

2.1 CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF ELECTORAL SERVICES – 2008 COUNCIL GENERAL ELECTION

(CF2008208 :NA)

Responsible Officer: Leigh Harder

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council -

- 1. Accepts the tender submitted by the Victorian Electoral Commission for the provision of electoral services for the City of Monash 2008 general election to be held by full postal voting, and the conduct of the failure to vote process, for the sum of \$437,776.90 (GST inclusive).*
- 2. Signs and seals contract documents for the provision of electoral services for the City of Monash 2008 general election.*

INTRODUCTION

This report proposes the appointment of the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the 2008 general election for Monash and the subsequent failure to vote process.

DISCUSSION

On 19 February 2008, the Council agreed to enter into an agreement for the Municipal Association of Victoria to act as its agent in the calling and assessment of tenders for the provision of electoral services for the 2008 Council election.

Tenders closed on 28 April 2008.

The contract is specifically for -

- the conduct of the 2008 election,
- the follow up process for those who fail to vote , and
- the conduct of extraordinary elections and by-elections that may be required between the 2008 elections and the next general elections, at an additional cost.

One tender was received; from the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC).

VEC's TENDER RESPONSE

In line with previous tender responses, the VEC submitted a tender with a 'two-tier' structure comprising 'core' services and 'additional' services.

This approach reflects the variables that need to be taken into account when planning for an election and allows the Council to negotiate additional services that it considers meet its particular requirements.

Basis of the Tender Response

The VEC's tender response was predicated on the following -

- Conduct of the election by full postal voting.
- 4 wards being contested
- 11 vacancies
- 14 or fewer candidates per ward
- 123,000 voters on the certified voters' roll (approximate figure)
- Returning Officer being located at the Monash Seminar and Training Centre.

“Core” Services

The “Core” Services contained within the tender price provide for –

- Conduct of the election by full postal voting
- Conduct candidate information session.
- Basic communication campaign.
- Appointment of Returning Officer and support staff
- Printing, postage, etc of ballot material.
- Merge of voters' lists.
- Compilation of the list of non-voters.
- Ballot count (electronic count, possibly at Holmesglen or Box Hill TAFE's).
- Administrative support, including contract management, training for Returning Officer and support staff.
- Communication campaign comprising -
 - Entitlement Day advertisement
 - Notice of Election advertisement
 - Voting details advertisement
 - Declaration of election results advertisement
 - Telephone interpreter service for the elections enquiry line
 - Web site services & media relations
 - State-wide information campaign, including ethnic media
 - Communication services for voters with special needs – blind and vision impaired.

“Additional” Services

The “Additional” Services contained within the tender price provide for –

- Additions to the communication campaign, consisting of voting reminder advertisement’ multi-language leaflet in ballot pack & telephone interpreter service; uncontested election leaflet.
- Enforcement of compulsory voting (excluding Infringement Court proceedings).

Cost variations

Cost variations apply to the following -

- Cost increase for reprinting of ballot papers where a candidate retires.
- Cost reduction for an uncontested ward.
- Cost increase for a recount.
- An increase/decrease in the number of enrolled voters.
- An increase in costs for candidates’ statement pamphlets where there are more than 14 candidates per ward.

ANALYSIS

It is recommended that the VEC’s tender be accepted for the ‘core’ and ‘additional’ services.

The Council has adopted the “additional” services for each of its previous Council elections.

The additions to the communication campaign are considered important in ensuring that voters from a CALD background are provided with the necessary information and advice to enable them to effectively participate in the election.

The reminder notice, which will be published in the local press, aims to capture those voters who may have overlooked to complete and mail their ballot paper.

The failure to vote process is to be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The VEC has the knowledge and experience as well as the necessary resources and processes in place to effectively undertake this activity on the Council’s behalf.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Core Price

The price for the “core” services is \$333,715 (GST exclusive).

Total Price

The total price, which includes the “additional” services, is -

\$397,979 (GST exclusive)

\$437,776.90 (GST inclusive).

A budget allocation has been made in the draft 2008/2009 Budget for the conduct of the 2008 election.

The 2005 election costs were \$343,766.88 (GST exclusive).

CONCLUSION

The Tenderer’s core business is the conduct of elections and since 1996, has developed a considerable level of expertise in conducting Local Government elections.

It is considered that the Tenderer has the capabilities and resources to successfully conduct the elections and the failure to vote process.

It is therefore recommended that the VEC’s tender be accepted.