

Procurement Advisory Notice 24/2020

For suppliers – Securing government tender opportunities as a small and medium enterprise

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (defined in the [Queensland Procurement Policy 2019 \(QPP\)](#) as businesses employing less than 200 people) are vital to Queensland's economy, regional prosperity and job creation, particularly during the COVID-19 emergency and recovery phases.

To support Queensland SMEs, the Queensland Government has introduced a Queensland SME procurement target. This requires all government agencies subject to the QPP to collectively meet a target of 25% of the State's procurement spend by value from Queensland SMEs from 1 July 2020, increasing to 30% by 30 June 2022. This is aimed at increasing tender opportunities for Queensland SMEs to drive business growth and employment within the sector.

This Procurement Advisory Notice outlines a number of key steps an SME can take to prepare for and maximise chances of securing these opportunities.

Preparing for the opportunity

Capability statement

As a first step to prepare for future tender opportunities, consider preparing a capability statement (or 'value proposition') to outline what your business can offer and the benefits that it can bring. In addition to deciding whether you present a competitive value for money option, this information will help prospective customers (whether government or private sector) decide whether to do business with you.

A basic capability statement includes an overview of the business, core competencies, achievements, management profile, client list by industry or sector, description of products and/or services and contact details. The capability statement, as well as information gathered to inform the statement (e.g. resumes, licences, accreditation, statistics, case studies, testimonials, references), should be retained for use in substantiating claims made in a tender response. Think about how this information could be incorporated into the business' website and used to publicly present credentials and promote achievements.

Pre-market engagement

SMEs that undertake pre-market engagement can better position themselves to secure government contracts. Generally, pre-market engagement involves proactively taking steps to anticipate upcoming tender opportunities and enhance visibility of your business. This includes:

- registering your interest in, and prequalifying for, future tender opportunities by local, state and federal government agencies:
 - [general tender opportunities](#)
 - register with QBuild for construction, building and maintenance tender opportunities - www.business.qld.gov.au, search for 'QBuild'
 - prequalifying for Queensland Government building projects - www.business.qld.gov.au, search for 'PQC'
- attending and engaging in information sessions or briefings, tradeshow, exhibitions, seminars and conferences conducted by government or industry for insights on upcoming opportunities, and seizing this opportunity to ask questions and network with potential tendering partners:
 - see the [Business events web page](#) on the Business Queensland website
 - [register for Buy Queensland supplier updates](#) for information on procurement events
- reviewing existing contracts with, and forward procurement schedules published by, government agencies:
 - [Queensland Contracts Directory](#)

- [Forward Procurement Pipeline interactive dashboard](#)
- contacting local, state and federal government agencies to enquire about being listed on supplier lists and to be notified for any relevant opportunities
- ensuring your business has taken action to ensure compliance with [current COVID-19 requirements](#), including adherence to a [COVID Safe Industry Plan](#) where applicable. You can also visit the [COVID-19 Supplier Portal](#) to find a list of suppliers that provide COVID-related goods and services (such as PPE and hand sanitiser) that your business may need to meet government requirements.

Securing the opportunity

Develop a response strategy

Once the tender is open, allocate time to understand the key tender requirements and formulate a response strategy. This involves:

- ascertaining key requirements and preparing a checklist – e.g. tender objectives, key dates, eligibility, fees, response format, specifications, mandatory and desirable evaluation criteria
- where possible, prepare your team by determining internal roles and responsibilities – e.g. who makes the decision to submit a response, who is leading the tender response, who has the skills and knowledge (e.g. technical, financial, legal), who approves the response prior to submission
- drawing on existing preparation and playing to your strengths – e.g. establish any partnering arrangements to deliver on the tender, consider whether added value can be provided which relates to the tender requirements and can be delivered with little to no additional cost impacts
- monitoring for any changes to the tender requirements and seek clarification if required
- seeking expert advice if needed to inform your tender response
- considering allocation of resources to address any further requests for information from the procuring agency during the evaluation phase.

Execute the strategy

To execute your response strategy, consider applying the following tactics:

- Use any response schedules or forms provided with the tender documents. Read the document carefully and follow any instructions provided.
- Respond to each requirement and evaluation criteria:
 - for multi-part requirements or criteria, answer all parts – consider describing the context, task, action and result where appropriate
 - provide supporting documentation to substantiate claims made
 - use short sentences and paragraphs, spacing, headings and bullets (where word or page limits are set ensure these are adhered to)
 - do not assume prior knowledge and minimise jargon
 - a degree of repetition is appropriate to reinforce required experience and capabilities, however, avoid a ‘cut and paste’ approach.
- Ensure you have read, understood and addressed any addenda released for the tender.
- Ensure that the tender response is submitted before the closing time and date listed on the tender documents. It is advisable to not leave this to the last minute in case you encounter any unexpected issues (a government agency may not consider your offer if it is late). If in doubt whether your tender response has been received, check with the tender contact.
- Maintain copies of all documents and correspondence created and submitted during the tender.

After the tender outcome is advised, seek a debrief from the procuring agency to inform your future response strategies, regardless of the outcome. All feedback is valuable.

Where to go for more information

- Australian Government – [Identifying opportunities to sell to government](#)
- New South Wales Government – [Local procurement: A guide to doing business with local councils](#)
- Queensland Government – [Tendering](#)
- Queensland Government – [Supplier guide to government procurement](#)
- Queensland Government – [Small and medium enterprise procurement target guide](#)
- South Australian Government – [Developing a Powerful Capability Statement - Participant's Workbook](#)
- UK Government – [Guidance - Doing business with government: guide for SMEs](#)
- Victorian Government – [10 tips to win government work](#)