



A guide for SME's; **Winning Commonwealth government business through product stewardship**



**Product
Stewardship
Centre of
Excellence**

**PRACTICE
NOTES**

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Andrew Campbell

A guide for SMEs; Winning Commonwealth government business through product stewardship.

SMEs¹ play an essential role in the Australian economy. However, it can also be more of a challenge to compete against larger businesses in the tender/request for quote (RFQ) process. Some businesses report that tender specifications can be difficult to understand, which may be more of a barrier to SMEs who are generally less resourced to navigate these complexities.²

This short guide aims to provide guidance on the process for SMEs to respond to government tenders and promote the product stewardship aspects of their goods or services. It should be read in conjunction with Centre's Practice Note - *The Value, Role, Relevance of Product Stewardship for SMEs*.

Summary

- Government tenders and other opportunities are called "Approaches to Market" (ATMs).
- Register now at [AusTender](#) before you start to receive ATM notifications.
- Use their frameworks to respond and include a section on how your product/service contributes to the Waste Action Plan, even if they haven't asked for it.
- Don't greenwash (see page 3).

1 What are government tenders and where do you find them?

Business opportunities from the government are called "Approaches to Market" (ATMs). ATMs are open for potential suppliers to participate and include requests for tender, requests for quote, expressions of interest, or proposals. They can come from the many Government departments, each with their own needs and ATM formats.

Visit the sites below to understand, find and apply for ATMs.

- Identifying opportunities to sell to government – [Selling to Government](#)
- ATMs can vary between departments but fortunately they can be found at one, searchable location which you can subscribe to for updates on ATMs relevant to your business.: [AusTender](#)

Getting started with your applications, including how to register (which you should do now!):

- [Getting started with AusTender](#)
- [Identifying Opportunities FAQ](#)

Tip: For links to state tender portals, see "further resources" at the end of this document.

¹ Small to Medium Enterprise as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) which considers any business with under 200 employees to be a medium business and any with under 20 employees to be a small business.

² 'The Australian Manufacturing Industry: Economics References Committee Inquiry,' Ai Group Submission, September 2020, p.16

2 What are they looking for regarding product stewardship?

The Department of Finance has a useful site outlining what to do in general terms:

- [Responding to an approach to market](#)

However, some ATMs don't explicitly ask you to outline how your product/service contributes to sustainable procurement practices, such as excellent product stewardship.

This is where the [National Waste Policy Action Plan](#) comes into play. All level of government in Australia have committed to taking responsibility for waste through sustainable procurement practices.

For Commonwealth work, we suggest you address the environmental elements that are called out for Commonwealth government procurers to look for in responses to ATMs are (but not limited to):

- energy efficiency
- environmental and climate change impact
- use of recycled products

3 How do you respond to an ATM?

In addition to the explicit requirements of the ATM, you should demonstrate how you support the government's commitment outlined above even if they are not explicitly requested. To help them understand the features and benefits of your product/service, use the guides created for the government officials to evaluate sustainable procurement and as a framework for your own submission:

- [Sustainable Procurement Guide](#)

A note about "Greenwashing"

Be ready to substantiate any environmental or sustainability claims when marketing your goods and services. In September 2022, the ACCC announced it is targeting 'greenwashing'³, warning businesses who make false or misleading claims undermine consumer trust and confidence in the market.

"Broad terms like 'environmentally friendly', 'green', or 'sustainable' have limited value and may mislead consumers, as they rarely provide enough information about what that exactly means in terms of the product or service consumers are considering purchasing." - CCC Deputy Chair Delia Rickard

As an SME supplying to government or larger companies, ensure you also meet the ACCC's expectations.

A note about value of Government procurement from SMEs

As an SME, it is worth knowing the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) allows government entities to directly engage an SME for procurements valued up to \$200,000 (including GST), or up to \$500,000 (including GST) for procurements by or on behalf of the Department of Defence, provided value for money can be demonstrated. [See more about this here.](#)

³ [Businesses told to be prepared to back up their environmental claims](#) – ACCC

Further resources

- How the Australian Government (DCCEEW) defines Product Stewardship in Australia - [here](#)
- Case study on sustainable procurement by Australian Government (DCCEEW) – [Reef HQ Aquarium](#)
- Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence contact details:
stewardshipexcellence.com.au | info@stewardshipexcellence.com | Twitter: @stewardshipAU
- Links to National and State based procurement portals

Register to receive notifications. The processes for procurement differ between states but the principles are the same. They're all working towards circularity and product stewardship. Promote in your submissions where possible.

State or Territory	Name of portal	URL
National	AusTender	www.tenders.gov.au/atm
ACT	Tenders ACT	www.tenders.act.gov.au/
NSW	eTendering	www.tenders.nsw.gov.au/
NT	Doing business with government	nt.gov.au/industry/procurement
QLD	Business Queensland	www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/marketing-sales/tendering/supply-queensland-government
SA	SA Tenders and Contracts	www.tenders.sa.gov.au/
TAS	Tasmanian Government Tenders	www.tenders.tas.gov.au/
VIC	Buying for Victoria	www.tenders.vic.gov.au/welcome
WA	Tenders WA	https://www.tenders.wa.gov.au/watenders/index.do



Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence

c/- Institute for Sustainable Futures

University of Technology

PO Box 123

Broadway NSW 2007

www.stewardshipexcellence.com.au