

Concise Method of Measurement

- Andrew Scotford, President, The Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors.

Following six months of Industry meetings in an attempt to produce a Concise Method of Measurement (CMM1) satisfactory to Proprietors, Governments, Design Professionals, Building Contractors and Sub-contractors, it has been agreed that only one Method of Measurement (SMM5) should be in use in the Industry at any one time.

The working party investigating the issue of a CMM comprising representatives of NPWC, RAIA, AFCC, MBCHAA, BISCOA and AIQS were united in their refinement of the "No Dispute" Cost Management paper referring to Bills of Quantities.

The Industry rejected the notion that Bills of Quantities created disputes. It maintained that disputes were created by inadequate documentation. The continued provision of Bills of Quantities was requested and it was confirmed that a detailed BQ was preferable to a Concise BQ for tendering purposes, in particular where tendering times were condensed.

Further measurement (which would be required if a Concise Method of Measurement were adopted) should not be necessary in order to elicit the right tender price.

Bills of Quantities should measure the works described in the plans and specifications that form the contract and should refer thereto. (As clearly required by AFCC's six general principles*).

Recent Industry reports have emphasised the necessity for proper and complete documentation. MBCHAA's

Improving Construction Industry Efficiency (Inquiry into construction costs of major projects) states that "A set of documents including drawings, specifications and bills of quantities prepared in a professional and competent manner ... will result in a less costly product".

It was further recommended that a seven day 'checking' period be introduced following completion of tender drawings and specifications, in order to enable the Quantity Surveyors to ensure that the BQ's aligned with drawings and specification before issue to tenderers (Tender Code Amendment).

Contrary to the findings of the "No Dispute" document, the industry representatives believe that there is little place for a Concise Method of Measurement, other than for use in preparing Construction Quantities for a particular contractor.

Participants in the Industry Working Party remained committed to the task of refining SMM5 to incorporate the

most efficient method of accurately measuring the works described in the scope. The detailed measure necessary to build up an accurate price was considered essential by the parties surveyed, in particular the requirement was reinforced by both the estimators and also the subcontractors at the workplace.

* In December 1989, AFCC had set out six principles for a CMM which may be summarised as follows:

- BQ to identify quantum, not specification.
- BQ should cross-refer to specification, drawings and other contract documents.
- Preliminaries should include 3 items, namely establishment, ongoing costs and demobilisation costs.
- The method of measurement should be based on the ways in which a competent trade subcontractor would price work if no bill was available.
- The number of items in the BQ should be kept to a minimum, whilst avoiding the need for re-measurement.
- None of the items should be composite "cross-trade" items.