

Slide 1 – Regional Employment Trials Program 2018-2020

[Purchasing speaker]

Good morning/afternoon.

My name is _____ from _____ and my co-presenter today is _____ from _____ and we are both from the Department of Jobs and Small Business.

I'd like to welcome you to today's webinar on the Request for Tender for Employment Facilitator Services for the Regional Employment Trials Program 2018–2020.

I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which we meet today, and pay respect to their elders, past, present and future. I would like to extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are present.

Today we will provide you with information about Employment Facilitator Services for the Regional Employment Trials Program. We will also provide you with details on the purchasing process and information for the Request for Tender that was released on 22 June 2018.

The Department of Jobs and Small Business is committed to ensuring the Employment Facilitator Services purchasing process is conducted in a fair and transparent manner. The Department has appointed the law firm Maddocks as the independent Probity Adviser to assist and monitor the Department's compliance with probity principles.

_____ is/are with us today from Maddocks.

We recognise that you will have questions and we will answer as many as possible today. However, there may be some questions that we need to take on notice and come back to you with a response. Responses to questions will be published on the Frequently Asked Questions document on the Employment Services Purchasing Information website. Respondents are encouraged to regularly check this site for publication of new responses.

If you have further questions following today's session, send them by email to the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline. A slide at the end of today's presentation has the contact details for both the Employment Services Purchasing Information website and the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline. The addresses are also set out in the Request for Tender under 'Contact Details', which is available from AusTender and 360Pro. 360Pro is the tool the Department uses for purchasing submissions.

Please note that nothing that is said in today's session is intended to amend the Request For Tender or the Department's requirements in any way. If you believe that something we say today is inconsistent with the Request for Tender documentation, please bring this to our attention by sending us a request for clarification by email to the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline.

A copy of the PowerPoint slides used in this presentation will be available on the Department's website after the last webinar is conducted.

I will now hand over to _____ who will take you through the program design elements of the presentation.

Slide 2 – Regional Employment Trials (RET) Program Overview

[Program speaker]

Thank you _____.

The Regional Employment Trials program will support local stakeholders to design and implement tailored solutions to local problems and promote local employment opportunities.

The program will run from 1 October 2018 to 30 June 2020 in ten selected disadvantaged regions.

There will be one employment facilitator per selected region.

Each of the ten regions has a \$1 million Local Employment Initiative Fund for grants to co-fund local employment related projects.

At least one employment services provider is required to be partnered with each funded project.

Slide 3 – RET program will operate in 10 regions

The RET program will be rolled out in 10 selected Regional Development Australia (RDA) regions. Because the Department already has a Facilitator in five of these, the 5 RDA regions where a new Employment Facilitator will be employed are:

- Far South Coast - NSW
- Northern Inland – NSW
- Murraylands and Riverland – SA
- Yorke and Mid North – SA
- Wide Bay Burnett – QLD

Tenders received in response to this RFT must be for these regions only.

For general information, the other RDA regions are:

- Gippsland – Victoria
- Melbourne – Victoria (North Western and Western Melbourne Employment Regions)
- Peel – Western Australia
- Tasmania (North and North Western Tasmania Employment Regions)
- Townsville and North West- Queensland (Townsville Employment Region)

The Department is not seeking responses in respect of these RDA regions.

Regions serviced by the Community Development Program are excluded.

Slide 4 – Timeline

The RET program was announced as part of the 2018-19 Budget, and the selected regions were announced by the Minister for Jobs and Innovation, the Hon Michaelia Cash, on 22 June 2018.

11 July 2018 is the closing date for Respondents to submit questions and requests for clarification about this RFT.

18 July 2018 at 12.00 noon (Canberra time) is the Closing date and time for Responses to this RFT.

The Department will undertake evaluations of the RFT submissions, and schedule any interviews in July/August 2018.

Announcement of outcomes for RET Employment Facilitator Services will be made in early September 2018.

Slide 5 – RDA Committees

Regional Development Australia brings together all levels of government to enhance the development of Australia's regions.

It includes a national network of 52 RDA committees, each operating in a defined RDA region.

The committees' charter includes a focus on facilitating economic development by creating local jobs, attracting investment and driving innovation.

RDA committees have local focus, input, knowledge and community contacts.

The RET program will provide a means for RDA committees to propose, review and recommend local employment related projects for funding.

Slide 6 – Role of Employment Facilitators

The RFT outlines the requirements for this position, so I would ask you to please refer to that document to gain a full understanding of the role. A broad overview of the role requirements includes:

- Supporting the delivery of the RET Program by working with stakeholders in the RDA region to improve local employment opportunities
- promoting awareness of the program
- working as an adviser to the relevant RDA Committee on employment matters
- keeping abreast of ongoing and future local developments and employment opportunities
- Identifying, developing and supervising the progress of projects funded through the Local Employment Initiative Fund, and overseeing and assisting the Department on the management of funded projects.

Slide 7 – Employment Facilitators will be locally based

Employment Facilitators will be locally based and are expected to:

- be familiar with their RDA region.
- maintain a local physical office space within their RDA region.
- engage in extensive travel within the RDA region (and externally where required).
- use local knowledge to engage with communities, local employers and other stakeholders, and to identify suitable Employment Services Providers who can partner with stakeholders to deliver funded projects.

Slide 8 – Interaction with existing programs

Employment Facilitators will be required to conduct an initial assessment to identify programs already in place in the region and what can be learned from them.

Examples of existing programs could include:

- Regional Jobs and Investment Packages
- Try, Test and Learn fund
- Local and state government programs.

Slide 9 – RET Program Employment Facilitators

The Nominated Person must reside in the RDA region or be prepared to relocate for the duration of the Contract Term (and this must be captured in the Nominated Person(s) Form).

Job sharing arrangements may be considered on a case by case basis.

Companies, organisations, partnerships and consortia will be considered on condition that separate responses are submitted for each RDA region of proposed operation, and that the organisation nominates a Specific individual or individuals to undertake the work.

Sub-contracting of the position will be considered provided each subcontractor completes a separate Subcontractor Credentials Information Form and provides supporting information, and the subcontractor authorises the Department to undertake certain checks.

Slide 10 – Local Employment Initiative Fund (LEIF)

A Local Employment Initiative Fund of \$1 million per region is available to support approved co-funded projects that assist job seekers prepare for and find work.

Projects will address the opportunities and needs that are specific to that RDA region and will partner with at least one employment services provider.

Stakeholders within each RDA region can apply for funding for proposed projects. Applications will first be endorsed by the local RDA committee.

The Business Grants Hub will then formally evaluate endorsed project proposals.

Final funding approval rests with the Department of Jobs and Small Business.

Slide 11 – Project focus

Project co-funding will be for sustainable initiatives that might include, but are not limited to:

- Innovative employment and work experience initiatives
- Coordinating employment and training related services
- Addressing skills mismatch through partnering with local industry
- Developing mentoring services
- Identifying ways to improve the operation and future capacity of the local labour market
- Early intervention services for displaced workers

Project co-funding can include in-kind contributions.

Slide 12 – Interaction with Employment Services Providers

The RET program has been designed to support ongoing employment service efforts and activities in the regions.

Employment Facilitators are expected to interact with Employment Services Providers in the RDA Region to identify local issues and develop region specific projects.

At least one jobactive, Transition to Work or ParentNext Provider will partner with each funded project, who will handle risk management and ensure that a Competent Person undertakes and updates Work Health and Safety risk assessments.

Providers are allowed to develop and submit project proposals however will not be involved in the recommendation or approval process.

Slide 13 – Relocation assistance

The RET program provides earlier access for eligible job seekers to Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job (RATTUJ) which will encourage labour mobility.

This provides payments to job seekers to help them move to take up a job.

Slide 14 – Process for a LEIF Project Proposal

This slide details the process for developing a project proposal.

The first phase is the development of the proposal itself.

Next, the RDA Committee assesses the proposal.

Each RDA endorsed proposal is then submitted by the proponent online to the Business Grants Hub.

Proposals endorsed by the Business Grants Hub are sent to the Department of Jobs and Small Business, who will consider the proposal for final funding approval.

Slide 15 – More Information

For more details on what will be expected of Employment Facilitators – please refer to the:

- Request For Tender
- Draft Contract

Further information on Regional Development Australia Committees can be found at www.rda.gov.au.

I will now hand over to _____ who will discuss the probity and purchasing arrangements.

Slide 16 – Probity and Purchasing—Overview

[Purchasing speaker]

Thank you _____.

In this part of the session I will cover:

- the objectives of the Request for Tender process
- the Probity principles
- the Communication Protocol
- some aspects of the evaluation processes
- some aspects of electronic lodgement through 360Pro, and
- the Request for Tender closing date and time.

The Request for Tender documentation has further information on this content and sets out the requirements and conditions for responding to this Tender.

Slide 17 – Purchasing Objectives and Rules

The purpose of the Request for Tender purchasing process is to select the Respondents that represent the best value for money to deliver Employment Facilitator Services in each region.

This process is governed by the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and our external Probity Adviser will oversee the process to ensure adherence to the Rules.

The Department has appointed Maddocks as the independent external Probity Adviser to assist and monitor the Department's compliance with probity principles.

The role of the external Probity Adviser is to:

- advise the Department on the probity and integrity of the Request for Tender process
- advise of appropriate probity training, and
- advise on relevant security arrangements.

The fundamental principle of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules is achieving value for money, which, in the case of Employment Facilitator Services, will include:

- the extent to which a Respondent addresses the selection criteria to the Department's satisfaction
- Diversity of Employment Facilitators to encourage competition and innovation in the delivery of the Employment Facilitator Service
- the extent to which a Respondent demonstrates the economic benefit of its offer to the Australian economy
- any relevant risks to the Australian Government, and
- the extent to which a Respondent is likely to achieve the highest possible quality in service delivery.

Slide 18 – Communication Protocol

A Communication Protocol has been developed for the RET purchasing process, which can be found at Appendix A of the Request for Tender.

The Protocol establishes procedures to minimise the risk of any improper practice that could influence the fair operation of the market or the probity of the process, and to ensure consistent messaging.

The Department has a complaints handling process in place, which is also outlined in the Communication Protocol.

If Respondents have questions about any element of the Request for Tender, they should contact the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline via email. The Hotline is the primary means of contact during the Request for Tender period.

Contact details for the Hotline are on page iii of the Request for Tender and will be shown towards the end of this presentation.

Slide 19 – Eligibility to Apply

The Department will only contract with Australian legal entities that have a current and valid Australian Business Number (ABN) and full legal capacity to enter into a Contract to provide Employment Facilitator Services. If the Respondent is a Group Respondent, each member of the Group Respondent must have a current ABN.

State, territory and local government entities are eligible to apply.

Respondents may nominate to subcontract all or part of the Employment Facilitator Services.

Sole traders and individuals are also eligible to apply but must have a current ABN.

The Department will only accept a response from a foreign entity if it is registered under Part 5B.2 of the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth).

Australian Government departments, agencies, employees or agents are not eligible to apply and cannot assist organisations to prepare a response.

This does not include persons who are, or may be, regarded as authorised agents of any government departments under existing employment services arrangements or arrangements for the administration of the social security law—for example, jobactive Providers currently contracted with the Department.

Further information on eligibility is outlined in Chapter 4 of the Request for Tender.

Slide 20 – Other Requirements

The purchasing process is designed to promote fair competition in the open market. Respondents and their respective officers, employees, agents and advisers must not engage in collusive bidding, anti-competitive conduct or any similar unlawful conduct with any other Respondents, or any other person regarding preparation of their response.

The Department may, at its absolute discretion, exclude a Respondent from this process should it become aware of information indicating that the Respondent has been involved in collusive bidding.

A Respondent must not compete against itself by submitting alternative or multiple responses for the same Regional Development Australia Region. If the Department determines that it has received alternative or multiple responses for a Region, it may, at its absolute discretion, cease considering, or otherwise dealing with either or both responses.

Where a Respondent retains its legal identity as a member of a Group Respondent, the Respondent cannot submit another individual response for a Region in which it has otherwise responded as part of the Group Respondent.

This does not apply to subcontractors. A subcontractor may be nominated as part of a response by one or more Respondents for the same Region. A nominated subcontractor may also respond in its own right for that Region.

Where a Respondent considers that, at the time of lodging its response, an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest concerning itself or a related entity exists or might arise during the term of the Contract or in relation to its response to the Request for Tender, they must complete the Conflict of Interest Form and lodge the form on the 'Conflict of Interest' tab in 360Pro.

If at any time prior to entering into a Contract with the Department, an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest concerning itself or a related entity arises or may arise for any Respondent, that Respondent should immediately notify the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline in writing.

For more information on conflicts of interest, please refer to Section 6.3.4 of the Request for Tender.

Slide 21 – Evaluation Process (1)

The evaluation process has several stages. Chapter 5 of the Request for Tender has more details.

Each response will be downloaded from 360Pro after the closing date and time, and will be checked to ensure that:

- the response includes all information required, as listed in the 'Respondent Checklist' at Appendix F of the Request for Tender, and
- the Respondent has submitted the correct response forms, in the correct format, containing completed information, including responses to the Selection Criteria.

Following this, responses will be checked for conformance with mandatory requirements and then assessed against the eligibility conditions.

All assessments will be undertaken by departmental staff with the appropriate expertise, knowledge, and training.

All eligible responses will then be assessed against Selection Criteria 1 and 2.

The Department may, at any stage of the evaluation process, contact Respondents or nominated subcontractors, to ask any question with a view to clarifying aspects of a response, or to seek additional information, in a manner that will not result in any unfairness to other Respondents.

Slide 22 – Selection Criteria

When responding to the selection criteria please refer to Chapter 3 of the RFT.

There are 2 Selection Criteria.

Selection Criterion 1 seeks the Respondent to demonstrate their experience and capacity to deliver Employment Facilitator Services. For this Selection Criteria, section 3.2.1 of the RFT provides details and guidance where the Respondent is an Organisation proposing a Nominated Person. Where the Respondent is an Individual/Sole Trader they should refer to section 3.2.2 of the RFT.

Selection Criterion 1 has a limit of 15,000 characters (not words), including punctuation and spaces.

Selection Criterion 2 seeks the Respondent to demonstrate its strategy to deliver effective, high quality Employment Facilitator Services that meet the needs of job seekers, Employers and industry in the RDA Region(s). For Selection Criterion 2, all Respondents should refer to section 3.2.3 of the RFT. Respondents should address this criterion once for each RDA region for which it is tendering.

Selection Criterion 2 has a limit of 25,000 characters (not words), including punctuation and spaces.

Slide 23 – Evaluation Process (2)

Each Respondent may provide up to two Referee endorsements to verify claims in its response to the Selection Criteria. These must be completed using the Referee Endorsement Form and Respondents must upload the signed forms to 360Pro as part of their response.

Current employees of the Department of Jobs and Small Business cannot be referees.

The Department reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to contact Referees to clarify information provided in their endorsement, or make its own enquiries to verify claims made in an endorsement (including contacting a person who is not nominated as a referee by the Respondent).

Respondents are responsible for ensuring that they have:

- read and understood the Request for Tender, any Addenda issued, the Draft Contract and other published supporting information
- if necessary, sought appropriate professional advice to prepare their response
- provided accurate and up-to-date information, and
- kept a copy of the submitted response for their records.

Respondents must not make false or misleading statements in their response, and must answer all questions honestly and completely. Respondents should also be aware that giving false or misleading information to the Australian Government is an offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth).

The Department reserves the right to exclude any response from further consideration where it is satisfied the Respondent has made a false or misleading statement in the response. Furthermore, the Department may refer the matter to relevant Australian Government, state or territory authorities. This right is in addition to any other remedies the Department may have under law or in any contract with a successful Tender.

Slide 24 – Evaluation Process (3)

In assessing the responses, the Department may consider any relevant information available to it, including a Respondent's past performance when delivering contracted services or activities that are similar to Employment Facilitator Services.

Responses will also be assessed against their Financial and Credentials Information Form, for financial viability, and assigned a risk rating.

A committee of senior departmental managers will consider the outcome of the assessment and make recommendations to the Delegate.

The Delegate, Deputy Secretary—Employment, will examine the recommendations and make final decisions based on the principle of value for money for the Australian Government. The decisions of the Delegate are final.

It is expected that successful Respondents will be notified early September 2018.

Slide 25 – Contracting with the Department

The Department proposes to enter into a Contract with successful Respondents that is substantially in the form of the Draft Contract contained in Appendix G of the RFT.

Respondents should review the terms and conditions of the Draft Contract when preparing their response.

Successful Respondents will be required to obtain and maintain the insurance specified in the Contract.

The Department does not want to discourage responses for the Employment Facilitator Services for the Regional Employment Trials Program 2018-2020 from Respondents that receive other public sector funding. However, a Respondent cannot claim payments from the Department that would constitute double funding, that is, receiving a fee from another Australian Government, state, territory, or local public funding source, including a different source within other departments, for providing the same or similar services.

Each Respondent is asked to declare, by completing the Double Funding Form, any actual or potential contractual relationships with public funding bodies (Australian, state, territory or local government) under which it may be entitled to a fee for the provision of the same or similar services prior to a Contract being finalised (should its response to this Request for Tender be successful).

Slide 26 – Lodgement of Responses (1)

As required under the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, the Request for Tenders was published on AusTender, but Respondents are redirected to the 360Pro system to download the Request for Tender pack. The Department will not provide the Request for Tender in any other format.

360Pro is the Department's tool used to submit responses. Responses cannot be submitted by any other means.

The Request for Tender pack includes the forms Respondents must use to submit their responses. The Department will only accept responses on the correct forms and will not accept any attachments submitted with a response unless specifically requested by the Department.

Any Addenda will be issued in both AusTender and 360Pro. Respondents will receive notification through the email address used to register in AusTender and 360Pro.

Responses that are incomplete or clearly non-competitive may be excluded from consideration at any time during the evaluation process at the Department's sole discretion. Alternatively, the Department may still consider such responses and seek clarification.

Slide 27 – Lodgement of Responses (2)

The Department will not accept a late response, unless the response is late due solely to mishandling by the Department.

Responses to this Request for Tender must be lodged before the closing date and time of 12.00 noon (Canberra time) on Wednesday 18 July 2018.

Respondents must allow sufficient time to complete and submit their response prior to the closing date and time, and should allow enough time to resolve any issue that may arise.

The 360Pro portal will not accept late responses.

Slide 28 – Key Dates

Key dates for Employment Facilitator Services for the Regional Employment Trials Program 2018–2020 are listed on the slide.

The Request for Tender was released on Friday 22 June 2018.

The deadline for submitting questions to the Department is 5.00 pm (Canberra time) on Wednesday 11 July 2018. There will be no obligation on the Department to respond to questions received after this time.

The closing time and date is 12.00 noon (Canberra time) on Wednesday 18 July 2018.

It is intended that notification of outcomes and dispatch of Contracts will occur in mid-September 2018.

Successful Respondents will commence delivery of services under the Contracts from 1 October 2018.

Slide 29 – Further Information

Further information regarding Employment Facilitator Services for the Regional Employment Trials Program 2018–2020 can be obtained from the Request for Tender published on AusTender and 360Pro, and the Frequently Asked Questions published on the Department’s Employment Services Purchasing Information website listed on the slide.

Respondents can also contact the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline as per the contact details on the slide. The Hotline can only provide information that is publicly available, and cannot provide interpretation or advice.

The Department also has a complaints handling process in place for purchasing processes. Any concerns about the probity or integrity of the Employment Facilitator Services for the Regional Employment Trials Program 2018–2020 purchasing process can be raised with the internal legal adviser, Luke de Jong via the email address on this slide. Where appropriate, complaints will be referred to the external Probity Adviser, the law firm Maddocks.

Slide 30 – Questions

We would be happy to take any questions you may have.

The Department may take questions on notice and will publish the answers at a later date on the Frequently Asked Questions document on the Department’s purchasing webpage.

If you have questions outside this information session, please submit these through the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline, and they may also be published.

Questions and responses that are published will not identify who asked the question and may be modified to assist with readability and context for others.