

Request for Proposal (RFP) CC202009 - Edwardstown Creative Industries Co-Working Hub Assessment Report

Tender (RFP) opened: 1 April 2020

Tender closed: 5 May 2020

Tenders Received: one tender was received

Assessment Panel: [REDACTED] all from City

Activation, with support from [REDACTED] from Strategic Procurement

The panel met on 14 May 2020 to assess the one submission received from Amuse Event Lighting & Audio-Visual Pty Ltd.

While the panel felt the tenderer broadly understood the requirements and there were some positive attributes that the tenderer was offering (streaming services, outdoor lighting etc), there was overall agreement that the proposal was not addressing the criteria of the brief in a way that offered a collective sense of comfort that the tenderer would be taking the project in the preferred direction.

Given there was only one response to the tender, the panel asked for clarification from the tenderer to expand on the issues on which they required more information. This included:

- Given the unknowns facing the business and creative sector due to Covid-19, would you in anyway change anything in your original response?
- Please provide an audited statement or statement from an accredited practitioner on the profit and loss statement provided.
- Provide more information on your business attraction approach including:
 - any affiliations with industry and professional groups in the Creative Industries;
 - Interaction with businesses in and associated with the Edwardstown Employment precinct.
- Community attraction plan and management independent of the City of Marion;
- Business vision after the 3-year subsidy i.e. what does success look like at 5 years and 10 years.
- Your response to the Key Performance Indicators listed on page 3 & 4 of the Project Brief (Part B).

The assessment panel reconvened on 28 May 2020 to review the additional information.

Overall the responses to the tender and additional requested information informed the panel that while they seemed to be a successful operation in their own field of event set up and design, the tender indicated an approach of adding to their existing operation with additional spaces for other operators rather than the entrepreneurial approach and collaborative opportunities provided by co-working hubs we were looking for.

In particular this included:

- Limited vision overall as to what the space could be or become.
- Limited understanding of the breadth of creative industries that could be attracted to such a facility.

- Limited understanding of the professional associations and industry groups outside of their own field.
- Limited vision for community interaction and engagement other than examples already mentioned in the project scope.
- Limited long-term vision of the facility after the three-year subsidy other than sustainability. While there was mention of a self-generated grant scheme, there were no details of how this would be achieved or managed.
- Reference was made to the KPIs included in the brief but no business model was defined to explain how these would be achieved.
- Reference was made to 'leaning heavily' on City of Marion for community engagement and business mentoring. The panel felt uncomfortable with that approach, rather were looking for an operator who would feel confident to operate independently of Council operations other than the subsidy.
- The panel was concerned that there was a limited consideration for the requirements of a range of creative industries and artists such as waste removal for paints, fumes etc. While this is not vital, and an operator may select tenants based on requirements, it would have been useful for them to address this approach.
- Limited planning for marketing and attraction of tenants other than social media.
- No consideration of attraction of other funding sources other than rent and Council subsidy. The panel would have like to see research into other funding sources, sponsorships or grants.
- Current approach seemed to be a group of businesses operating from the same premises – would like to have seen more vision around the collaborative nature of co-working hubs, particularly in the creative industries and how this can lead to the generation of new entities, development of new products, opportunities for cross-discipline collaboration etc.
- Limited description of how the Creative Industries Co-working hub would interact and integrate with the broader Edwardstown economy.

In summary, the assessment panel felt that while the one submission received provided an average response to the tender it did not fulfil their expectations for the project. The assessment panel were aware that the tender was released just prior to the full understanding of the Covid-19 situation and shut down. This may have impacted on the lack of responses, the Creative Industries being one of the hardest hit business sectors during the pandemic. Uncertainty of what the future holds and lack of financial security may have dissuaded responses to the initial tender. As recovery plans are put in place and businesses and practitioners in this sector regroup and look for ways forward, the co-working model may attract more innovative responses. Therefore, the panel requests to go out to the market again, with direct approaches to potential operators and industry bodies who are looking at new ways to support members and affiliates to regenerate business in this sector.