



Businesses to be given greater support for the benefit of the whole community

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The City of Sydney will be required to make procurement processes more transparent and remove unnecessary barriers that prevent local small and medium business from tendering as part of a comprehensive business policy to drive greater community outcomes.

The Sydney Matters Independent Team policy also includes the cutting of red tape, the establishment of a small business task force and a program to leverage multiple language skills to create new export ventures.

Councillor Angela Vithoukas, who leads the Sydney Matters Independent Team and is a Lord Mayoral Candidate, said: "Sydney Matters feels that the current system is failing its stakeholders, creating unnecessary barriers for businesses to put in tenders and ultimately stifling a competitive environment that in turn can improve costs and efficiency.

"While business contributed more than \$108 billion per annum to the local economy, it could deliver even greater value to the community with the right focus. Just on 85 percent of businesses are SME's.

"Research shows that every dollar spent in a local economy delivers 1.63 times in benefit to the community, yet the City's current tendering process makes it difficult for the small and medium businesses in the CBD to respond. The current arbitrary process is not flexible enough to meet the needs of digital purchases or solutions.

"There is also overuse of a clause in the Local Government Act to systematically classify tenders as confidential, which is not only detrimental to business owners. This is also at odds with clause 11 of the act which states 'Information supplied by a Tenderer will not be treated as commercially sensitive'.

"We want to create a more open market for tenders. We also want a more open, communicative and collaborative style of local government which fosters innovation, technology and dialogue.

"Procurement issues are just some of the many challenges that are holding back our business community from realising their full potential and in turn contributing more to the local community.

"From listening to business they feel constrained and confused by masses of red tape and seemingly arbitrary rules.

"This not only impacts on business, but also impacts on the wider community who rely on a strong economy so that important services can be delivered."

Clr Vithoukas, who has been a resident and business person in the City for almost 30 years, announced the following details of the policy:

- Establishing a Small Business Task Force, to ensure the relationship between business and council, address issues and concerns of both parties more quickly, and connect businesses.
- Funding of business chambers and local organisations to independently assist with local economic development initiatives.
- Developing a small business advisory committee to help council develop effective policies to support sustainable growth.
- Ensuring that the City's business owners are aware of their voting obligations in the City of Sydney elections through a sustained information campaign.
- Establishing a Crowd Sourcing for Public Works funding platform that enables individuals or organisations to propose new projects or use for a public space and raise the funds to create it.
- Introducing a program where council will work with cultural and immigrant representative groups to leverage their language skills to create new export ventures, strengthen trade ties and boost the local economy.