

ITEM 14. TENDER - MEDIA MONITORING AND DISTRIBUTION

FILE NO: X001438

TENDER NO: 1546

SUMMARY

This report provides details of tenders received for the ongoing provision of media monitoring and media distribution services for the City of Sydney.

The City has an obligation to inform the community of Council decisions and how ratepayer funds are being invested in the delivery of policies, projects, programs and events.

Like many other major councils, government bodies and companies across Australia, the City invests in media monitoring and distribution to ensure news about its important programs and projects are reaching as many people as possible.

Media monitoring provides information on issues affecting the City, helps us evaluate how City services and activities are perceived and forms part of our community engagement and consultation process.

For many years, the City has adopted 24-hour monitoring of print, TV, radio and online media for relevant keywords, such as names of our events, parks, policies and Sustainable Sydney 2030. This is standard practice across all levels of government in Australia.

The City continues to look for an organisation with the ability to provide reliable monitoring of international media coverage of the City's events and activities.

The City's media releases - more than 300 in the past financial year - are distributed through a specialist provider to media outlets across the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA), state-wide and nationally.

Professional media distribution helps news of the City's services, projects and programs reach the broadest range of media possible, and in this way enhances the information reaching community members across the local government area.

The City currently uses media monitoring and distribution services on a contract basis and the current agreement expires on 10 December 2015.

This new tender seeks to ensure we continue to receive these important services from an expert provider, while gaining value for money.

This report recommends that no tenders be accepted, and that the City now seeks to negotiate with suitable alternative companies.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council reject all tenders received for media monitoring and distribution for the reasons set out in confidential Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council not invite fresh tenders, as it is considered that inviting fresh tenders would be unlikely to deliver a better result;
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to enter into negotiations with contractors that are suitably qualified and demonstrate a capability to fully undertake the scope of works; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the CEO to enter into a contract, subject to the conclusion of negotiations, with suitable companies for the delivery of both media monitoring and distribution.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Tender Evaluation Summary Report (Confidential)

(As Attachment A is confidential, it will be circulated separately from the agenda paper and to Councillors and relevant senior staff only.)

BACKGROUND

1. Professional media monitoring and media distribution services help the City lead, govern and serve as part of Sustainable Sydney 2030.
2. The delivery of media monitoring and distribution by a service provider is standard practice across all levels of government in Australia and for private corporations. Media monitoring involves 24-hour monitoring of print, TV, radio and online media for certain keywords or phrases supplied by the City. Keywords include the City's events and festivals, buildings, parks, initiatives, developments, policies, Sustainable Sydney 2030, Councillors and the CEO. Monitoring provides staff with the opportunity to correct misinformation, but also is a cost-effective means of promoting an event or encouraging behavioural change.
3. Media distribution helps the City meet its requirement to keep LGA residents and ratepayers properly informed of Council decisions in support of the City's programs, initiatives, and services.
4. The City uses a variety of sources to contact media, including media conferences, a dedicated media website, direct emailing and phone calls. Professional media distribution companies provide direct contact with print, radio, TV, online and wire agencies across the country quickly and efficiently, ensuring news announcements meet the intended audience.
5. Through media monitoring and media distribution services, the City is able to report back on the success of its policies, plans, projects and services. For example, the media coverage of the City's 2014 New Year's Eve celebrations included 12,523 stories, including 609 print stories, 5,398 TV stories and 3,616 radio stories. The estimated cost to purchase the equivalent amount of advertising space would be \$22.2 million, while the potential audience reached through this media coverage was more than 90 million people. This distribution of the City's messaging and analysis of its coverage reach is essential in determining the effectiveness of our programming.
6. The City of Sydney is potentially servicing and interacting with more than one million people daily. The ability to monitor and communicate with media is critical to get our messaging out to the community and ensure accuracy in reporting of the City's programs, services, facilities and events.
7. The City currently uses the services of a media monitoring and distribution company on a contract basis. This tender is designed to ensure Council continues to receive best value for money from those companies providing applicable services in this industry.

INVITATION TO TENDER

8. A tender for media monitoring and media distribution services was advertised on Tuesday 1 September 2015 in The Sydney Morning Herald, The Daily Telegraph and on the City's e-tendering website, Tenderlink. The tender closed on Tuesday 22 September 2015.

TENDER SUBMISSIONS

9. At the close of tenders, three submissions were received from the following organisations (listed alphabetically):

- LexisNexis.
- Media Measures
- Media Research Group

10. No late submissions were received.

TENDER EVALUATION

11. All members of the Tender Evaluation Panel have signed Pecuniary Interest Declarations. No pecuniary interests were noted.
12. The relative ranking of tenders as determined from the total weighted score is provided in the confidential Tender Evaluation Summary – Attachment A.
13. All submissions were assessed in accordance with the approved evaluation criteria being:
 - (a) organisational capacity and technical ability to carry out the work under the contract;
 - (b) organisational managerial capability, qualifications, experience and personnel;
 - (c) quality of project methodology;
 - (d) financial stability and financial position of the tenderer; and
 - (e) schedule of rates.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

14. Performance will be measured against the ability to meet agreed delivery timeframes, match content against keywords and distribute information to key media outlets within specified timeframes. Ongoing management will occur with regular performance reviews.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. There are sufficient funds allocated for this project within the current year's operating budget and future years' forward estimates.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

16. The tender has been conducted in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 and the City's Contracts Policy.
17. Attachment A contains confidential commercial information of the tenderers and details of Council's tender evaluation and contingencies which, if disclosed, would:
 - (a) confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business; and
 - (b) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.

18. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

19. The contract for the City's current media monitoring and distribution services expires on 10 December 2015.

OPTIONS

20. Council has the following options regarding this tender:
- (a) reject all tenders and re-advertise, which is not recommended, as it is considered this would be unlikely to deliver a better result; or
 - (b) reject the tender and negotiate for the provision of media monitoring and distribution
21. In reviewing the available options, it is recommended that no tenders be accepted and the City enter into negotiations with suitably qualified providers.

SYD CASSIDY

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