

Alexandrina Council

Supplier's Tendering Guide November 2015



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES



Introduction

This guide has been developed to provide businesses with information to assist them in participating effectively in quoting and tendering opportunities with Alexandrina Council. Tenderers should ensure that they carefully read the tender/quote documents for each procurement activity.

What is Tendering?

Tendering is submitting a formal bid (tender) for the supply of good or services in response to a request from Council.

Tendering in Local Government

Section 49 of the LG Act states that Councils must develop and maintain procurement policies, practices and procedures directed towards:

- obtaining value for money outcomes in the expenditure of public money;
- providing for ethical and fair treatment of participants; and
- ensuring probity, accountability and transparency in procurement processes.

To comply with this Council has established its own framework and has developed its Procurement Policy which sets out the requirements and guides all procurement activities undertaken by staff.

Tenderer's Responsibility

It is your responsibility as a tenderer to ensure that you have all the information you require to develop your submission. If you are unclear about any aspects of the documentation you should contact the Council's nominated officer, whose contact details will be listed in the tender/quote documents.

Terminology

RFT – Request for Tender

A formal invitation, open to the public to submit a bid for the provision of goods, services or works to the Council, under specified terms and conditions.

ROI – Registration of Interest

A formal invitation, open to the public to submit a bid for inclusion on a panel arrangement, to supply good, services or works under a standing offer arrangement. It can also be used to establish a pre-qualified supplier list (no contract).

EOI – Expression of Interest

A formal invitation, open to the public inviting prospective suppliers to provide information and opinions of the methodologies required to meet a specific need.

RFP - Request for Proposal

A formal invitation open to the public, when the end result or methodology hasn't been defined and suppliers are asked to propose a solution to the requirement sought by Council. This provides an opportunity for innovation.

Select Tender

This approach is used where knowledge of the market place exists and is limited or it can be used as the second stage of a two stage tender process.

Notification and Submission of Tenders

Advertising of tenders

Council tenders are advertised on SA Tenders, the Council's website and depending on the requirement, sometimes in the newspaper.

When setting the timeframe for submissions to be lodged, Council takes into account a number of factors, including the complexity of the requirement, the time of year (i.e. Christmas holiday period), availability of precise and reliable information and normal market expectations. You should check the quote/tender documentation to ensure that you are fully aware of the closing date and time.

Closing of tenders

All submissions for Council tenders must be lodged via SA Tenders. Submissions lodged via any other method will not be accepted. It is important that you make yourself aware of the closing date and time which can be found in the tender or quote documentation for the particular process that you are responding to.

Occasionally Council at their discretion may, for various reasons, extend the closing time. All suppliers that have downloaded the documentation via SA Tenders will be notified via an addendum which will also be issued via SA Tenders.

Late tenders

Late tender submissions will not be accepted. To respond to a tender via SA Tenders, you must be a registered site user. Upon receipt at the SA Tenders & Contracts server the response is time and date logged, re-encrypted then stored in a tender specific electronic tender box that is time and date locked.

Each tender has a separate electronic tender box and none of the responses submitted can be accessed until after the closing date and time of the tender. At the expiration of the time and date lock, the relevant authorised Council officer can open the electronic tender box.

Alternative tenders

If you wish to submit an alternative tender i.e. offering an alternative method of providing the Council's requirements, you must also submit a fully conforming tender. Council can only consider your alternative offer if a conforming tender is also submitted.

How to Submit a Tender

Step 1 - Review current tenders

A list of current Council Tenders can be found on the Alexandrina Council Tenders webpage. This will take you to the [SA Tenders website](#). You will be required to register on the SA Tenders website before you can download any tender documents. When you register on Tenders SA you can elect to be notified of tenders under specific categories that are applicable to your business. Information regarding how to register and download/upload tenders can be found in the [Supplier User Guide](#) on the SA Tenders website.

Step 2 – Decide whether or not you are suitable for the project

Once you have downloaded a Request for Tender, read the documents very carefully and familiarise yourself with any mandatory requirements, the conditions of tendering, the conditions of contract and the specifications before deciding whether it is a suitable tender for you.

Some questions that need to be answered when making a bid decision include:

- Do we meet the pre-qualification requirements (e.g. licences, certifications, registrations, insurances)?
- Do we meet the Work Health & Safety requirements?
- Can we meet all the evaluation criteria?
- Do we currently have, and are we willing to commit to, the required resources to make tendering worthwhile (including time and experienced people)?
- If we are successful, can we actually fulfil the contract requirements and do we have the finances to do so?
- Is price or some other factor (e.g. ownership of particular machinery) a major factor in this tender? If so, is our price likely to be considered competitive?
- What are the risks?
- What are the potential benefits?
- Would successfully winning this opportunity lead to other opportunities?

Step 3 – Understanding the documents

Evaluation criteria

Ensure that you understand the evaluation criteria and what information you are required to provide in your response. If there is anything you don't understand in documentation including the proposed contract, you can contact the Council's nominated contact officer whose details will be listed in the tender documentation.

Tender briefings

The Council may decide to hold a tender briefing (or site inspection) if the purchase is complex, high risk, unique, or high value. Attendance can mandatory or non-mandatory. The tender documents will provide details of whether there is to be a briefing, including dates, times and locations of where it will be held. If briefings are listed as mandatory, you must attend as failure to do this will result in your submission being eliminated from evaluation. You should check as soon as you download the documents as briefing can often be held the week after the tender has been advertised.

Step 4 – Completing the tender response forms

The Request for Tender documentation stipulates that submissions should be completed on the Tender Response Schedule templates provided. Failure to do this could result in your tender being set aside for being non-compliant.

It is important that you give yourself plenty of time to address the evaluation criteria. Your responses should be concise and you should ensure the “question” has been “answered” and that you have provided the required information. The Evaluation Panel will not base its decision on cost alone. The most important factor is your ability to provide the goods, services or works to the standard expected and outlined in the specification. Price then becomes an important consideration but only once you have demonstrated that you have the skills and resources required.

Ensure that you understand the pricing requirements that are asked for in the request documentation and whether there are any conditions attached i.e. is there a period where the Council requires the price to be fixed and what are the mechanisms to request a price increase?

Alexandrina Council supports local development, however, this is not the only consideration when choosing a supplier. Council may decide to choose a “non-local” supplier if they submit a more attractive offer that provides a superior, better value for money result.

Work Health and Safety (WH&S) compliance is a critical factor in your tender submission being accepted for evaluation. If you require assistance in becoming WH&S compliant you can contact [SafeWork SA](#) for information.

Ensure that copies of current licences, accreditations etc that required are included with your submission and that you have signed the forms required.

Marketing brochures should only be attached if they are relevant to a specific evaluation criterion and should be referenced when addressing the criterion.

Before you submit your tender response you should read through it carefully to ensure that you haven't missed anything out and that you have provided all the information required to enable the Evaluation Panel to assess your bid.

Step 5 – Submitting your tender

Alexandrina Council only accepts tenders lodged electronically via SA Tenders. Ensure that you check the closing time and that you give yourself plenty of time to submit your response. Guidance on how to lodge your tender via SA Tenders is available in the [Supplier User Guide](#).

Upon receipt at the SA Tenders & Contracts server the response is time and date logged, re-encrypted then stored in a tender specific electronic tender box that is time and date locked.

Each tender has a separate electronic tender box and none of the responses submitted can be

accessed until after the closing date and time of the tender. At the expiration of the time and date lock, the relevant authorised Council officer can open the electronic tender box.

If you have any issues or concerns about lodging your tender please contact the SA Tenders Support Team:

SA Tenders System Administrator

Phone: 08 8462 1401

satendersandcontracts@sharedservices.sa.gov.au

What happens next?

After the closing time the electronic tender box will be opened and the submissions that have been received will be registered. The tenders are then provided to the Evaluation Panel who will check them for compliance before the evaluation against the criteria commences.

Evaluation, Negotiation and Awarding of Contract

The evaluation process

The Evaluation Panel will develop an evaluation matrix to allow them to evaluate each submission against the criteria that was provided in the tender documentation.

It depends on how many submissions are received and the nature of the tender as to how long the evaluation will take. Some tender recommendations have to be accepted by a formal meeting of the elected council, which can sometimes stretch the process timeframes out.

Negotiations

As outlined in the tender documentation, the Council may wish to enter into negotiations with one or more suppliers before awarding the contract. This is an opportunity for both sides to raise any concerns that they may have.

Awarding the Contract

Once the successful tenderer/s have been selected and notified, they will be offered a contract to provide the tendered requirements. Once a supplier has entered into a contract with Council, they are legally bound to provide the goods, services or works as stated in the contract.

All respondents will be notified of the outcome of a tender or quote process.

What do you do if you don't win the work?

Of course, not all tender responses can be successful, no matter how good they are. However, the experience of an unsuccessful tender should not be a signal to give up on doing business with Alexandrina Council. Rather, consider an unsuccessful tender process as a chance to learn and improve your offering for the next business opportunity.

Debriefs

If your bid is unsuccessful you can request a tender debrief. This can be a valuable source of information on the strengths and weaknesses of your tender and help you prepare better responses to future tenders.

A debrief can be held either in person or over the phone depending on the situation and can be requested by contacting the nominated contact officer listed in the tender documentation.

The purpose of the debrief is to not to justify the selection of the winning tender, but rather to give you feedback on your response. Comparative aspect of the winning bid or other bids are not allowed to be discussed.

Remember that you may have other opportunities to do business with Alexandrina Council in the future. Take a positive approach to the debrief and treat it as an opportunity to continue to build your relationship with the Council.