Supplier's Tendering Guide

Alexandrina Council



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1. Introduction

This guide has been developed to help businesses participate effectively in quoting and tendering opportunities with Alexandrina Council.

Tenderers should always carefully read the tender or quotation documents for each procurement activity to ensure they understand the requirements and conditions.

2. What is Tendering or Responding?

Tendering or Responding means submitting a formal bid (tender) for the supply of goods, services, or works in response to a request from Council.

3. Tendering in Local Government

Under Section 49 of the *Local Government Act 1999,* Councils must develop and maintain procurement policies, practices, and procedures that ensure:

- Value for money in the expenditure of public funds.
- Ethical and fair treatment of all participants.
- Probity, accountability, and transparency in procurement processes.

To meet these requirements, Alexandrina Council has developed its own Procurement Policy which guides all procurement activities.

4. Responder's Responsibility

It is your responsibility as a tenderer/responder to ensure that you have all the information needed to prepare your submission.

If anything in the documentation is unclear, contact the nominated Council officer listed in the tender or quotation documents.

5. 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. The Value threshold for this method procurement is for procurements greater than $150,000.
- ***ROI*** – Registration of Interest
  A formal invitation, open to the public to submit a bid for inclusion on a panel arrangement, to supply goods, 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 on the methodologies required to meet a specific need.
- ***RFQ*** – Request for Quotation
  A formal invitation to submit a quotation for provision of goods, services or works to the Council, under specified terms and conditions. The Value threshold for this method procurement is for procurements between $25,000 and $150,000. The invitation to submit a quotation may be by either a select invitation (by invitation to select supplier only) or an open invitation (open to the broader pre-qualified supplier listing).

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- ***RFP*** - Request for Proposal
  A formal invitation, open to the public, when the 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 marketplace exists and is limited, or it can be used at the second stage of a two-stage tender process.

6. Notification and Submission of Tenders & Quotations

Advertising

- Procurements between $25,000 and $150,0000 are advertised on Vendor Panel.
- Procurements greater than $150,000 are advertised on SA Tenders.

Timeframe for submissions are set based on the complexity of the requirement, time of year (i.e. Christmas holiday period), and market expectations. Always check the documentation for the exact closing date and time.

Closing

- Submissions must be lodged electronically via SA Tenders or Vendor Panel.
- Physical submissions (tender box, mail, etc.) are no longer accepted.
- Closing times are often 2pm or 3pm (not end of business day), to provide time to download the submissions by close of business.
- Council may extend the closing time via addendum on SA Tenders or Vendor Panel.

Security

Responses lodged are logged, encrypted, and stored in a locked electronic tender box. They cannot be accessed until after the closing date and time.

Late Submissions

Late tender and quotation will not be accepted.

Alternative Offers

If you submit an alternative offer, you must also submit a fully conforming offer.

7. How to Submit a Tender or Quotation

Step 1 - Review current Open Tenders

- Current Council tenders are listed on the SA Tenders webpage.
- You must register before downloading tender documents.
- When registering, you can opt to be notified of tenders in categories relevant to your business.
- Guidance on downloading and submitting tenders is available in the Supplier User Guide on the SA Tenders website.

For quotations:

- Register on the Vendor Panel website to access documents.
- You can also opt to be notified of opportunities by category.

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

Before bidding, carefully read the tender/quotation documents and ask:

- Do we meet all mandatory requirements (licences, certifications, registrations, insurances)?
- Do we meet the Work Health & Safety (WHS) requirements?
- Can we satisfy all evaluation criteria?
- Do we have the right resources and people available?
- Do we have the financial capacity to deliver if successful?
- Is our price competitive?
- What risks and benefits are involved?
- Could this opportunity lead to other future opportunities?

Step 3 – Understand the documents

- **Evaluation criteria:** Know how your submission will be assessed.
- **Briefings:** If listed as mandatory, you must attend, or your submission will not be considered. Check dates early, as briefings are often held soon after advertising.

Step 4 – Complete the response forms

- Use the **Response Schedule templates** provided. Submissions not using these forms may be set aside.
- Allow enough time to address the evaluation criteria. Keep responses clear, relevant, and make sure each question is fully answered.
- Cost is important but not the only factor – capability and quality come first; price is considered once capability is demonstrated.
- Understand all pricing requirements, any fixed-price period and how/when price increases may be requested.
- Council supports local development but may select a non-local supplier if their offer provides superior value for money.
- WHS compliance is critical. If you need help to become compliant, contact SafeWork SA.
- Include copies of all required licenses/accreditations and ensure all forms are signed.
- Attach marketing brochures only if directly relevant to a specific evaluation criterion and reference them in your response.
- Before submitting, proofread your response to confirm nothing is missing and that the Evaluation Panel has all information needed to assess your bid.

Step 5 – Submit your response

- Submissions must be lodged electronically via SA Tenders or Vendor Panel.
- Check the closing time and allow time to upload.
- On submission, your response is securely logged, encrypted, and stored in a locked electronic tender box.
- 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.

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

SA Tenders System Administrator
Ph: (08) 8462 1401
Email: satendersandcontracts@sa.gov.au

8. What happens next?

- After closing, the electronic tender box is opened, and submissions are registered.
- Submissions are provided to the Evaluation Panel who will check them for compliance before the evaluation against the criteria commences.

9. Evaluation, Negotiation and Awarding of Contract

Evaluation

- An evaluation matrix is used to assess each submission against the published criteria.
- Timeframes depend on the number of submissions and complexity of the requirement.
- Some contracts require Council approval at a formal meeting, which may extend timelines.

Negotiations

- Council may negotiate with one or more suppliers before awarding the contract.
- This is an opportunity for both parties to raise questions or concerns.

Awarding the Contract

- Successful suppliers are offered a contract and are legally bound by its terms.
- All respondents will be notified of the outcome.

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

Not every submission will be successful, but each experience is an opportunity to improve.

Consider an unsuccessful tender as part of building your knowledge and strengthening future bids.

11. Debriefs

- If unsuccessful, you can request a debrief to receive feedback on your submission.
- Debriefs can be held in person or over the phone.
- The purpose is to highlight strengths and weaknesses in your submission.
- Comparative details about the winning bid cannot be disclosed.
- Treat debriefs as a chance to improve and to continue to build your relationship with Alexandrina Council.

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12. Quick Reference Guide (Checklist)

Before You Submit

- ☐ Registered on SA Tenders or Vendor Panel.
- ☐ Downloaded and read all documentation.
- ☐ Attended any mandatory briefings/site visits.
- ☐ Completed Response Schedule templates.
- ☐ Attached copies of required licences, certifications, insurance.
- ☐ Addressed each evaluation criterion clearly.
- ☐ Reviewed pricing requirements (including fixed price periods).
- ☐ Checked WHS compliance.
- ☐ Proofread submission to ensure nothing is missing.

At Submission

- ☐ Submitted via SA Tenders or Vendor Panel.
- ☐ Checked closing date and time (allow for upload).
- ☐ Received confirmation of successful lodgement.

If Unsuccessful

- ☐ Requested a debrief for feedback.
- ☐ Identified improvements for future tenders.
- ☐ Stayed registered for upcoming opportunities.

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