



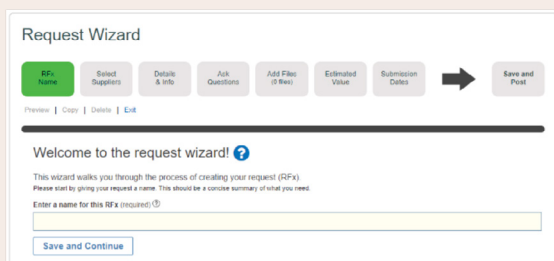
Mid-Western Council reduces sourcing risk and supports local businesses

Background

Mid-Western Council in Mudgee, NSW has dozens of buyers that source quotes for projects on a regular basis. Kristie Ward has been Procurement Manager at the council for the last 6 years. She first used VendorPanel to access Local Government Procurement’s preferred supplier panels, which LGP makes available at no cost to NSW councils. At that time, sourcing that didn’t involve LGP panels was largely managed using phone and email.

Fairness and Compliance

The decision to transition all of Mid-Western’s procurement to VendorPanel was partly to address an erosion of trust with service providers who had concerns about the transparency of council processes. Kristie explains, “We had identified a few risks with regards to how we were approaching contractors. VendorPanel permitted us to have full visibility over our sourcing, and importantly, it helped us to improve and provide contractors with the evidence of a fair and compliant process.”



Creating Local Opportunities

Mid-Western had an existing network of preferred suppliers that formed the basis for their new panels. However, the council wanted to expand and diversify its supplier base so it mandated the use of VendorPanel Marketplace alongside panels. The Marketplace is open and free to suppliers, with over 80 service categories and multiple subcategories, and geolocation allows buyers to refine their supplier search to within 5km of an address. The simple process makes it easy for buyers to open up their sourcing.

The Request Wizard steps non procurement staff through a structured, easy-to-follow RFQ process. By providing a consistent and compliant framework it improves the quality of requests and responses, makes it easy to include more suppliers in each RFQ, and reduces risk to the organisation.



As Kristy says, “It’s as easy for us to get 10 quotes as it is to get 3, so there are now more opportunities in the local market.

Last year Mid-Western raised over 70 RFQs in the public Marketplace, to the value of \$1.5m. On average, nine suppliers were invited to quote on each job.

Not only are local suppliers receiving more opportunities, they are benefiting from the improvements in Council process. “It’s no longer a conversation, but a consistent process with improved detail. Requests are released to everybody at the same time with responses being opened only upon close.” says Kristie.

Suppliers have found that doing business with Council is now an improved experience. “We’re receiving clearer requests with more information, and there is a sense now that we’re on an even playing field when we’re quoting with Council.” says James Wallace of irrigation specialists Aquawest.

Local businesses receive opportunities not only from Mid-Western, but also from other councils in NSW that use VendorPanel Marketplace to source services. As a result, local suppliers like Jodie Benton, Director of OzArk Environmental, have seen their businesses grow. “Although we originally registered for Mid-Western, we’re now exposed to all these other buyers on the platform and have won work throughout western and southwestern NSW.”

Swan Hill is part of a Regional Procurement Excellence Network (RPEN) that includes eight neighbouring local government authorities identifying opportunities to collaborate is high on their agenda. While all Councils in Victoria can access MAV contracts via the platform, those that have upgraded to a full license, including Swan Hill neighbours City of Greater Bendigo, are able to securely share their own panel arrangements with other organisations.

Back at Mid-Western, Kristie Ward counts exposure for local suppliers among the benefits that the council has seen. “It’s wonderful to see contractors receive opportunities outside of our region, and that aspect of the Marketplace is something we actively promote”. Three years since implementing VendorPanel, Mid-Western have gained full control of their procurement, diversified their supplier network, and built trust with the local business community. “Our 40 plus buyers save time with each quote, and the procurement team have complete visibility of all sourcing activity...

But the greatest thing for us is the evidence of the process that we followed - it’s enabled us to build back trust with our local contractors by proving to them that we’re doing the right thing.”

***Kristie Ward
Procurement Manager
Mid-Western Council.***