

Procurement

Webinar Transcript

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Hello, and thank you for tuning into this recorded presentation. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the Western Victoria Primary Health Network's (WVPHN's) procurement process, and to build viewer's capacity to undertake the required tasks to access funding when it becomes available.

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This presentation has been structured into three key areas including:

- information about the WVPHN;
- an overview of procurement and probity; followed by,
- useful tips on how to apply for funding, including where to find relevant data.

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WVPHN is one of 31 Primary Health Networks across Australia, and one of six in Victoria that were established on the 1st of July 2015. We serve a population of approximately 618 thousand people in a land area of just under 80 thousand square kilometres with 775 General Practitioners. Our region comprises 21 local government areas which have been divided into four sub-regions including: Ballarat Goldfield, Geelong-Otway, Great South Coast and Wimmera Grampians. We have offices located within each sub-region in Ballarat, Geelong, Warrnambool and Horsham.

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All PHNs were established by the Commonwealth government with the objectives of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

To achieve these objectives, PHNs have established three key functions which are:

One, Support General Practice through established Practice Facilitator teams who assist primary health care practices with professional support, information and quality improvement activities;

Two, Commission or purchase locally-needed services under a commissioning model, which seeks to drive improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care services, and;

Three, Integrate local service systems through the co-design of models of patient care that deliver improved health outcomes with a mix of interventions from a range of providers.

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WVPHN receives federal and state government funding for commissioning projects and services to address priority primary health care needs in our region and to improve coordination of care. Distribution of funding is undertaken through a procurement process, whereby services or works from an external source is sought via a competitive tender process. Ultimately the aim of procurement is to enable WVPHN to allocate available resources in ways which best address the needs of our region.

WVPHN aims to ensure that probity is a key consideration in all procurement activities undertaken. The concept of probity in a procurement or tender process, is about being fair and impartial and ensuring the use of transparent and accountable processes that would withstand external or independent scrutiny. Probity aims to provide a level playing field so that all appliers for funding, or “tenderers”, are provided with the same opportunity, and can have confidence that the rules will be fairly and equitably applied. It also supports a competitive tender process to ensure best outcomes, including value for money for funding organisations.

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As part of the procurement process, WVPHN selects an evaluation panel to evaluate the received applications for funding. These panels are specific to the advertised tender and can be made up of internal staff, representatives from external organisations and specialist advisors. Through this process, identification and management of any conflicts of interest is vital to ensure impartiality and procedural fairness.

Conflicts of interest can be:

- **actual**- where an evaluator has some other interest/s that may affect their decision-making and the outcome of the tender process.
- **potential**- where it is more likely than not that an evaluator has other interest/s that may affect their decision-making and the outcome of the tender; or,
- **perceived**- where an evaluator may reasonably be understood as having competing interest/s that may affect their decision-making and the outcome of the tender.

All evaluators and specialist advisors are required to complete conflict of interest forms at the beginning of any tender process, which are then reviewed after tender closure and as necessary during the process.

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Appliers for funding, or “tenderers”, also have probity obligations which are to:

- comply with the requirements of the tender including closing time and lodgement requirements;
- not seek improper assistance from WVPHN staff, including its employees and contractors;
- direct all communications through the Western Victoria PHN e-Tender portal, TenderLink;
- avoid anti-competitive conduct; and,

- avoid and declare any conflicts of interest.

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All WVPHN invitations to tender are made via our e-Tender portal, Tenderlink. All interested individuals or organisations who wish to view details on available tenders, or submit a tender application, must be registered on the TenderLink portal.

Supplier registration is free, however you will need a valid email address. If your email is not registered on the portal, you will be asked to register your full organisation details (including a valid ABN), and agree to the TenderLink Terms of Service. Once registered, you can request to receive email alerts about future opportunities.

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Commissioning offers enhanced opportunities to explore more collaborative and innovative ways of working with healthcare providers and communities. Procurement is one part of the commissioning process. There are three main steps to applying for a tender:

1. Decide whether you should apply;
2. Plan for your tender response; and,
3. Put together your response.

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To decide whether to apply for an opportunity, consider:

- Do you think you have everything WVPHN is looking for? If not, can you bring in a partner?
- Do you have some knowledge of WVPHN and their key priorities?
- Who might your competitors be, and do you have a unique selling point that will put you above the competition?
- Are the costs you will incur worth the possibility of winning the tender?
- Are there risks associated with tendering or not tendering?

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Tendering may be a new to many of you, so it's important to know what's required before making the decision to apply for an opportunity. Service specifications, eligibility criteria and weighting along with the questions that need to be responded to, will be made available via TenderLink when the tenders open. To be successful in a tender process be sure to prepare your response to:

- get the basics right;
- highlight your point of difference;
- show you've got all the right experience; and,
- weight your answers according to the criteria.

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It is also important to plan your response to:

- Demonstrate that you understand the work being commissioned and that you have the right experience to help WVPHN solve the problem.
- Highlight your point of difference and clearly communicate it throughout your response.
- Get the basics right first - answer the questions in the tender and ensure you show how you meet the evaluation criteria, then look at what extra value you can offer to make you stand out.
- Weight your answers according to the criteria
- Look at the weightings of the evaluation criteria and use this as a guide for what you should be focusing on.
- Ask questions- unless your question includes commercially sensitive information, WVPHN will make the question and answer available to all tenderers.

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When preparing a tender response to WVPHN, you will need to demonstrate a good understanding of the problem and the appropriate evidence-based response. In terms of understanding the current state of population health within your area, you can draw on a range of data sources including:

- **PHN Exchange:** this portal is hosted by WVPHN and includes population statistics by location, compiled from reputable sources. Much of this information can be downloaded and viewed in table or map form.
- **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare PHN Portal:** the AIHW maintains an online portal which displays a variety of health information by PHN, and against a national baseline. The data spans health risk factors, prevalence, screening, and vulnerable population groups.
- **Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU)-** this portal specialises in small area statistics around health and the social determinants of health. The interface provides access to interactive tables and graphs.
- **Victorian Health Information Surveillance System (VHISS)-** another interactive portal that provides information on burden of disease, Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (ACSC), avoidable mortality and the Victorian Population Health Survey.

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All individuals or organisations commissioned by the WVPHN will be asked to participate in data collection activities to provide information for monitoring or evaluation. Examples of data collection activities you may be asked to participate in could include one, or more, of the following:

- collecting information on the number of services you provide, or the number of people you support, in a spreadsheet for the WVPHN;
- providing WVPHN with a description of how you allocated and expended the budget for your commissioned service or program;
- distributing or collecting information from patients through surveys; and,
- participating in interviews with the WVPHN, or a third party commissioned by the PHN, to provide information about the service or program you deliver.

You will be informed about what data collection activities you will be asked to participate in during the tendering and contracting stages. This should help you plan and allocate resources accordingly, before you commence service delivery or program activities

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Once tenders open on TenderLink, all communications and enquiries must only be directed in writing via the TenderLink portal or the tenders email address listed here. Should you have any general queries prior to tender opening, these can be directed to the relevant program teams. If you're not sure how to reach a specific program, please contact the Western Victoria PHN via the phone number listed on the slide.

I hope this presentation has been helpful and thank you for tuning in.