

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2012-13 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 5

Question No: 526

Topic: Tender to support vision/hearing impaired children

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

During 2012 FaHCSIA has released a number of tenders that do not follow protocols under the Commonwealth procurement guidelines. In particular FaHCSIA called for tenders to “support Children who are blind or vision impaired, deaf or hearing impaired in regional and remote areas” funded to \$4.5 million. The tender as drafted did not represent value for money, for instance: Contained no statement of requirements (so how could a legitimate assessment be made or competing tenders compared); Did not take into account either existing models of service or the structure of the Sector; Was released on the 23rd of February, 2012, with closing date of 13th March, 2012 (14 working days) there was no prior notice; Subsequently (we believe) amended in term and number of children to be provided services; Inappropriate expert group; Not advertised on Austender; Provided only 3 sections of 500 words to explain how an organisation would implement; (We believe) is being subcontracted to an unsuccessful tenderer.

How can a tender for \$4.5 million be released and awarded with no genuine statement of requirements?

Why were the proper procurement protocols by-passed and the timeframe for a response so short?

Was an appropriately experienced selection panel created?

Given the above, on what basis does FaHCSIA believe it received value for money in the tender process?

Given the lack of a meaningful statement of requirements, lack of response time and what appears to be non compliance with Government Procurement Guidelines, what actions will be taken within FaHCSIA to prevent a reoccurrence of the above?

Answer:

FaHCSIA has established procedures and processes in place to ensure compliance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

As the example cited in the question relates to a selection process to select a provider to deliver the Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children Initiative, it is not covered by the Commonwealth Procurement Rules. Rather, the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines provides the policy framework that underpins this selection process.

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FaHCSIA has reviewed its selection process for the Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children Initiative and is satisfied that it has complied with all legal and administrative requirements and policies and procedures as part of the competitive selection process to determine a preferred applicant. FaHCSIA is also satisfied that the selected provider represents best value for money and minimal risk to the government.