



What is my maranoa business?

The question asked of local governments everywhere is.... *What are Councils doing to assist local business?*

From the perspective of Maranoa Regional Council, we have developed a list of actions where Council can contribute to the economic development of the region, and also provide practical assistance to individual local businesses where there is a public benefit in doing so – in this way doing what we can to remove impediments and giving businesses the best chance of success.

We are realistic in our expectations though - our goal is not to be all things to all people. We know that there are many factors that lead to the success or otherwise of business and industry. However, what we can do, and what Council is committed to, is creating an environment where competitive local business has the opportunity to flourish. To do that it is essential we partner with the State Government, industry groups and local business to develop processes that meet all of our needs.

Through the My Maranoa Business initiative, our priorities are to provide:

- greater insight into Council's purchasing processes, and why we need to do some things in certain ways;
- opening up Council's purchasing so that businesses have the opportunity to bid for the supply of goods and/or services;
- marketing and promotion opportunities for the region's businesses;
- new ways of keeping the business community up to date with Council's decisions and directions;
- reduced administration for businesses where possible, while still meeting Council's legislative obligations;
- practical support to the business community where it counts the most.




The supply of goods or services for Council operations and services (**'Procurement'**) is one of the key areas in which residents, through Council, can support local businesses. Many may not realise though that when it comes to procurement, there are some things we can change and improve, and other things that we must do by legislation given that we are a local government accountable for public funds.


For example, when making purchasing decisions, the Local Government Act requires us to consider five **sound contracting principles**:

- (a) value for money; **and**
- (b) open and effective competition; **and**
- (c) the development of competitive local business and industry; **and**
- (d) environmental protection; **and**
- (e) ethical behaviour and fair dealing.

Therefore it cannot be 'local' at any cost – we need to ensure *value for money* for all ratepayers. Value for money means that there may be considerations in addition to price (lowest price may not always win). It also means that local business and industry must still be competitive.

Our Commitment to the Business Community and the Maranoa Region

Policy Commitment	What this means in practice	
 <p>We will start with a level playing field</p>	<p>Products/Goods – We will take steps to ensure that we are comparing ‘apples and apples’ by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advising minimum standards where applicable; ▪ Standardising quotation request and response forms; ▪ Where practical, encouraging businesses to provide pricing in 3 categories (cheapest, mid range and highest quality); ▪ Being open to substitution of brands if the standard and value for money considerations are not compromised. <p>Services & Infrastructure Works – Evaluation will include all criteria that are an important part of the decision making process (excluding price) – e.g. compliance with specifications, suppliers’/contractors’ and operators’ experience and qualifications, timeframes, quality, safety and environmental protection (<i>the latter in line with Council’s legislative obligation</i>).</p> <p>All suppliers / tenderers will first be evaluated on a level playing field.</p> <p><i>[This is ensuring Council is providing open and effective competition in line with its legislative obligation]</i></p>	
 <p>We will provide a helping hand to local businesses to recognise their contribution to the regional economy</p>	<p>Council will allow a 5 star local business a ‘leg up’ to help them compete with out of town businesses or those with less local content (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4 stars). The ‘helping hand’ will be a maximum of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tenders – 15 point local content weighting for a 5 star local business (out of a total of 100 points) ▪ Quotations - 10% price premium for a 5 star local business <p>The pricing premium for local businesses with less than 5 stars will be on a sliding scale – the calculation based on 3% per star for tenders and 2% per star for quotations. This will provide a fair and transparent process, for instance, if there is a 5 star local business competing with a 4 star local business.</p> <p><i>[This is ensuring Council is obtaining value for money for its ratepayers, and is encouraging the development of competitive local business and industry in line with its legislative obligations]</i></p> <p>Important Note: <i>The awarding of a price premium and/or local content weighting will be subject to the local business’ consent to the release of Council’s total spend with the local business (supplier/contractor) as the information is in the public interest.</i></p> <p>Local Businesses will be able to use their star rating for their business’ marketing and promotion.</p> <p>Unsuccessful tenderers will be provided an opportunity to obtain feedback to assist in improving their competitiveness for future tenders.</p> <p>Council will release certain information to unsuccessful businesses for quotations about the successful bid (Who and how much) to help businesses improve their competitiveness for the future</p>	
 <p>We will be transparent in our dealings with local businesses within the parameters of our legislative, contractual and ethical obligations, and be accountable to the community for expenditure of public funds</p>	<p>Subject to local businesses’ participation in the My Maranoa Business program, Council will collate data on local spend with registered local (star rated) businesses for release through Council’s reporting processes (e.g. website, quarterly review, annual report).</p> <p>Council will release certain information about a successful bid to those who provided a quote / tender.</p> <p>Council will respect the commercial-in-confidence / specific details of individual business’ unsuccessful tenders or quotations providing that the unsuccessful business or businesses do not initiate a public campaign about the loss of the tender or quotation (including through social media or mainstream media). In that event, Council reserves the right to release information that it believes is in the public interest.</p> <p><i>[This is ensuring Council is being ethical and fair in its dealings in line with its legislative obligation]</i></p>	

	<p>We will partner with the local business community to develop processes that meet the needs of us both</p>	<p>Council will implement the My Maranoa Business Registration Portal to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ streamline the quotation and tendering process (removing duplication of effort for businesses); ▪ facilitate the sharing of details pertaining to local businesses' product and service offerings; ▪ gather information to assist in assigning the star rating; ▪ other information of public interest. <p>Tenders and quotations will seek a commitment from business to submit a My Maranoa Business Acquittal Statement upon completion of the awarded project, to enable Council to gather other valuable information for the community about the contract's additional contribution to the regional economy (through the engagement of local sub-contractors and procurement).</p> <p>Council will implement initiatives that do not put businesses to the expense of frequent quotations for low value items, through the use of panels that negotiate an agreed pricing framework upfront.</p>
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In developing all of these commitments we seek to value and encourage for the betterment of the region:

- **Ownership** - the businesses that are owned and operated by residents
- **Investment** - those who invest in our region in some form through their business premises (long term leases or commercial, industrial, rural rates)
- **Employment** - businesses that employ our residents who in turn also have the opportunity to support our local businesses and industry.

We recognise that the best outcome for ratepayers as a whole, and Council, is to have a diverse and competitive market – we need to be a community that welcomes economic interest in our region. It is through that interest that we grow and prosper. However, we also need to ensure that competitive local business is encouraged. We aim to do that through the five star rating system, to provide 'truly local' and 'partly local' businesses a helping hand in Council's tendering and quotation processes.

We initially commenced a major reform process titled the "My Maranoa Business" initiative to improve our own processes (transparency and accountability), and make it easier for local suppliers to do business with Council.

The initiative continues to grow, with the changes incorporating previous suggestions from local businesses, matters raised by Council's auditors, and learnings from a number of workplace investigations. We continue to learn from each procurement process and decision, and we remain open to feedback about how we can continue to improve.