

SUPPLYING TO GOVERNMENT

The Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP) seeks to provide support and advice to grow and strengthen the Indigenous business sector in Queensland. This fact sheet contains information and tips for improving your business' chance of success in supplying to government.

Identifying opportunities

A number of governments and organisations in Australia have Indigenous-specific procurement policies. The Queensland Government's policy is the [Queensland Indigenous \(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander\) Procurement Policy](#), (QIPP).

Just as there are several levels of Government, there are multiple sources of information on opportunities to supply. These include:

- [QTender](#) (Queensland Government)
- [eTender](#) (Queensland Government – major capital projects)
- [Austender](#) (Australian Government)
- [LGtenderbox](#) (Local Government, Queensland)
- [ICN Gateway](#) (private and government opportunities)
- Local government websites

TIPS:

- Register on these systems and get set up to receive email alerts when a relevant tender is advertised.
- Learn more about Queensland Government [procurement](#) and associated [policies](#).

FAQ: *Are there any specific Queensland Government procurement areas targeted for Indigenous supply?*

A: The majority of Queensland Government procurement is open to all suppliers, however the QIPP has special provisions for the supply of goods and services to Indigenous communities and areas of high Indigenous population. The **set-aside** within the QIPP requires Queensland Government departments to first look to engage with Indigenous businesses where:

- the goods or services being purchased will be delivered to Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islander people in discrete locations, or in other locations that have a high Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population; or
- the goods or services being purchased target the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders (or a cohort of Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islander people).

Government agencies can also elect to use the **selective offer** process where there is a known competitive Indigenous supplier market. Government has a range of priorities and uses its purchasing to support those (for example Buy Local, Small and Medium Enterprise, Social Procurement and Indigenous procurement). Agencies and categories lead their own procurement strategies and set priorities for procurement processes in line with procurement policies and strategies.

FAQ: *Why are there rarely any advertised opportunities for goods or services that my business can supply?*

A: The majority of contracts are advertised on QTenders in a number of ways. (For example rather than a specific tender for plumbing it could form part of a bigger contract that is advertised as refurbishment or construction; or catering may be bundled into a functions tender.) By interrogating the Queensland contracts directory and using varied search criteria you can identify how contracts are packaged, awarded and who is winning them as this may identify who your main competitors are. Low value procurement will normally be sourced locally and through a separate process such as verbal or email request to quote. Know and understand the government procurement methods (see below).

Understanding procurement methods

The Queensland Government uses several methods to approach the market for goods and services including:

- **Ad hoc purchasing**

Usually used for low-value, low-risk, one-off purchases below a pre-determined dollar threshold, government agencies can simply approach suppliers they know for a quote, either written or verbal.

- **Open tender**

Open tenders, which 'invite offers' or put out 'requests for offer', are open to all businesses in the marketplace.

- **Selective tender**

Agencies can use selective tendering processes where they have determined that only suppliers who have met certain pre-established criteria may submit a bid. (This may require businesses to hold certain prequalification or accreditation.)

- **Limited tender**

Agencies may make direct approaches to a supplier(s) of their choice, inviting them to submit an offer, usually only in very specific circumstances, such as under extreme urgency or if goods and services can only be provided by one supplier (e.g. a commissioned work of art).

- **Lists of preferred suppliers**

Preferred supplier lists are common in most government agencies. Agencies maintain a list of preferred suppliers who have met the necessary conditions/requirements for the supply of certain goods and/or services. The list may be used as the basis for determining which suppliers are invited to tender for certain goods/services (i.e. a selective tender).

- **Standing Offer Arrangements (SOAs)**

An SOA is usually set up to obtain frequently used products or services. SOAs set out the terms and conditions, including price, under which a business agrees to supply an undefined volume of goods and/or services for a defined period of time. Inclusion on an SOA means suppliers do not have to repeatedly respond to tender requests, while most government buyers are allowed to purchase directly from these arrangements.

TIP:

- QBuild is a provider of construction and strategic building maintenance services for Queensland Government. Contractors, consultants and suppliers who operate in these industries can [register](#) their business to have more access to tender opportunities.

FAQ: *How do I become a supplier on an SOA?*

A: Indigenous businesses are encouraged to apply for inclusion on SOAs by submitting a response through QTender when the SOA is advertised. A list of current SOAs and their renewal date can be found on the [Queensland Contracts Directory](#). Some SOAs allow the addition of suppliers during the period. If unsure, check with the SOA's contact officer listed on the Directory.

FAQ: *What are the advantages of being on an SOA?*

A: Queensland Government is actively looking to include Indigenous suppliers on whole of government SOAs. Agencies can use SOAs to increase their procurement from Indigenous businesses. A matrix included with the SOA highlights which businesses on the Arrangement are Indigenous.

Position for success

Understanding Queensland Government's procurement approach and the capability and offering of your business will enable you to position your business for success.

Assess your business – know what your business is capable of delivering and how you stack up against your competitors. It's important to focus on opportunities you have the best prospects of winning.

TIPS:

- Take a free [Fit to Supply quiz](#) on the Queensland Government Business and Industry Portal.
- Know where you fit in the supply chain. Are you looking to supply directly to government or are there opportunities to be a subcontractor?
- Build a supplier/buyer relationship with potential customers such as local State schools and local regional offices.
- Attend workshops and industry events to meet buyers and other suppliers. Upcoming Queensland Government events can be found on the [Business Queensland](#) website
- Promote your business and brand by registering with [Black Business Finder](#) and [Indigenous Business Direct \(Supply Nation\)](#).
- Make yourself known to DSDSATSIP in your region through email: enterprise@datasip.qld.gov.au
- Develop an effective business capability statement and elevator pitch to promote your business to successful contractors.
- Always seek to learn and improve. Whether you are unsuccessful or successful, find out what you can improve for your next submission.
- Get qualified. If you are in the construction, infrastructure or ITC markets the Queensland Government has specific prequalification requirements for suppliers: [building contractor prequalification](#); [infrastructure prequalification](#); [government information technology contracting](#).

FAQ: *In a package project, rather than for my specific supply or trade, how do I become a sub-contractor?*

A: All awarded contracts over \$10,000 are listed on the [Open Data Portal](#). By searching the data you can see who is winning contracts that you may be interested in supplying as a sub-contractor. The name of the prime contractor is provided in the contract award detail. Know where you fit in the supply chain.

Responding to opportunities

Once you have identified an opportunity of interest, how you develop your response is important.

TIPS:

- Check the tender documents carefully to ensure you identify and understand the requirements and evaluation criteria, which may include: capability to deliver, experience, quality, contract compliance, cost and value for money.
- Be prepared – ensure you have the qualifications and key documents together before you start writing.
- Understand what is important to the buyer and tailor your bid to address these factors. For instance, understanding the Government's priorities and how it uses its spend to support those, then demonstrating how you can assist in achieving those priorities could be the point of difference between you and another business.
- Understand value for money – government needs to achieve the best outcomes for the money spent. Price is one factor of this. You should seek to demonstrate why your solution will deliver the most benefits to the client.
- Start the submission process early – it takes longer than you think – and submit by the closing date.
- Fill out all sections of the response document. Do not leave any sections blank. If they are not applicable say Not Applicable. Provide answers within the response form and avoid the use of "see attachment" if possible.

FAQ: *If I'm not successful in a tender process, how do I find out why?*

A: Everyone who submits a tender response is able to obtain feedback on their submission (not a comparison to other tender responses). You are urged to ensure you obtain that so that you can use the feedback to improve future responses. A number of Indigenous businesses have told us it has taken them some time and learnings to be successful in winning government business.