Brunel

Recruiting a Fitting AP Automation Solution

Brunel Australasia eliminates invoicing delays and accelerates cashflow with Esker Accounts Payable.

ESKER®

Brunel Australia

🏭 **Staffing & recruiting for the energy sector**	👥 **Over 12,000 specialists**
🏪 **Founded in 1975**	👥 **Locations in 45 countries**
🌐 **Operating in Australia since 1997**	💻 **MS Dynamics NAV**

Challenges
Manual processes make suppliers feel neglected

With over 120 offices and a team of more than 12,000 specialists worldwide, Brunel delivers skilled talent and workforce solutions to over 45 countries. Brunel specialises in transforming global projects in industries such as Life Sciences, Renewable Energy, Oil and Gas, Infrastructure, Future Mobility, and Mining.

Prior to automation, Brunel relied on a manual accounts payable (AP) process – printing invoices and entering data into the ERP, chasing for approvals, managing mailboxes and filing documents. The AP process presented a significant bottleneck, leading to considerable frustration throughout the organisation due to the multitude of touchpoints and the involvement of numerous individuals in the workflow. The Finance Director at Brunel Australasia, Andre Giles, highlighted these challenges by stating, "We've had countless conversations where the invoice is received, pending approval, and then it gets lost." The mounting frustration was not confined to the internal team but extended to external stakeholders as well. "We faced challenges in promptly and efficiently on-charging certain costs to our customers. This introduced an additional layer of frustration for external stakeholders engaged in the process," he explained.

Brunel's objective was to find a solution that could provide instant visibility into the status of invoices so that the AP team would be able to respond to supplier queries quicker, remove frustrations, improve productivity and accelerate invoice processing times.

Objectives

⏱ **Reduce customer invoicing delays to accelerate cashflow**

✓ **Eliminate repetitive & mundane AP tasks**

👁 **Provide instant visibility into invoice status**

⚙ **Decrease supplier invoice processing times**

📊 **Increase both innovation & processing speed**

Solution

Less is more: directing invoices to the relevant approvers

With the implementation of Esker Accounts Payable, an AI-powered automation solution, all invoices are directed to a centralised processing system. If an invoice is not present in the system, it is considered non-existent. Esker has also eliminated the challenge of invoices being distributed among multiple individuals, instead providing the relevant approvers with a single platform for validating invoices in a standardised manner, complete with automatic reminders. Mr. Giles pointed out that the team can now predict how long an invoice will be waiting for approval, thanks to the new performance metrics introduced - an ability they didn't have before.

Mr. Giles applauded the simplicity of the solution, stating, "You can follow up on approvals, but now you know exactly who to approach, who holds which invoice, and the duration they've held it for. The solution's UI is remarkably user-friendly." Mr. Giles emphasised that the goal was not to develop an overly complex custom software since Esker's solution already covered 90% of the required functionalities, and he is very happy how seamlessly it was integrated into the company's operational structure.

Esker has not only prevented the need to hire additional staff but has also played a crucial role in retaining existing team members. The avoidance of recruitment costs, which can be quite substantial, has been a tremendous relief. Mr. Giles stressed that "simplifying people's daily tasks usually gets a good reaction, and this lies at the core of the transformative journey I am leading." The positive impact of the solution goes beyond just the AP team; it also reaches the approvers. Esker has effectively removed a significant amount of frustration from their work processes, contributing to an overall improvement in their satisfaction. In terms of vendor experience, he highlighted the absence of 'noise', or issues, seeing it as a good sign that the interactions about issues have decreased significantly.

Mr. Giles commended the Esker team for their outstanding support, noting their attentiveness to requirements and provision of practical examples to address concerns. He also praised the effective remote delivery of user acceptance testing (UAT) training by meeting deadlines flawlessly. Describing it as the best project with an external solution provider, he credited the Esker team for setting clear expectations, milestones, and maintaining frequent communications.

> **"We've managed to reduce our invoice processing times by as much as 60% as we are no longer receipting, printing and keying much of the information into our ERP. We've enjoyed the benefits of Esker so much that we are extending the solution to other entities around the world."**
>
> **Andre Giles**
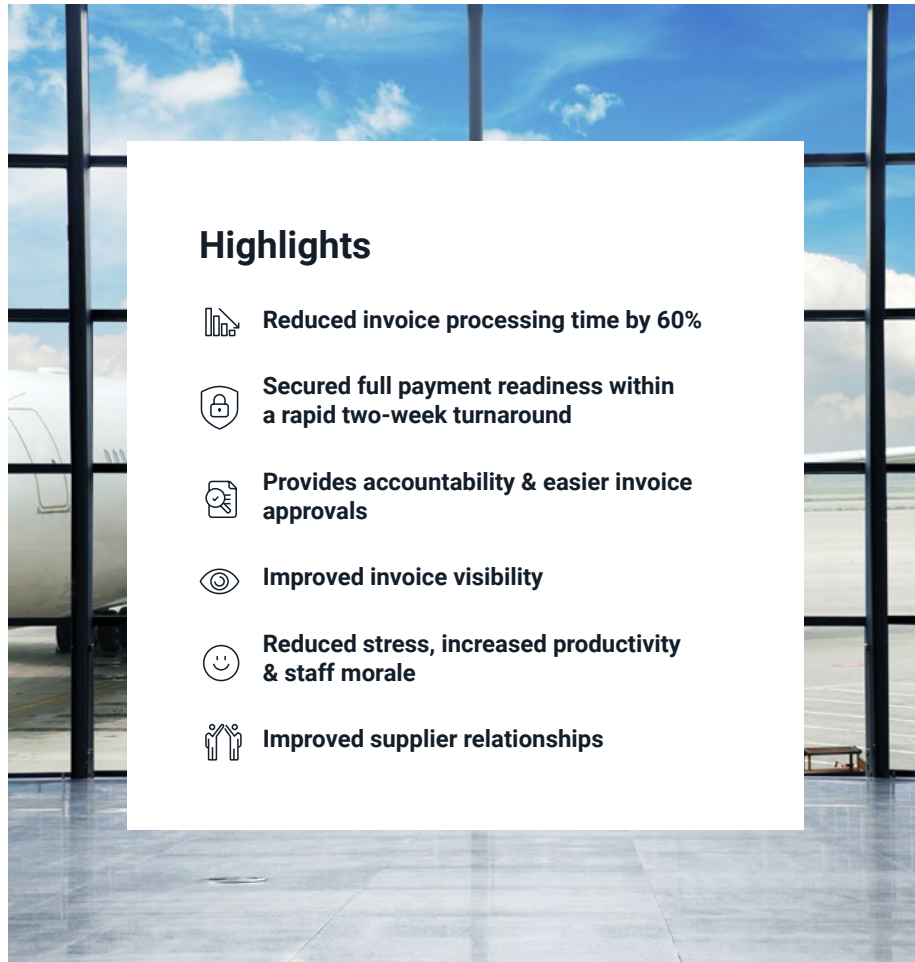> Finance Director Australasia, Brunel

> "With Esker, we've achieved an end-to-end readiness for payment within two weeks, a remarkable accomplishment."

Andre Giles
Finance Director Australasia, Brunel

Highlights

📊 **Reduced invoice processing time by 60%**

🔒 **Secured full payment readiness within a rapid two-week turnaround**

📝 **Provides accountability & easier invoice approvals**

👁 **Improved invoice visibility**

☺ **Reduced stress, increased productivity & staff morale**

👥 **Improved supplier relationships**

Results
Visibility through better reporting

Ever since Brunel has implemented Esker Accounts Payable, it has reported many noticeable improvements, ranging from greater visibility into the status of every invoice to shorter invoice processing times – by as much as 60%. The time required for approving invoices has now been shortened to three days. "We've achieved an end-to-end readiness for payment within two weeks, a remarkable accomplishment," said Mr. Giles. Thanks to Esker, Brunel has been able to shift its focus to valuable insights, spend management, and improved vendor engagement. As he noted, these were goals we've always aspired to but never had the time to address due to being constantly engrossed in day-to-day tasks. Furthermore, Esker has played a significant role in enhancing the company's performance in the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), particularly in the environmental aspect. "By eliminating paper usage and discontinuing the filing of documents we've taken a step towards sustainability," he commented. This move has not only contributed to planet-friendly practices but has also boosted employee morale, strengthened relationships with stakeholders and provided the desired visibility.

Apart from these advantages, Esker Accounts Payable has demonstrated its value as a significant asset in streamlining our bi-annual Payment Times Reporting obligations. Although this wasn't the primary motivation for selecting Esker, Mr. Giles noted that the effort involved in generating reports every six months used to be substantial. However, with Esker, we can now complete this task in less than half a day, greatly supporting our compliance initiatives.

He concluded by saying: "We're working with the Esker team to implement the solution in Papua New Guinea. The platform has demonstrated its worth and I believe in sharing good products globally. We chose Esker for its global reach and capabilities beyond our business and I'm confident it can be used in different locations."

Want to automate your Accounts Payable processes like Brunel?

Get in touch with Esker.

About Esker

Esker is a global cloud platform built to unlock strategic value for Finance, Procurement and Customer Service professionals, and strengthen collaboration between companies by automating the cash conversion cycle. Founded in 1985, Esker operates in North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia Pacific with global headquarters in Lyon, France, and U.S. headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. Our customers use our cloud solutions to increase the efficiency, productivity and visibility of their source-to-pay (S2P) and order-to-cash (O2C) processes.

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