170 pages. The Contract Administrator, Shobana Krishnan, would print, bind, and mail three copies of the contract to each supplier for review and signature. "Once we sent the contracts in the mail, we had less control over the process," says Krishnan. "The contracts could get lost in the mail or sit on someone's desk, and we would have no idea what was happening."

It could take anywhere from two weeks to three months or longer to receive contracts back. "If there was a long delay, we would start calling the supplier to check where the contract was, which was not only labor intensive, but also not the best use of the team's time," says Dale Chapman, Acting Executive Manager of Business Solutions at WALGA.

After a signed contract was returned, WALGA Executives signed the contracts a final time. Krishnan then scanned every page into an e-filing system. One copy was returned to the supplier, one copy was stored on site, and the third copy was stored off site in the vital records storage.



“Our average turnaround time for signed contracts with Adobe Sign is 1.3 hours. Considering that it used to take at least two weeks, and sometimes even months with paper contracts, this is a huge improvement.”

Nikki Brennan, Contract Coordinator, WALGA

“If I had to pick three terms to describe our previous process, they would be onerous, inefficient, and wasteful,” says Brennan. “We knew that there had to be a better way.” In her search for greater efficiency, Brennan attended a presentation on electronic signatures. “A legal advisor in attendance assured me that electronic signatures were legally binding. With that assurance, I realized e-signatures could be the answer.”

Exploring e-signature solutions

WALGA approached e-signatures methodically, using a detailed trial to aid in the decision-making process. After the field was narrowed down to the top three choices, the Contract Management team tested each solution using ten different document scenarios. “We had a long list of requirements, including audit trails, reporting, usability, and cost,” says Brennan. “And we didn’t just consider our needs. We wanted something that would be easy for our suppliers to work with as well.”

After extensive user tests, Adobe Sign, an Adobe Document Cloud solution, was the preferred selection. “Adobe Document Cloud met all of our usability and functionality requirements, while still giving us good value,” says Brennan. “We received endorsement from our Executive Manager just by giving him a trial. He understood the difficulties we had been having, so he was sold immediately.”

Faster contracts, faster service

Starting small, the Contract Management team began with a simple contract involving only nine suppliers. Using Adobe Sign, the signed contracts were returned in minutes instead of weeks—an undeniable success.

In the first year of using Adobe Sign, WALGA has completed 511 supplier contracts. “Our average turnaround time for signed contracts with Adobe Sign is 1.3 hours,” says Brennan. “Considering that it used to take at least two weeks, and sometimes even months with paper contracts, this is a huge improvement.”

One supplier contract involved particularly lengthy negotiations. While this contract could have easily taken more than three months to complete previously, WALGA completed the contract with Adobe Sign in only 19 days.

“We give suppliers the option to continue using paper contracts, but with the ease that they’re seeing of e-signing, more than 95% have welcomed our electronic process,” says Brennan. “Working with Adobe Sign is so much faster and easier. We can get suppliers into our systems for Local Governments so that they can benefit from being a Preferred Supplier right away. The faster they are approved as a supplier, the faster our Local Government Members can take advantage of their services, which is a win for everyone.”

“Adobe Sign delivers the trackability and visibility we were missing from the contract process.”

Shobana Krishnan, Contract Administrator, WALGA

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

- Adobe Document Cloud
- Adobe Sign

Enhanced visibility and sustainability

“Adobe Sign delivers the trackability and visibility we were missing from the contract process,” says Krishnan. “From a single dashboard, we can see whether signers have read or signed the contracts. We can send out reminders with the click of a button and enable automated reminders to help ensure contracts are returned faster.”

Copies of signed contracts are automatically delivered to all parties, eliminating the need to scan and deliver signed contracts. Administrative processing time improved by 92%, reducing total processing time per contract from 100 minutes to eight minutes. With the additional productivity, Krishnan has more time to work on identifying inefficiencies and improving processes.

Switching to electronic signatures not only saves time, but also reams of paper. “Since deploying Adobe Sign, we’ve completed hundreds of contracts,” says Brennan. “Previously, each of these contracts, which average 110 pages long, would be printed in triplicate. Moving to a paperless workflow with Adobe Sign has saved us more than 50,000 pieces of paper, approximately AU \$56,000 so far, and has significantly impacted our sustainability, professionalism, and process efficiencies.”

With the success of Adobe Sign for managing Preferred Supplier contracts, WALGA is starting to look at other ways to use e-signatures, including for purchase orders, contract administration, IT agreements, and tenders delivered by the Contract and Procurement Consultancy Team.

“By processing contracts more efficiently, we are helping our Local Governments connect with a larger pool of Preferred Suppliers faster,” says Chapman. “Adobe Sign gives us the efficiencies we need to simplify contract paperwork and improve Member services.”

For more information

www.adobe.com/go/dc-enterprise



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