



Tendering

Practical insights from community organisations

Zuleika Arashiro and Amanda Pagan

2018



Brotherhood
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is a non-government, community-based organisation concerned with social justice. Based in Melbourne, but with programs and services throughout Australia, the Brotherhood is working for a better deal for disadvantaged people. It undertakes research, service development and delivery, and advocacy, with the objective of addressing unmet needs and translating learning into new policies, programs and practices for implementation by government and others. For more information visit <www.bsl.org.au>.

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1 About this guide

This guide offers practical suggestions for community service organisations interested in tendering for government services. Many of the insights and suggestions presented here were shared by practitioners of small and medium-size community organisations that offer support services for young people in their pathways to employment. The quotes highlighted throughout the document come from interviews with six senior managers from small community organisations. While this guide can be used by any community organisation, it aims particularly to reach smaller service providers, for which competitive tenders often impose higher barriers.

Competitive tendering and the community sector

Growing competition in the human services sector, combined with the complexity that characterises compliance with government contracts, has changed the environment in the community sector. The changes have been especially challenging for smaller, local organisations. They are now required to continuously develop new organisational capabilities, as well as investing capital, to be able to compete for tenders. When they are successful, the staff and resources needed to comply with government contracts also tends to assume a large organisational structure in support.

From a citizen-centred perspective, the reforms in human services should be conducive to improving the outcomes for service users. However, pure competition, rather than attention to contestability, as a means of offering good alternatives to citizens can be counterproductive. There is a high risk, for instance, that local organisations that are well suited to offer high quality services to citizens may be simply left out of the 'market' due to the high barriers to entry involved in tender processes.

The recommendations emerging from the Productivity Commission's 2017 inquiry into the reforms to human services recognised how those barriers manifest in practice (see Table 1).

Table 1 Productivity Commission recommendations for improving tender processes

RECOMMENDATION 8.2

To improve processes used to tender family and community services, the Australian, State and Territory Governments should:

- publish a rolling schedule of upcoming tenders over (at least) the next twelve months
- allow sufficient time (a default of three months) for providers to prepare considered responses, including the development of integrated bids across related services
- notify providers of the outcome of tender processes in a timely manner
- design selection criteria that focus on the ability of service providers to improve outcomes for service users
- not discriminate on the basis of organisational type (for-profit, not-for-profit and mutual, for example).

Source: Productivity Commission 2017, *Introducing competition and informed user choice into human services: Reforms to human services*, report no. 85, Productivity Commission, Canberra, p. 46, <<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/human-services/reforms/report/human-services-reforms-overview.pdf>>.

Contribution and structure of this guide

There are good quality government resources and tools directed to guide organisations interested in submitting tenders (see **Appendix A**). In the community sector, initiatives such as *Love your tender*, a webinar series coordinated by peak bodies VCOSS, QCOSS and NCOSS, also provide support for community organisations that are preparing grant applications and tenders.

The specific contribution of this guide is to draw lessons from an actual experience of collaboration for tendering. The organisations consulted are partners in the national Transition to Work Community of Practice (TtW CoP). The TtW CoP is a group of providers of Transition to Work, a Commonwealth-funded service initiated in 2016 by the Department of Employment (now Department of Jobs and Small Business) to support young people aged 15–21 on their path towards employment.

This guide includes four further sections. **Section 2** highlights some principles of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs). Other levels of government enact their own provisions, but the CPRs illustrate well how government approaches procurement, and the rules that bind the conduct of public authorities. **Section 3** presents key considerations for organisations deciding whether to tender. **Section 4** offers practical guidance for the actual preparation of a proposal, informed by the experience of

executives from six TtW CoP organisations. **Section 5** outlines how 11 organisations across the country collaborated in tendering, and ultimately formed the TtW CoP.¹

We thank all the practitioners interviewed for this guide for sharing their knowledge and allowing us to shape this document as a hands-on resource. As they emphasised, tendering requires pulling together resources that are not always available for immediate mobilisation in smaller organisations. Deep knowledge of the organisation's mission, priorities and strengths, support from executive board and financial resources to invest in tendering all have to be considered in advance. Equally, the practitioners showed that even in a highly competitive environment, it is possible to find creative solutions for collaboration.

¹ The Transition to Work National Community of Practice now includes 12 organisations across 13 regions of Australia. For more information on its members, activities and approach, see <<https://www.ttwcommunity.com.au/>>.

2 Understand government rules

The rules that guide the purchase of goods and services by public authorities (or 'procurement') vary across government levels. The central point for all Commonwealth procurement-related information, including publications, policies, announcements and contract awards is AusTender <www.tenders.gov.au>.

The Commonwealth Procurement Rules are the backbone of the Commonwealth procurement framework. Here we refer to the CPRs as an example to highlight the overall public logic that guides the conduct of public authorities.

The CPRs are issued by the Finance Minister under Section 105 B (1) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. While each tender will contain some specific requirements, the CPRs provide a common denominator for Commonwealth public authorities.

In procuring goods and services, these authorities must:

- assess value for money
- encourage competition
- promote efficient, effective, economical and ethical procurement
- ensure accountability and transparency
- conduct procurement risk assessment and establish risk management processes
- select appropriate procurement methods.

'Value for money' is the core rule of the CPRs, but there is no rigid formula to assess it. The provisions make it clear that public authorities must consider not only the total budget for an offer, but also a series of qualifying characteristics that include financial and non-financial costs and benefits (see Box 1).

Box 1 Commonwealth Procurement Rules (as of 1 January 2018), key extracts

Considering value for money

4.1 A thorough consideration of value for money begins by officials clearly understanding and expressing the goals and purpose of the procurement.

4.2 When a business requirement arises, officials should consider whether a procurement will deliver the best value for money. It is important to take into consideration:

- a. stakeholder input;
- b. the scale and scope of the business requirement;
- c. the relevant entity's resourcing and budget;
- d. obligations and opportunities under other existing arrangements;
- e. relevant Commonwealth policies; and
- f. the market's capacity to competitively respond to a procurement.

4.3 When a relevant entity determines that procurement represents the best value for money, these considerations [in 4.2] will inform the development and implementation of the procurement.

Achieving value for money

4.4 Achieving value for money is the core rule of the CPRs. Officials responsible for a procurement must be satisfied, after reasonable enquiries, that the procurement achieves a value for money outcome. Procurements should:

- a. encourage competition and be non-discriminatory;
- b. use public resources in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner that is not inconsistent with the policies of the Commonwealth;
- c. facilitate accountable and transparent decision-making;
- d. encourage appropriate engagement with risk; and
- e. be commensurate with the scale and scope of the business requirement.

4.5 When conducting a procurement, an official must consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each submission including, but not limited to:

- a. the quality of the goods and services;
- b. fitness for purpose of the proposal;
- c. the potential supplier's relevant experience and performance history;
- d. flexibility of the proposal (including innovation and adaptability over the lifecycle of the procurement);
- e. environmental sustainability of the proposed goods and services (such as energy efficiency and environmental impact); and
- f. whole-of-life costs.

4.6 Whole-of-life costs could include:

- a. the initial purchase price of the goods and services;
- b. maintenance costs;
- c. transition out costs;
- d. licensing costs (when applicable);
- e. the cost of additional features procured after the initial procurement;
- f. consumable costs; and
- g. disposal costs.

Source: Department of Finance 2018, *Commonwealth Procurement Rules*, 1 January, <<https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/commonwealth-procurement-rules-1-jan-18.pdf>>

Another important aspect is that the CPRs value both competition and non-discrimination. In order to ensure non-discrimination, all potential suppliers must 'be treated equitably based on their commercial, legal, technical and financial abilities and not be discriminated against due to their size, degree of foreign affiliation or ownership, location, or the origin of their goods and services' (CPRs, Paragraph 5.3). Equitable treatment recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach could in fact lead to discrimination. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are protected by specific provisions. Thus public authorities should consider:

- a. the benefits of doing business with competitive SMEs when specifying requirements and evaluating value for money;
- b. barriers to entry, such as costly preparation of submissions, that may prevent SMEs from competing;
- c. SMEs' capabilities and their commitment to local or regional markets; and
- d. the potential benefits of having a larger, more competitive supplier base. (CPRs, Paragraph 5.4)

Moreover, non-corporate Commonwealth entities should outsource at least 10% of procurement by value from SMEs. Unfortunately smaller non-profit organisations are not covered by those provisions, despite being very likely to face similar barriers to entry (e.g. the cost of preparing submissions) and having capabilities and commitment relevant to local areas.

The CPRs define approach to market as 'any notice inviting potential suppliers to participate in a procurement, which may include a request for tender, request for quote, request for expression of interest, request for information or request for proposal' (CPRs, Appendix B). They also establish three procurement methods:

- **open tender:** involves publishing an open approach to market and inviting submissions
- **prequalified tender:** involves procurement from the Legal Services Multi-use List
- **limited tender:** involves a relevant entity approaching one or more potential suppliers to make submissions, when the process does not meet the rules for open tender or prequalified tender. (CPRs, Paragraphs 9.8–9.10)

3 Think strategically: is this a good match?

Tendering is an investment with no guarantee that it will pay off. That can be especially hard for smaller organisations, which operate with compact teams already tasked with multiple functions, and with lean budgets. Given the time and costs that are necessary for the preparation of large tenders, most guides recommend that organisations begin by strategically evaluating whether they are a good fit for the service put out to tender, which in turn will influence their actual chances of winning. In the *Writing a strong tender* training resource, the Department of Employment (2015) advises organisations to keep in mind that ‘it’s about the buyer before it’s about the seller’. That essentially means that the readiness and qualities of an organisation to deliver a service have to be clearly demonstrated for the government (‘buyer’), which will ultimately choose the provider (‘seller’).

Governments usually release an annual plan of upcoming tenders, and publish feedback on what made good proposals. Thus, while the notification to market may be the official start of the process, the preparation for tendering begins well in advance. Before the proposal writing, it is vital to carefully assess whether the opportunity suits your organisation’s mission, culture and strategy. Experience shows that many small organisations go through profound changes after winning government contracts. One of the executives interviewed talked about the tension involved in balancing the increase in administrative tasks with the ‘time actually dedicated to serve clients’. Depending on the scale and complexity of the contract, the time and resources required for staff training and data management can be considerable. Learning how to combine a compliance-driven, risk-averse culture with a community-driven, flexible culture can be a significant challenge.

A good practice is to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to map where your organisation stands in relation to the services put out to tender. The short list of questions in Tip 1 can also assist in the assessment, or you can use the more detailed checklist from the Department of Employment (now the Department of Jobs and Small Business) which is reproduced in **Appendix B**.

TIP 1 Deciding whether to tender for a service

Look into the present: Is your organisation fit for the purpose?	Look into the future: Is the tender a good fit for your organisation?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your organisation’s experience in delivering the services you’re tendering for? • What is your organisation’s capacity and capabilities, against each of the selection criteria? • What is your organisation’s value proposition that makes it stand out among other competitors? • Is your approach to the service put out to tender in line with what the government is interested in? • What upfront investment are you likely to be required to make before beginning to deliver the services? • What level of non-recoverable expenses may be needed? Is your organisation’s board supportive of ‘safety net’ funding for that? • Can you mobilise resources by partnering with other organisations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How exactly does this tender opportunity fit into your organisation’s business model? • If you win, how is that likely to impact your organisation (mission, staff, infrastructure, reputation)? • What are the risks and opportunities? What does the financial modelling tell you about the actual costs and feasibility? • Are there any breaches or sanctions you will be required to administer that could impact on your trusting relationships with service users and the local community? • How do you plan to deal with the risk of funding coming to an end? • Do you have your Board’s support to ensure some service continuity? • If you enter into a partnership, what are the risks and benefits for your organisation?

We asked interviewees to comment on any surprises they had after winning the tender, that might assist organisations in this preparatory phase. Transition to Work is a new service, and even though the organisations had long previous experience with other youth support services, TtW has an emphasis on employment and specific requirements. Three key things stood out and are highlighted below.

Various managers pointed out the high pressure caused by the very limited time given to initiate the services. Organisations had on average a month to open the doors. However, about eighteen months had passed between the end of the federal funding for Youth Connections, and the announcement of TtW tender results. During that (unfunded) gap, small organisations had not been able to maintain their youth services staff, with significant loss of human capital. Starting up again so quickly was difficult:

You can just imagine the pressure around that, it’s pretty much almost impossible. We were three-quarters of the way there on the day that the doors opened but obviously

when you're recruiting staff they have to give notice so there's a turnaround time. We did hit the ground very underresourced, both infrastructure-wise and HR-wise.

As a result managers were performing multiple simultaneous activities that ranged from office lease and renovation, to purchase and installation of furniture and computers, to fast recruitment and training of new staff.

IT and data management is another area in which considerable challenges happened. In addition to contracting of specialists and continuous staff training, organisations spent more time and money than they had estimated with IT security protocols in order to comply with the contractual requirements:

Even if [the government] had spelled out [in the contract] that you were going to be on a three-year pathway to accreditation program and that this will require you to be very diligent with, none of us in those early days would've interpreted what that really means in terms of consultants and time and labour and computer upgrade costs.

TIP 2 Winning is only the beginning

- Once you win a contract, you must 'hit the ground running'. That is when the early identification of your capacity, capabilities and investment needed (see TIP 1) will make a significant difference.
- Form a task force so you can initiate the services within a very limited timeframe.
- You must have some funds for upfront investment that will not always be recoverable.
- Depending on the complexity of the services and the level of government you will work with, compliance around IT and data security can be extremely rigorous and costly.
- Consider getting legal advice on the terms of the contract before signing it, so you fully understand compliance terms, restrictions and adaptations required.

4 Green light: prepare a strong proposal

Planning your proposal

Once you carefully review the terms and conditions of the request for tender and decide to go ahead, you are most likely to have only six to eight weeks between the government's announcement and the closing date for proposals.

Table 2 shows the timeline for the tendering process for Transition to Work 2016–2020, to illustrate the time pressures which organisations need to take into account in planning.

Table 2 Indicative timeline: Request for Proposal for Transition to Work 2016–2020

Date	Stage of tender process
21 October 2015	Release of the Request for Proposal for Transition to Work 2016–2020
Week commencing 26 October 2015	Information sessions and two webinars
24 November 2015, 5.00 pm (Canberra time)	Last day for requests for further information regarding the Request for Proposal for Transition to Work 2016–2020. There will be no obligation on the Department of Employment to answer questions received after this date
1 December 2015, 5.00 pm (Canberra time)	Closing date and time for the Request for Proposal for Transition to Work 2016–2020
From January 2016	Transition to Work commences rolling announcements [of successful tenders]
By end of April 2016	Transition to Work announcements are finalised and all services have commenced
26 June 2020	End date of Transition to Work 2016–2020 Deed

Source: Department of Employment 2015, *Request for proposal for Transition to Work 2016–2020*, p. iii.

A good way to engage with a tender is to approach it as a project, which ideally begins when the government's intention to commission a service first becomes known. Monitoring news around the tendering and knowing your sector well are crucial. Moreover, when government releases an exposure draft for comments, you may be able to collaborate with peer organisations to provide shared feedback. Whenever this is possible, remember that a collective voice is likely to be weighted differently from a single input.

It is essential to establish from the start who will ultimately manage the tendering project, even though the actual proposal will result from the contribution of many people. A project management approach will help you clearly map the resources needed, including any time from other staff beyond the manager, and upfront non-recoverable costs, such as contracting of external consultants. Set tasks and early deadlines, hold regular meetings of the core team and consult with relevant staff. Remember to reserve plenty of time for draft reviews and editing well before the final submission date. As one manager summarised: 'You need to hit the ground running hard and fast, right up front. You can't sit there mulling this over and say "I'll write it all in the last week"'.

TIP 3 Working effectively with other local agencies

- Remember that cultivating positive relationships with other service providers in your area matters not only for an integrated support to service users, but also for your local legitimacy.
- Be clear about your organisation's strengths and respect the strengths of other local agencies.
- Consider inviting local agencies to a briefing meeting so you can resolve any concerns and build support.
- Consider whether your organisation would benefit by collaborating with others in responding to a call for tenders. (See **Section 5** for a successful example of such a process.)

Writing your proposal

The proposal is your only chance to demonstrate that your approach, service model and knowledge of the field are not only sound, but are also the most likely to lead to the outcomes government expects from a specific service. A well-written response to the selection criteria is essential.

Writing a tender is the art of combining clear expression, facts and well-supported statements, within the required format. As one manager explained:

Character limits meant every keystroke had to add value. We spent hours sharing ideas on the most concise way to express all the critical points. Be true to the agreed model, add your local content and stay under the character count.

In all the small and medium-size organisations we consulted, the project manager was the organisation's executive officer or a senior manager. In their role, they wrote tender drafts, worked with external consultants and incorporated feedback throughout the process. That meant mobilisation for several weeks, and intensive, full-time dedication during the final writing stage. Arrangements varied:

- Three organisations paid for external assistance. That ranged from limited 'proof editing' work, to more expensive consultancy throughout the process.
- One organisation had a senior manager and a researcher working full-time on the tender, as well as an external consultant. It also held weekly meetings for update and feedback with an internal group that included the organisation's youth workers across other programs.
- One executive went 'off line' for a few weeks, working closely with the CEO.
- Another executive was in charge of the whole process, but relied on a couple of people, internal and external to the organisation, who provided regular, honest feedback.

With regard to the use of external consultants, there are pros and cons depending on the size of the tender and the organisation's experience with tendering. One manager mentioned that in consortia, the need for coordination of inputs and consistency of language and approaches meant that an external consultant could be useful. On the other hand, she also noted that relying on an external consultant who was not very familiar with the organisation could be counterproductive, with staff feeling they were disconnected from the process, and with more uncertainty.

Practitioners consistently recommended submitting tender drafts to an objective reviewer and allowing plenty of time for amendments. In the case of the collaboration that led to the Transition to Work National Community of Practice (TtW CoP), organisations were paired and received feedback on early drafts. Commenting on the value of the peer review, one manager said:

Having that other organisation really was just fantastic. It just cut through very quickly and the turnaround times were very quick—but also, I would say, put them under pressure because they were actually writing their own tender and [yet were] willing to give feedback on another organisation's tender. I don't know how we would go doing that. I thought that was pretty amazing really, just in the spirit of the community of practice.

TIP 4 Getting your message across

- Have a senior staff member, who knows the organisation and its strategy well, lead the tender writing.
- Be prepared for various reviews of drafts and set early deadlines. One week for review will not be sufficient.
- 'De-construct' what the government is looking for, understand what it really means by each selection criterion.
- Get as much constructive critique/feedback as possible from critical friends, who respect your organisation's goals and mission but can be objective readers.
- Be self-critical, read sentence by sentence and ask 'so what?' Remember, you are speaking not to your peers but to strangers. The aim is to demonstrate that your organisation is the fittest for purpose by supporting your statements with clear evidence.
- When your organisation has provided a similar service before, make sure you include supporting data.
- Ensure the document reads flawlessly. Especially when different people draft individual sections, check for cohesion and language consistency.
- Use smaller funding applications as opportunities to build the capacity of managers who have not written a tender, so when a larger application comes the organisation will have internal capability to handle it.

5 Collaboration for tendering: the Transition to Work National Community of Practice

Among the alternatives for dealing with the increasing competition in human service tenders, forming a consortium is the best known arrangement. While it may provide a stronger platform for tendering than individual proposals, smaller organisations are also aware of the risks that such an arrangement can bring. The practice of large providers subcontracting to smaller, locally embedded organisations at times involves a marked power imbalance, and smaller organisations can end up carrying most of the workload without fair financial compensation or recognition.

Still, there are arrangements for collaboration that are less complex than a consortium, and can be used to bring organisations of various scales together. In 2015, eleven organisations of varying sizes and located across different regions (not in direct competition with each other) were brought together by the Brotherhood of St Laurence to collaborate for the Transition to Work tender. Given that all the executives we interviewed emphasised the positive effects of initial collaboration on the quality of their proposals, the pooling of resources and the development of the Transition to Work National Community of Practice (TtW CoP), it is valuable to share some insights about how the collaboration originated. A distinctive feature of the TtW CoP was that while organisations shared knowledge and resources for tendering, and a larger organisation was responsible for coordination, they maintained their business autonomy and submitted individual proposals.

The TtW CoP experience

The Department of Employment (now the Department of Jobs and Small Business) initiated the Transition to Work service in 2016. After the termination of two national youth programs, Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers, and the announcement of TtW, practitioners with a long history in youth education and support services continued to discuss opportunities for a common influencing agenda.

When the federal government announced the TtW initiative, some of the practitioners who would later join the TtW CoP started to work towards common feedback on the exposure draft. At the same time, around May 2015 the former chair of the Youth Connections National Network joined the Youth Transitions team at the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The strategic approach that the Brotherhood of St Laurence took to TtW was to bring together a larger, nationwide group of like-minded organisations, which reflected the diversity within the sector and yet shared a commitment to try a model for youth services that emphasised capabilities and strengths.

Between July and September 2015, the Brotherhood of St Laurence team approached potential partners to form an initial core group. A critical element for success at that

stage was that the identification of collaborators was based on longstanding, trusting relationships and positive experience of working together and sharing a similar vision. Some had been professionally connected and personal friends for over a decade. As one executive described:

There's a lot of history that went into the decision to do this, to go down this track, and I think that's partly the reason it's so successful, that a lot of us have been on this journey together and have worked at a national level in partnership with one another, and we trust one another. That's the big thing; it would be very hard to do this if we were in competition.

Once about six organisations were on board, referrals and joint identification of other like-minded partners continued. The Brotherhood of St Laurence developed a self-assessment form for each interested organisation to fill out, aimed at assessing capacity to deliver TtW services and values alignment with the proposed service approach. In September 2015, senior managers from various organisations participated in a meeting organised by the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne. In addition to presenting the TtW collaboration initiative, the Brotherhood of St Laurence conducted a workshop on the proposed service model, which was then adopted by all partners. Leadership and coordination were cited as critical factors by various managers:

We knew we had the brains and the heart to deliver a winning program. The challenge was to get eleven expert organisations to agree on a common model that demonstrated our strengths and point of difference to win the tender. Leadership from [the Brotherhood of St Laurence] was crucial to bring us all together and workshop through the issues, point by point until we had it mapped out.

In October, the government released the request for tenders, with organisations given around a month to submit their proposals. Managers of four organisations accepted the task of acting as peer reviewers, and organisations were assigned to them, with a strict schedule defined for submission of drafts for feedback. The peer review enabled some managers who did not know each other to work together for the first time.

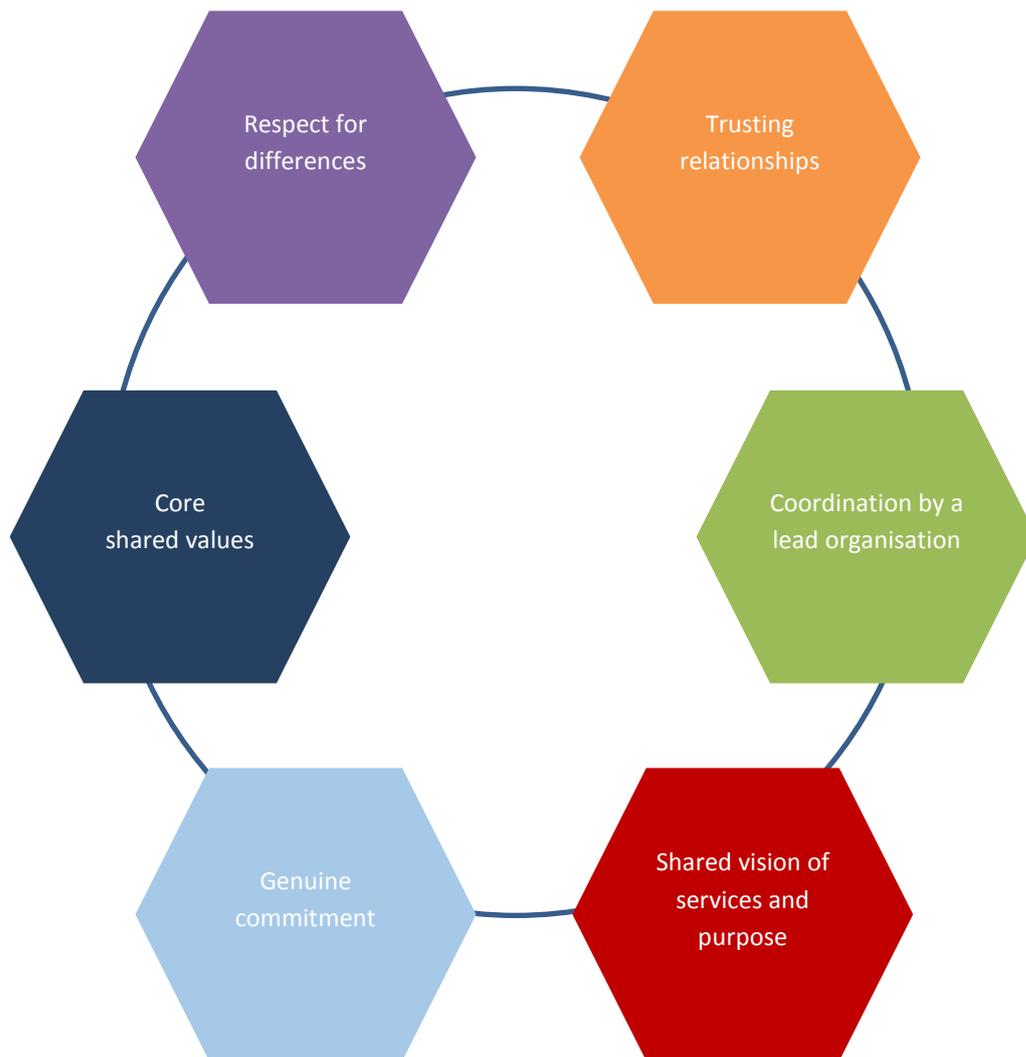
For the tender writing, it was important to ensure that all organisations clearly and consistently 'spoke the same language'. The Brotherhood of St Laurence drafted the service model section for the tenders, shared relevant materials and assisted with the financial modelling. Coordination also involved ongoing group communication, drafting documents and consolidation of inputs. One manager recalled:

There were lots of to-ing and fro-ing, of writing up parts of it, going to other people who then responded. So yes, there was a lot of time commitment from everybody but I think the real strength was that there was a commitment from everybody to really put together the best application possible and to demonstrate a consistent model but to be responsive locally.

Key lessons

Based on the process and interaction that preceded the formation of the TtW CoP, it is possible to identify the key ingredients for effective collaboration for tendering (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Ingredients for effective collaboration on tenders



These 'ingredients' and the brief account above show that collaboration is not a magical solution for all types of challenges; neither is it an option available all the time. It requires intensive and long-term commitment, and it taps into a combination of trusting relationships, shared values and common interests. As we re-imagine the commissioning landscape and the nature of the relationship between government and the community sector, we can open space for new forms of collaborative action that demonstrate that competition is not the 'only rule of the game'. And we can start from the very first step, through joint solutions when tendering for services.

Appendix A Other tendering guides

Government resources

Australian Government Department of Employment 2015, *Writing a strong tender*, Training module 8, <<https://docs.jobs.gov.au/documents/module-8-writing-strong-tender-0>>.

Government of Western Australia 2014, *Guide to community service tendering for service providers*, Department of Finance, 2nd edn, July, <https://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/uploadedFiles/Government_Procurement/Guidelines_and_templates/Community_Services_Templates_and_Guides/cs_tendering_for_service_providers.pdf>.

Queensland Government 2018, *Tendering*, Business Queensland website with resources and tools for tendering, <<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/marketing-sales/tendering>>.

Community sector resources

QCOSS, VCOSS and NCOSS (undated), *Love your tender*, webinar series, <<https://www.qcoss.org.au/love-your-tender-webinar-series>>.

Appendix B Evaluation and tender qualification checklist (Department of Employment)

1	Strategic qualification	Check
1.1	<p>Does this opportunity fit within your organisation's objectives, strategic plan and purpose?</p> <p>What is the opportunity's 'strategic fit'?</p>	
1.2	Is there value (strategic/other) to your organisation securing this opportunity?	
1.3	Is it in an industry you want to service?	
1.4	Is it important that your organisation is 'seen' to be bidding?	
2	Commercial qualification	Check
2.1	<p>What are the funder's reasons for going out to tender?</p> <p>Are they clear and do you understand them fully?</p>	
2.2	<p>Is this opportunity going to be financially profitable to your organisation?</p> <p>How much is it worth and how profitable will it be?</p>	
2.3	<p>Does the opportunity form part of a larger opportunity?</p> <p>Is this opportunity likely to lead to further or more profitable business with the funder later?</p> <p>What is the potential future income stream from this opportunity?</p>	
2.4	Do you fully understand the funder's business drivers?	
2.5	<p>Do you have enough information to fully qualify for the opportunity?</p> <p>Is more information required to further assess the situation?</p>	
2.6	<p>Does this funder currently provide funding to you?</p> <p>Have you done work for this organisation before?</p> <p>Do you have existing relationships with the funding organisation?</p>	
2.7	<p>Who are the decision-makers in the funding organisation?</p> <p>What is the state of your relationships with these people?</p> <p>Can you get access to all the decision-makers?</p>	
2.8	<p>What is the decision-making process?</p> <p>What are the likely decision criteria?</p>	
2.9	<p>What will it take to win this business and can you achieve this?</p> <p>What are your chances of winning this business?</p>	

3 Competition		Check
3.1	Who are your competitors?	
3.2	What are the competition's strengths and weaknesses?	
3.3.	How can you truly differentiate yourselves? What will your unique selling points be?	
3.4	What competitor analysis is available to you for this opportunity?	
4 Practical matters		Check
4.1	Can you meet the client's principal requirements? Do you understand their key drivers?	
4.2	Can you meet the client's timeframes, both for tender submission and delivery of service?	
4.3	Is the scope of the tender appropriate?	
4.4	Can you get access to the right quality of information to do your work?	
4.5	Do you have the best team possible for this opportunity? Do you have the right skills and resources available to do the work? Are these resources available at the right time and in the right locations?	
4.6	What is the opportunity going to 'cost' you to win? What will the tender cost and do you have a budget for this?	
5 Risk analysis		Check
5.1	Is this the type of funding you want – does the funder have a good/solid reputation?	
5.2	Is this organisation legal – is the work legal?	
5.3	Are there any other professional risks associated with taking on this work?	
5.4	Are there any physical risks associated with the organisation?	
5.5	Does this opportunity present any conflict of interest?	
5.6	What is the funder's credit record? Do we need to run credit checks?	

Source: Department of Employment 2015, *Module 8. Writing a strong tender*, pp. 8–10.