



TENDERS | BIDS | PROPOSALS | SUBMISSIONS

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

CAPABILITY STATEMENT





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Building on Industry

Australia's industrial sector is broad, diverse and complex.

The first thing that comes to mind is heavy industry: heavy equipment, huge facilities on massive sites, and bulky goods or materials being extracted, produced or loaded. And of course, grease and grime, the hum of machinery and sparks from welding, and the wide-spread Hi-Vis and PPE.

But that is just one picture of the industrial sector. These days, Australia's industrial sector is increasingly clean, green and high tech. Think bio-tech, medical equipment, renewable energy and aerospace. Instead of grease and grime, many of Australia's leading producers have clean rooms and advanced air filtration systems. Heavy equipment and huge facilities have been replaced with laser scanning, point clouds and 3D models. The hum of machinery has been replaced with the whirr of drones, and instead of PPE, the workforce is increasingly wearing VR and AR headsets.

We're in the midst of a new industrial revolution with Industry 4.0 driving exciting progress in advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, automation and robotics. Combining this revolution with the changing dynamics of the world's supply chain, Australia's industrial sector must keep pace for Australia's economy to thrive.

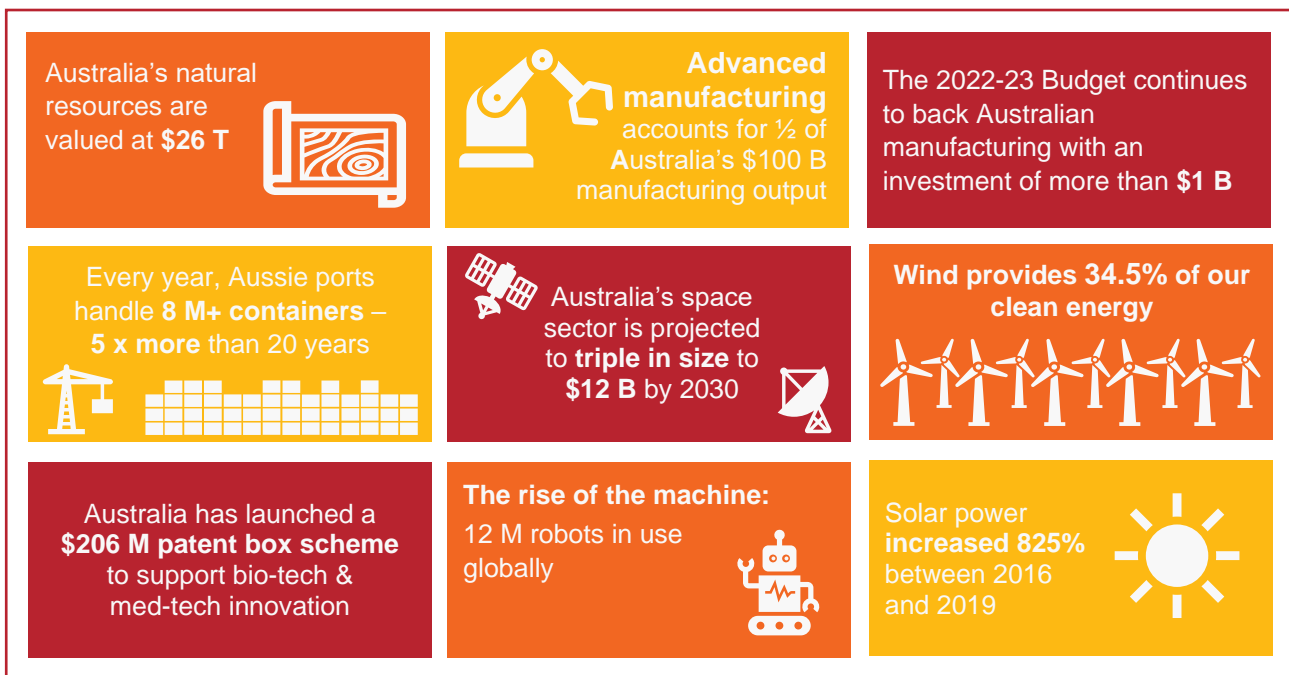


Figure 1: A quick snapshot of the state of the industry and its trajectory.



The industrial sector's unique complexities

For companies bidding in the industrial sector or on industrial projects, there are a few industry nuances to keep in mind:

Table 1: Challenges in the industrial sector.



SAFETY FOCUS

In the industrial sector, safety is sacrosanct. It's top of mind every day, for every team member, and top of the agenda, for every meeting. To be successful, tenderers need to demonstrate their understanding of and alignment to the organisation's safety approach, and their ability to support and improve safety outcomes.



MISSION CRITICAL SERVICE CONTINUITY

Given the mission critical nature of many industrial projects, organisations place heavy emphasis on guaranteeing continuity of production or service. Successful bidders identify risks and develop comprehensive mitigation strategies to eliminate unplanned disruptions, reduce lost time and maintain quality.



PRIVATE SECTOR PROCUREMENT

The industrial sector undertakes more private sector mega projects than any other, and private sector procurement is a completely different kettle of fish: it follows a different process with an entirely different set of priorities. Success relies more on long-term relationships and trusted partnerships, collaborative design thinking and solution development, and the right economic solution.



EMPHASIS ON PRICE

Industrial projects *typically* place more emphasis on price than non-cost agenda items such as community engagement, local content, workforce development or diversity. Bid teams do well to solve for low cost outcomes, whether that be low capital cost, low operating costs or low whole-of-life costs. Even smart value adds generally won't create a significant advantage unless they drive a better financial outcome.



SOCIAL LICENCE

The success of large industrial projects often depends on the acceptance, approval and support of local communities and stakeholders. Industrial operators must genuinely engage with local communities and stakeholders so tenderers do well when they develop meaningful plans for communication, consultation and engagement, and develop opportunities to deliver value and 'leave a legacy' for their local community.



TECHNICAL LINGO

The complexity of industrial projects means that teams are usually populated with a wide range of specialists all speaking their own deeply technical language. The bid team needs Olympic-level linguistic dexterity to synthesise, translate and communicate complex information to ensure it's accessible to all without losing its potency.



A fiercely competitive sector

The industrial sector in Australia and New Zealand is extremely competitive, with most industrial bids being hotly contested by a range of aggressive contenders including well-known Australian companies and new-to-market international behemoths.

If you're about to embark on an industrial tender, you'll need every possible advantage to win.

As a rule of thumb, you can expect a typical industrial bid to follow a process similar to this:

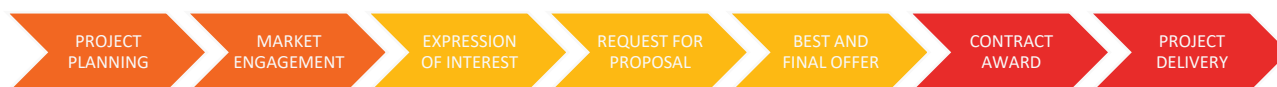


Figure 2: Typical bid process.

The bidding phase is shown in yellow. Depending on the procurement process being followed, the process might include all three bidding steps (or more) or might concentrate on just one bidding step (usually the Request for Proposal).

Bid timing can vary enormously, depending on the size and complexity of the project:

- An Expression of Interest will typically take between 2–4 weeks, but sometimes up to 12-15 weeks
- A Request for Proposal could vary from 4 weeks to as many as 20 or 26 weeks for a mega project
- A Best and Final Offer might take a week or several months (one recent project took 11 months).

Despite the variation in bid process and timing, typical bid budgets are quite consistent, particularly for the top tier and major players. **A comprehensive bid budget, including allocation of internal costs, typically runs to around 2% of project value.**

From our experience, we consistently see that the winning industrial bids are those that have been developed and prepared by teams that have a clear partnership between the 'project team' and the 'bid team'. Success comes when the project team can focus on developing a smart solution while the bid team takes responsibility for selling the solution through a persuasive submission. The important point here is that both elements are needed – a smart solution and a persuasive submission.

In terms of bid team resources, the winning bidders are typically scaling up their bid team with:

- Performance coaches and teaming experts (like Alliance Coaches)
- Industry experts and people with client insight (like our Shadow Catalysts)
- Bid strategists and innovation experts (what we call Bid Catalysts)
- Bid managers and team leaders (like our Bid Whips)
- Bid writers and content developers (our Bid Writers)
- Formatters and production experts (our Production Managers)
- Graphic designers (our Design Team).

A strong bid team frees the bid director to focus their effort on leading the team, driving the solution and negotiating the commercial arrangements, knowing that the submission is under control.



Feedback from buyers and evaluators

Having worked in bids and tenders for more than 20 years, we consistently hear clients express frustration at the complexity of the procurement process and the challenge in gathering real, meaningful and constructive feedback from evaluation panels.

Since the release of our first **Behind Closed Doors** report, we have undertaken numerous confidential interviews with evaluation panel members and procurement directors who evaluate major and mega projects.

Our research has revealed a few surprises, overturned a few myths of the dark art of bidding, and transformed the approach many bid teams take to developing their submissions.

Key findings

Evaluators are looking for five key factors when choosing a winning bid

We asked evaluators to tell us how important various factors were when assessing a bidder's submission, such as previous experience, technical capability, an innovative solution, clarity of communication and so on. The results show that evaluators have high expectations across a wide range of factors, but a clear top 5 emerged. **Note the even spread across these 5 factors: this is the formula for success.**

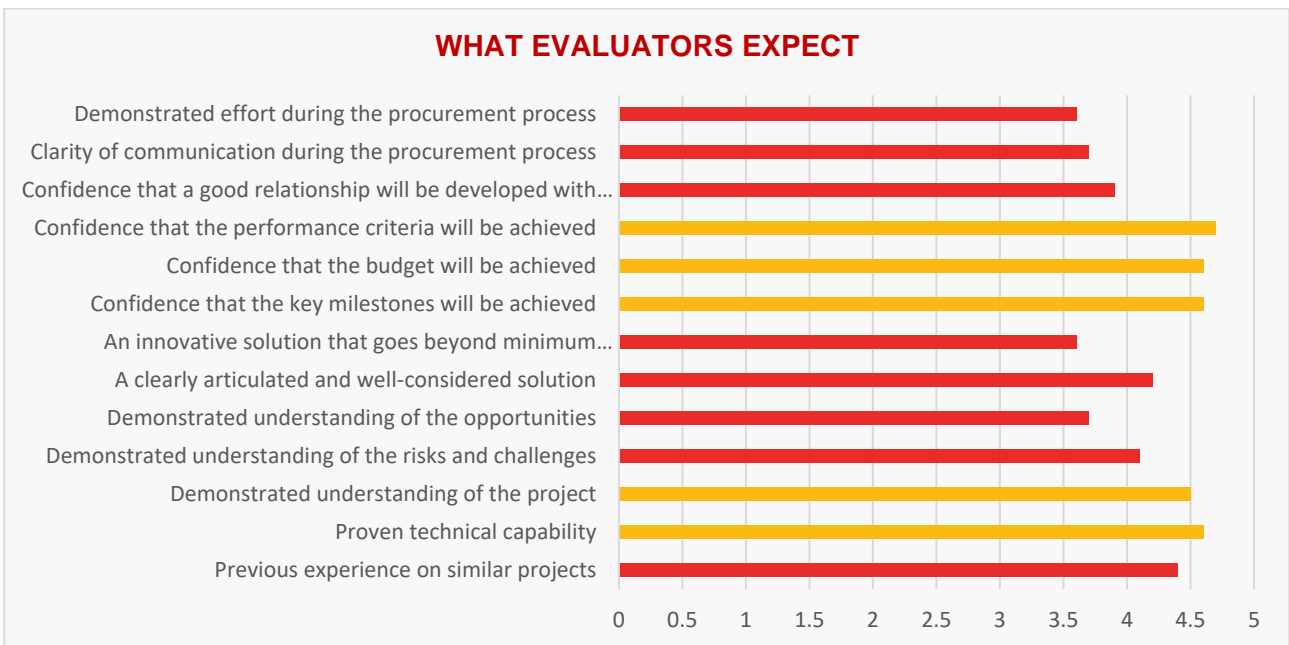


Figure 3: Evaluators were clear about what made a strong submission, with 7 stand-out characteristics.



Evaluators are looking for seven key elements in submissions

Evaluators cited almost 20 characteristics common to the best submissions, with 7 characteristics standing out as the most important. Readers may jump to the conclusion that 'concise' justifies keeping their submissions short and sweet, but 'comprehensive' and 'thorough' also rated strongly. The key is to include information that is both **relevant and pertinent**.

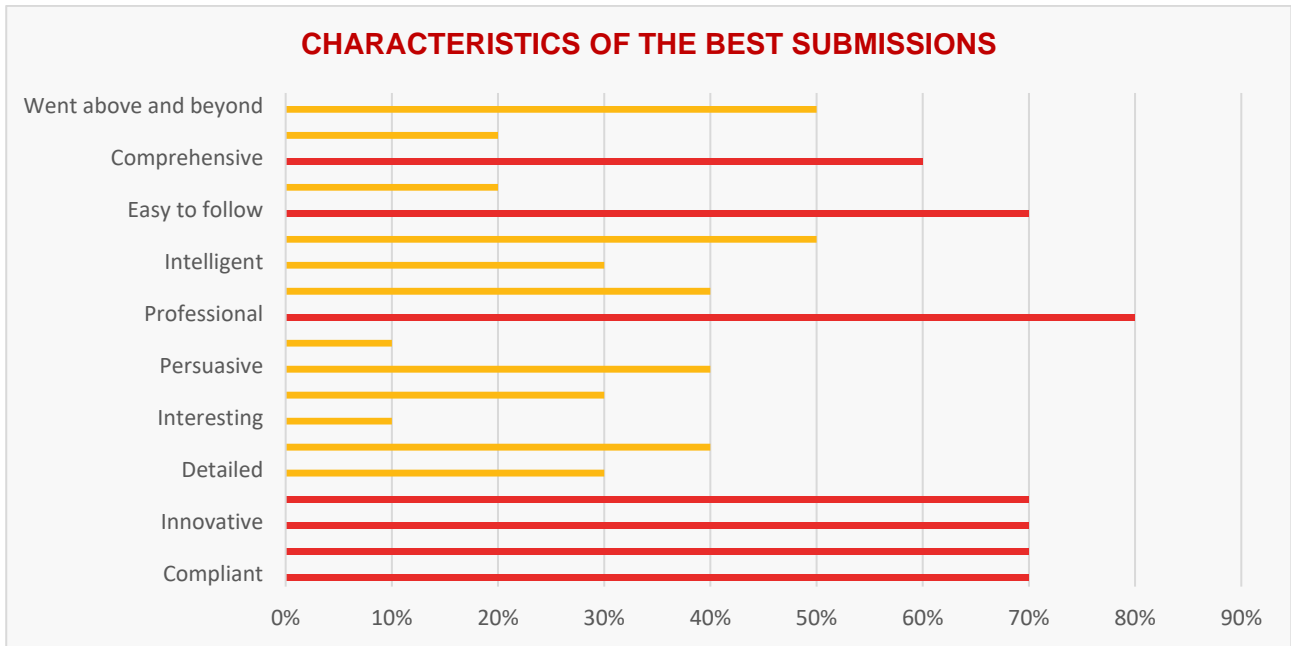


Figure 4: Evaluators were clear about what made a strong submission, with 7 stand-out characteristics.



Bidders are most frequently let down by simple – and avoidable – failings

Evaluators cited almost 20 common failings in the submissions they reviewed, but 7 deadly sins stood out as the most common failings, all referenced by at least 50% of evaluators.

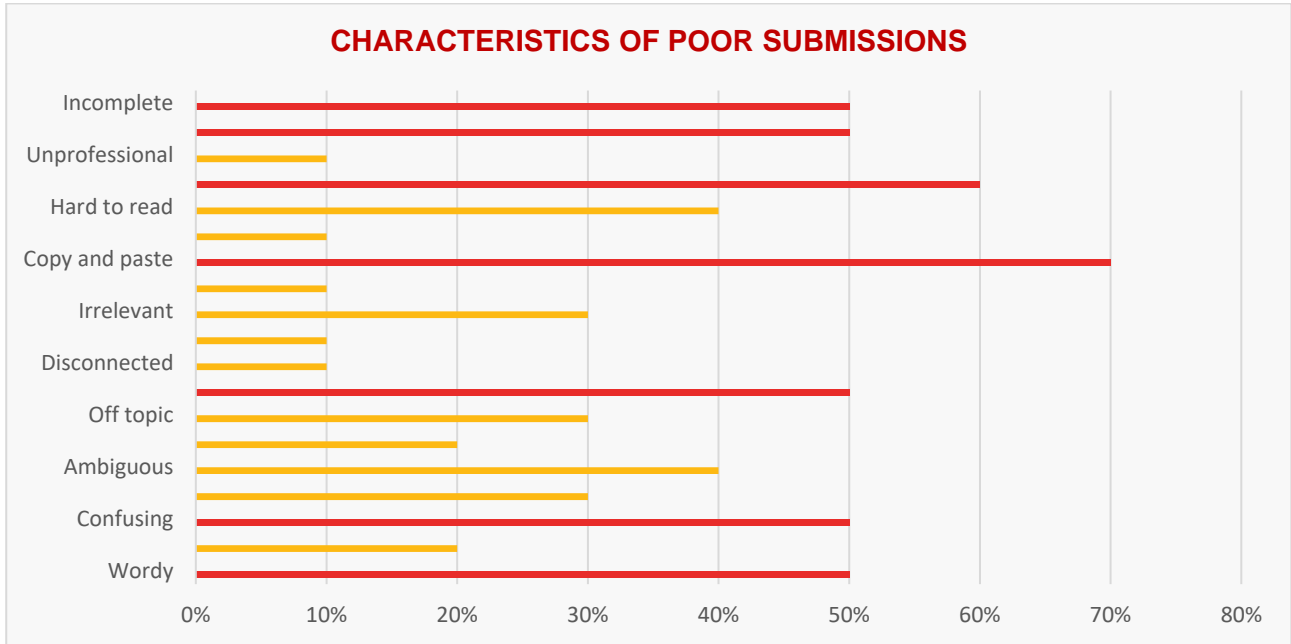


Figure 5: Evaluators saw consistent themes in poor submissions, with 7 deadly sins occurring frequently.

Further to this, when asked where bidders dropped the ball, evaluators referenced a wide range of issues, from not addressing criteria, to demonstrating poor attitudes and behaviours, through to missing the mark on project objectives and risks.



How well are bidders currently performing?

The good news is that 80% of evaluators report that the bids received are 'fine – adequate and compliant'. The even better news for bidders is that there is a tremendous opportunity to up their **game as only 10% of bids are considered 'excellent – very thorough and compelling'**.

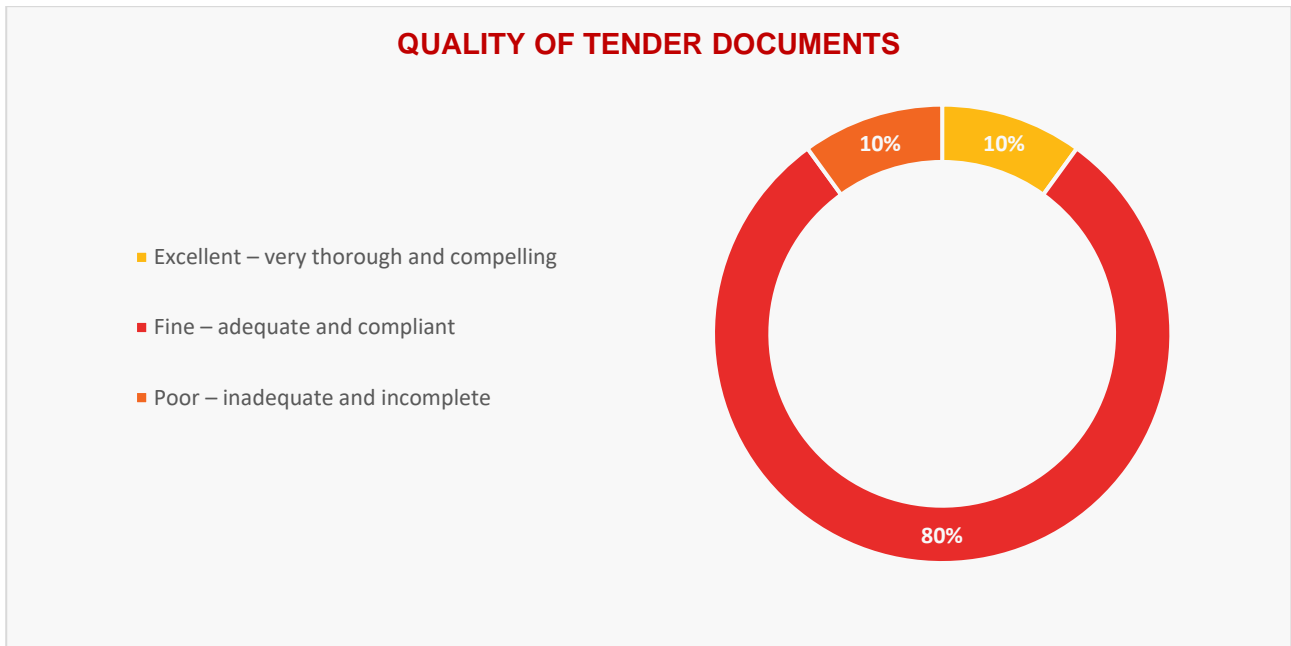


Figure 6: The typical quality of tender documents is 'fine' – meaning there is a great opportunity for bidders to step up and impress the evaluators.



Importance of price

As usual, questions about price produced an interesting mixed response.

Price was the most important consideration for 20% of evaluators. In contrast, a collective 30% of evaluators said that price was either the least important consideration or less important than all other elements. In addition, the majority of evaluators (50%) said that price was very important but other elements were also considered.

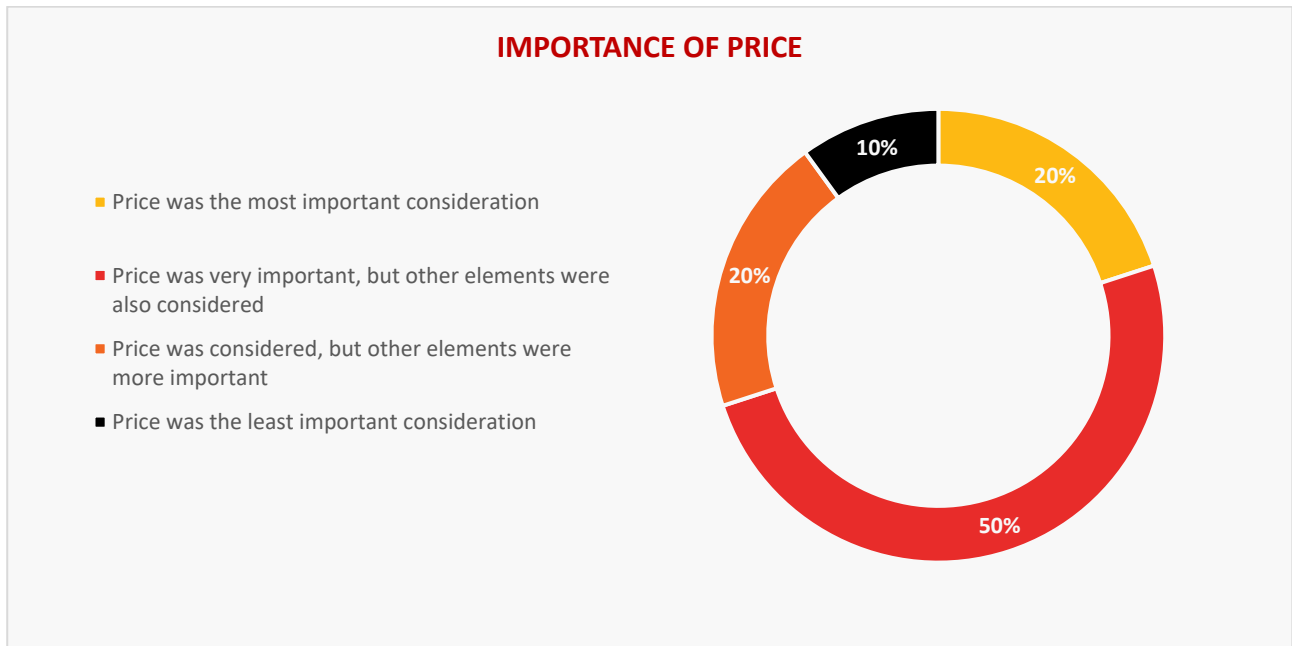


Figure 7: As we have come to expect, the importance of price prompted mixed responses.



Takeaways for writing industrial tender responses

Six simple ways to improve your success in industrial tenders:

1. Know and respect your audience

You should know everything you can about the buyer and their project. While a pre-existing relationship is not critical, it will improve your chances to have had effective preliminary discussions with the buyer prior to the bid period and will improve your understanding of the project's risks and challenges. On this point, evaluators commented that bidders often showed a lack of understanding of the project and the big picture, which resulted in generally poor submissions. It's also important to understand who the evaluators are so you can pitch your responses accordingly. Even in the rail sector, evaluation panels include a diverse cross-section of disciplines – they're not all engineers!

2. Bring your A-game to every question and presentation

Yes, price remains one of the most important sections of a tender but it's rarely the only factor evaluators consider. To win a tender, bidders need to bring their A-game to every question and every presentation they deliver. Evaluators will frequently read the entire submission so it's important that you tell a complete and consistent story that shows you understand the project and that you can give evaluators confidence in your ability to meet the performance criteria, achieve the key milestones and make budget. With only 10% of submissions and presentations deemed excellent and the remaining 90% deemed 'adequate' or 'poor' there is plenty of room for bidders to step up.

3. Pay attention to the 'soft stuff'

The so-called 'soft stuff' matters, with the majority of evaluators stating what we know to be instinctively true: well-presented submissions are easier to follow and make a good first impression. Neat formatting and presentation make it easier for evaluators to do their job and will engage them more easily, improving your chances of their understanding your solution and following your proposal. A clear structure and grammatical polish aren't just nice-to-haves – they demonstrate effort, professionalism and attention to detail.

4. Attach only pertinent information

Think carefully about what to include in your attachments. If you think you can just attach your capability statement or marketing brochure – think again. The key word here is 'pertinent': your attachments need to be pertinent and relevant to the bid. Generic information not only doesn't cut it, but it will also do your submission more harm than good with the vast majority of evaluators saying generic information is never welcome.

5. Stand out from the crowd

Evaluators noted that bidders are often clustered and that choosing the winning bidder is not always straightforward. This presents a fantastic opportunity to stand out from your competitors and create memorable differentiators for the evaluation panel to consider. Offer more than a compliant, business-as-usual response. Explore innovative solutions and be open to alternatives. Demonstrate your energy and enthusiasm for the buyer's project. Show your smarts and your professionalism, and your commitment to delivering a first-class submission.

6. Ask questions: don't be coy

A common request from evaluators is for bidders to ask more questions of the buyers. Engage with the Q&A process and ask searching questions that will help you understand the project and its inherent risks and challenges. If you're worried that your questions will reveal your solution, use the confidential question function for those types of questions; but it's in your best interests to join in the Q&A process and demonstrate your commitment and enthusiasm.



Factors for success in industrial sector bids

From our experience in industrial sector bids, there are a few key factors that enhance your likelihood of success:

Table 2: This is the winning formula for success.



BID MINDSET

Embrace the bid mindset to win the competition and go beyond business as usual. Submitting a compliant tender is the starting point; submitting a winning tender requires a completely different attitude.



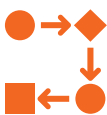
EARLY AND BROAD ENGAGEMENT

Engage early to position and prepare for the tender. Don't wait for the bid documents – get your project and bid team up and running, aligned and focused. It's also crucial to engage early with your project partners, and potentially also with stakeholders, community groups and local industry.



OUTSTANDING SOLUTION

Develop an outstanding approach or solution that differentiates you and provides real and genuine value to your client. Pack your proposal full of smart initiatives that minimise risks, maximise opportunities and create value.



DISCIPLINED PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Follow a disciplined bid management process including detailed content analysis, iterative content development and collaborative document review. Did you know: a first draft usually scores only 40%? If your process is to gather it all together three days before the deadline, you may be in trouble...



CONTENT THAT SCORES

Develop compelling and persuasive content that goes beyond a compliant answer to maximise your score through the formal evaluation process. Remember: a compliant answer usually scores only 4 out of 10. To elevate your submission, you need to create more potent and comprehensive content.



Get the edge with Aurora Marketing

For more than 20 years, Aurora Marketing has pioneered the submission management space in Australia.

At the pointy end of our expertise is the work we do in tenders, bids, proposals and submissions. In many sectors, a submission like this is where all the effort our clients invest in marketing, promotion, sales and business development culminates in an all-or-nothing competitive offer. It is an opportunity to really showcase their unique offering and close the deal.

This is the space where we thrive.

We're experts at developing **pragmatic business growth programs**. These programs help position companies as market leaders across selected industry sectors and give guidance on how to actively pursue a targeted list of clients and prospects. Our expertise covers all aspects of marketing, promotion, sales and business development, but always with the crystal-clear focus of driving revenue through more or bigger clients, and more or bigger contracts.

We can help you to **assemble the team** for your tender using your own internal resources and preferred suppliers, or we can assemble a full team of our own resources. We work with teams of all sizes, shapes and skills. Some of our clients are very well resourced with high calibre, experienced tender experts, a strong internal bid culture, and well-honed bid systems. Others are at the opposite end of the spectrum, with limited resources and processes. Depending on what your team needs and the scale of your tender, we can provide **extra resources** to fill gaps or an **entire holistic solution**.

And while this is what we are best known for, our expertise goes beyond tenders, bids, proposals and submissions. We excel in preparing **any kind of highly technical document** that needs to be clear and compelling for its target audience. Think capability statements, white papers, research reports, grant applications, award submissions, information memoranda and annual reports.

Importantly, the size and scale of our team enables us to ramp up **resources when you need them**. Whether you need a team dedicated to a key project for three months, a tender coach in-house for three weeks, a team of writers working around the clock for three days, or a document formatter for a few hours, we have the solution you need.



Deep understanding of the industrial sector

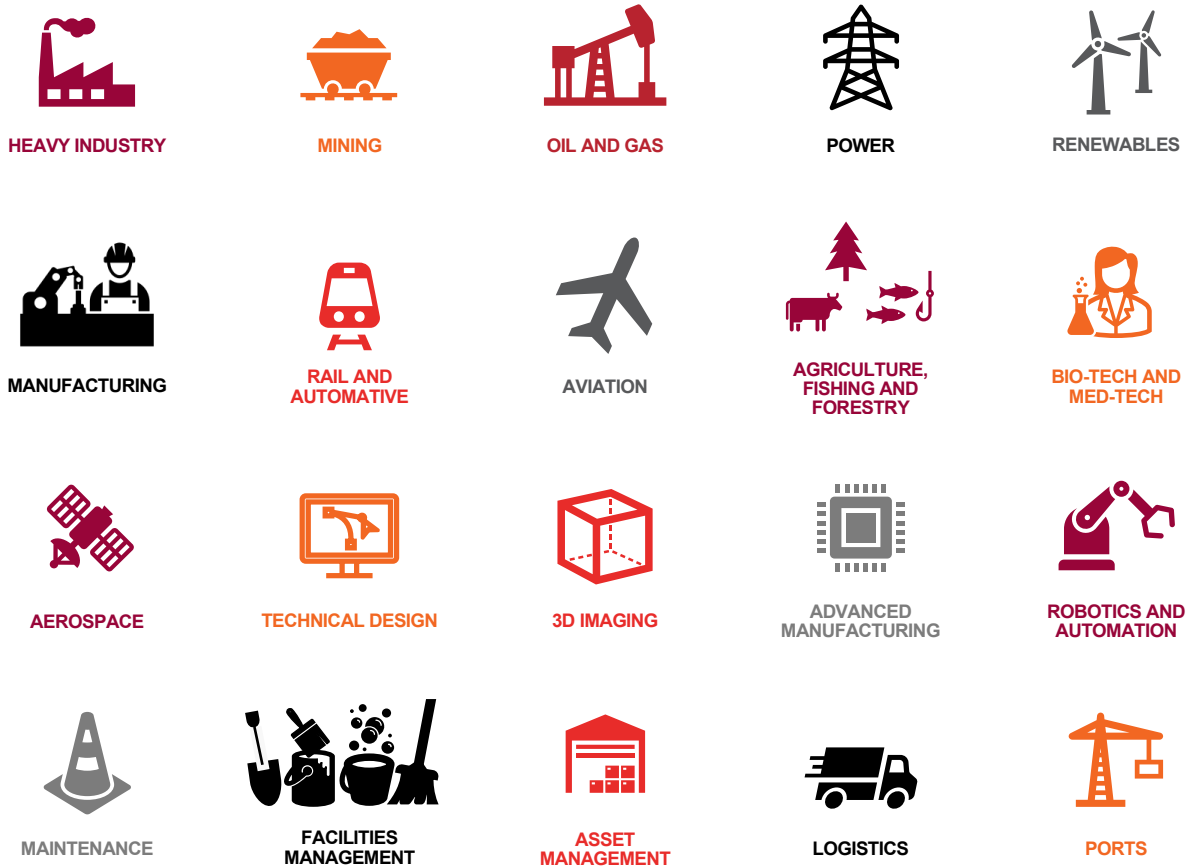
Aurora Marketing is deeply and passionately engaged in the industrial sector. Since our first rolling stock tender over 15 years ago, we have embraced this exciting, challenging and dynamic sector.

We are active participants in industry conferences, seminars and events around Australia and New Zealand, and are proud members of the Queensland Major Contractors Association (QMCA) and La Camara. Furthermore, we are recognised Industry Experts with Queensland Leaders and provide valuable education and mentoring for members across numerous sectors. We are also members of the Australasian Rail Association and regular participants at major industry events including AusRail and AusRail Plus in Australia, and even Innotrans in Berlin.

Furthermore, since 2019 we have been driving a behind-the-scenes investigation of the tender evaluation process to broaden our understanding of how evaluation panels score tenders, what they are really looking for, and what the common shortfalls are. Our latest Behind Closed Doors program was completed in 2022 and focussed specifically on the rail sector in Australia and New Zealand. The full report can be viewed and downloaded from our website www.auroramarketing.com.au.

Our bidding experience reflects the full diversity and complexity of the industrial sector including:

Table 3: Aurora Marketing has experience that spans the full breadth of the industrial industry.





A track record of winning landmark deals

We've worked on literally thousands of live tender opportunities for organisations of all sizes and we're proud to have contributed to some of Australia's biggest contracts including:

- Extensive mining projects such as LNG and coal
- Pipelines, power lines and telecommunications infrastructure
- Water treatment plants, desalination plants, wastewater and sewerage
- Facilities management and camp services such as catering, cleaning and security
- Sub services supply agreements for power, ICT, HVAC, lifts and escalators
- Ports contracts for port operations and sub supply into port operators
- Pilotage services and pilotage transfer services for ports
- Passenger transfer and medical evacuation services for offshore facilities.



1500
PROJECTS



\$160 B+
SUCCESSFUL
PROJECTS



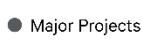
98.5%
SUCCESS RATE



Offices



Teams



Major Projects



Projects

Figure 8: The Aurora Marketing presence continues to grow in stride with our success.



Trusted by the leaders of industry

We are particularly proud of the client base we have served. Across the industry sector, we have worked with some of Australia's best-known companies including:

Table 4: Our clients are as diverse as the industry itself.





Delivering exceptional results

Don't just take our word for it – our clients sing our praises too:

Elizabeth Kara, Downer
“Thank you for the great presentation and workshop. The feedback from the team is they all thought it was very well researched, well put together and had a high level of detail. They were all impressed.”

Andrew Parnell, Aspen Medical
“A special thanks to the team at Aurora Marketing who all did an amazing job, thank you so much! The quality of the submission, including the stunning Executive Summary speaks for itself!”

Mark Bruzzone, Abergeldie
“On behalf of the Abergeldie team we wanted to reach out and say a big thank you for your support and commitment to this challenging bid. We have appreciated your guidance, challenge and experience in pulling together a winning submission.”

Neil Gleeson, John Holland
“Thanks again to you all for your help with the Bid. Really appreciated your input / pushback / guidance. I didn't realise prior to this experience just how important good writers / submissions management was.

I think that we can be tremendously proud of our submission, I honestly don't think we left any stone unturned, and it will be very compelling.”

Figure 9: Client testimonials.

Talk to us
We can help you win that 'must win' bid, improve your success rate or improve your bidding methodologies.

Brisbane | Sydney | Melbourne | Adelaide | Perth | Canberra
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