

Doing Business with Government

Procurement of Goods and Services

On 30 January 2006, after consulting with Territory business, the Government approved a new framework for all its procurement activities.

These changes provide a simple, clear and consistent approach to buying goods and services, while continuing to embrace the five fundamental procurement principles, which are:

- value for money;
- open and effective competition;
- enhancing the capabilities of local business and industry;
- environmental protection; and
- ethical behaviour and fair dealing.

Value for Money

In assessing tenders for goods, services and works, value for money remains the key procurement objective. To assist business when preparing a tender response, value for money is now clearly defined. A value for money decision will consider:

- past performance of the tenderer;
- whole of life cost of the tender (for example, after sales support);
- local development/value adding (incorporating the Buy Territory policy);
- capacity of the tenderer;
- innovation; and
- timeliness (the tenderer's ability to deliver the goods or services in the required timeframe).

Other Changes

Other changes include:

- implementation of the Buy Territory policy requiring a minimum 20 per cent weighting in all tenders to build the capacity of Territory business;
- tenderers now have 14 days from the tender closing date to upgrade their Contractor Accreditation Limited (CAL) accreditation within their existing category;
- Northern Territory Industry Capability Network (NTICN) will be consulted on local capabilities before calling or advertising tenders up to \$50 000 outside the Territory;
- variations of \$50 000 or 15 per cent of original contract (whichever is the higher) require the approval of Accountable Officers and are reported to the Procurement Review Board; and
- the authority of the Southern Region Procurement Review Board to approve tender recommendations has been raised from \$1 million to \$2 million.



Buy Territory Policy

The Buy Territory policy is part of the new Procurement Directions, which came into effect on 1 March 2006. As part of the value for money assessment, a mandatory minimum weighting of 20 per cent will apply for local development, with tenderers required to demonstrate how they will develop and add value to local business and industry, including:

- whether the business operates from a Territory base;
- direct and indirect employment in the Territory;
- training and skills development for Territorians; and
- increased jobs for Territorians.

Immediate Payment for Purchases

Government has mandated that agencies make immediate payment for certain purchases by corporate credit card. Businesses with credit card processing facilities will now be paid by credit card when agencies:

- make any purchase where the total value is up to \$500;
- purchase travel or accommodation or both; and
- make payments via the internet or telephone.

This initiative will reduce administrative overheads, like invoicing and accounts receivable management, for businesses that accept these payments from Government. This, along with the 30-day payment policy, ensures that Territory businesses receive payments from Government with minimal delay and pressure on cash flows.

Territory Business Centre

Territory Business Centres (TBCs) are the first point of contact and referral for all business services and products provided by government agencies. They are located in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek.

At the TBC, people can:

- lodge licence applications;
- register a business name;
- conduct a business name search;
- access the Business Licence Information Service to find out about all relevant licence and permit requirements for operating a business in the Territory; and
- gain accurate information on all business assistance services and products offered by the Territory Government.

By March 2006, more than 66 190 services had been provided to clients in 2005-06.

Procurement Liaison

The Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development provides the facility for suppliers and tenderers to make complaints or raise concerns about any aspect of the Government procurement process.

Procurement Liaison will register and track written submissions and can be contacted on:

Phone: 08 8999 5212

Fax: 08 8999 7924

Email: procurement@nt.gov.au

TRM Electronic Returns

Territory Revenue Management Electronic Returns (TRMeR) is an online system that will allow businesses that pay payroll tax to calculate, lodge and pay their returns via the internet. To be released in July 2006, TRMeR will provide businesses with a convenient and flexible way to manage their tax payments. Without the delays of postage, businesses will be able to make accurate payments on the due date and will have online access to their electronic payment history.

For more information visit:
www.revenue.nt.gov.au



Motor Vehicle Registry Online

An interactive telephone service is scheduled for implementation in May 2006 to complement the Motor Vehicle Registry (MVR) Quick Pay internet-based service. This will enable individual and business customers to complete vehicle registrations when no inspection is required and driver's licence renewals where no eyesight test is required, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without leaving their home or office. At present, 1200 Territorians use this service every month, a figure that is expected to increase throughout 2006-07.

MVR continues to develop eGovernment service delivery options for commercial organisations. Working with Licensed Motor Vehicle Dealers, MVR has been developing a 'Dealer Franchise System' which, when complete, will allow approved dealers to electronically register vehicles on behalf of MVR at the point of sale.

Land Searches Online for Business

The online Land Search system provides Territory businesses with an efficient and convenient way to search the Northern Territory Register of Land for publicly available information, from their office computer. Businesses with an interest in land information, such as solicitors, conveyancers, real estate agents, mining companies, surveyors and valuers can access Land Title Search Certificates and the Record of Administrative Interests, including links to survey and unit plans, scanned dealings and historical titles. For businesses that prefer an over-the-counter service, searches can be conducted at the Land Titles offices in Darwin and Alice Springs.

New Planning Act and Regulations

The Northern Territory's new *Planning Act* and Planning Regulations commenced on 30 September 2005. The *Planning Act* has been simplified after feedback from members of the public and developers. The changes simplify the distinctions between land use objectives, development provisions and incorporated documents and pave the way for a single default planning scheme for the Northern Territory, which has been made available for community feedback.

It also enables separate planning schemes to be made for parts of the Territory where there are unique circumstances.

For the first time, the Act includes a statement of its objectives. It also includes a definition of 'amenity' as it applies to planning issues.

Amenity, in relation to a locality or building, means any quality, condition or factor that makes or contributes to making the locality or building harmonious, pleasant or enjoyable.

The proposed planning scheme is available via the internet at: www.dpi.nt.gov.au

Antisocial Behaviour Act

One of the key features of the new *Antisocial Behaviour Act* is the introduction of a new form of dry or restricted private premises. This provision allows the Licensing Commission, after considering an application, to make a declaration that prohibits the consumption or possession of alcohol on premises including buildings open to and used by the public, such as shops, churches and shopping centres. These new provisions are designed to assist business operators to deter antisocial behaviour from their places of business.

More information including Fact Sheets and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available at: www.justice.nt.gov.au

