

The background features a dark blue field with several overlapping circles in lighter blue and orange. Four globes are positioned at the intersections of these circles: one in the upper left, one in the lower left, and two in the lower right. A large, semi-transparent orange circle with a white 'e' inside is located in the upper right quadrant.

GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK FOR

NATIONAL COOPERATION ON

ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT



BUSINESS online

GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL COOPERATION ON ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT

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DISCLAIMER

The Australian Procurement and Construction Council (APCC) is committed to enhancing the availability, dissemination and exchange of information relating to government procurement and construction policy. This *Framework* is designed to assist in making such information easily accessible. However, the APCC accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of any material contained in the *Framework* and recommends that users exercise their own skill and care with respect to its use. Before relying on the material in any important matter, users should carefully evaluate its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purposes, and should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances. We encourage readers to check with the APCC if you have any concern about the information herein. In some cases the material may incorporate or summarise views, guidelines or recommendations of third parties.

FOREWORD

The Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have identified procurement as a strategic activity which can facilitate the achievement of government, community and industry outcomes in a non-discriminatory framework which focuses on buying outcomes.

All the Australian governments are facilitating the use of information technology in their procurement activities in order to realise efficiencies, improve productivity and provide business with better access to government markets. The increasing use of electronic commerce in government procurement has added a new dimension to the buyer/supplier relationship.

In May 1999, the Australian Procurement and Construction Ministerial Council released the *Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Commerce in Government Procurement* to provide guidance and encourage the adoption of a consistent and open approach to electronic commerce.

Electronic commerce is a rapidly developing field and the framework for its use in government procurement needs to remain dynamic and reflect ongoing procurement policy development and technology evolution. The revised framework, *Government Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Procurement*, includes changes and developments in all aspects of electronic commerce since 1999.

The Australian Procurement and Construction Ministerial Council appreciates the commitment and support from government and industry to keeping the framework contemporary and relevant. Input from the Online Council in the areas of privacy, business confidentiality, security, electronic authentication and electronic directories is specifically acknowledged.

The Ministerial Council hopes that this framework will stimulate further cooperation in other areas of electronic business and the development of a more comprehensive strategic guide for Australian governments and businesses as they implement and refine Business-to-Business electronic commerce.

The Hon Morris Iemma MP
Chair

Australian Procurement and Construction Ministerial Council

BACKGROUND

Australia's approach to government procurement domestically and internationally is based on a liberal approach designed to provide flexibility within a framework of transparency, accountability and open effective competition.

The Australian governments' procurement environment is, generally, nationally consistent and focussed on delivery of goods and services which the community requires.

As a mature and sophisticated purchaser, within a well developed marketplace, Australian governments' procurement policies utilise the principles of:

- Value for money;
- Accountability;
- Transparency;
- Equity and fair dealing; and
- Open and effective competition without the need for overriding prescription.

Procurement practices in Australia have been developed in consultation with the community and industry to achieve beneficial outcomes for both industry and government.

Australian governments have underpinned these principles through strategic procurement planning and by encouraging sound supply chain management, industry development programs, performance monitoring and robust supplier selection processes including criteria and evaluation methodologies.

Australian governments aim to achieve continuous improvement as buyers through the reengineering of procurement practices such as:

- Streamlining of procurement processes;
- The introduction and support of information technology in government procurement;
- Consistent approaches in dealing with industry suppliers;
- Improvement in contract management; and
- Rewarding better performance from suppliers.

Australian governments have identified procurement as a strategic activity which can facilitate the achievement of government, community and industry outcomes in a non-discriminatory framework which focuses on buying outcomes.

Australian governments are facilitating the use of information technology in procurement (including construction) activities in order to realise efficiencies, improve productivity and provide business with better access to government markets.

The emerging use of electronic commerce in government procurement places more demand on the need for the buyer/supplier relationship to be more open, reinforcing Australian governments' underpinning principles of value for money, accountability, transparency, equity and fair dealing, and open and effective competition.

The Australian Procurement and Construction Ministerial Council (APCMC), which represents the Commonwealth, States and Territories, unanimously endorsed and publicly released the *Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Commerce in Government Procurement*, or 'National Framework', in May 1999. This publication was acknowledged both domestically and overseas as a landmark document that represented a global first for government in providing guidance and encouraging the adoption of a consistent and open approach to electronic commerce.

The *National Framework* was the first document in the world designed to facilitate the development of a national electronic commerce trading environment for governments. It promotes and guides the development of a consistent environment to enable government buyers and suppliers to government to trade openly and securely using electronic means.

Since its release, the *National Framework* has received much positive feedback from governments, service providers, suppliers and other organisations. The Australian Procurement and Construction Council (APCC) considers the concepts in the *National Framework* need to remain dynamic and reflect ongoing procurement policy development and technology evolution.

Noting that APCC members have been concurrently developing independent electronic procurement strategies, the APCMC agreed to update the *National Framework* to reflect the continued maturing of industry standards. To assist governments and business this update, *Government Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Procurement*, aims to develop a consistent approach to:

- Open systems for electronic trading
- Catalogue management
- Supplier registries/directories
- Online auctions and reverse auctions
- Supplier access to government business opportunities
- Online financial transactions
- Security
- Privacy
- Business confidentiality
- Authentication
- Third party service providers

In addition to the work of APCC members, the update provides an opportunity to respond to requests from industry and, through the introduction of the term 'trading partners', to reflect the shared responsibility of buyers and suppliers to implement an open environment so neither party will be disadvantaged by the implementation of electronic commerce.

The APCC recognises that, in the dynamically changing world of electronic commerce, prescriptive and detailed legislation and regulation is often inappropriate. It also recognises the need for nationally consistent guidelines that provide a flexible framework to encourage and support the rapid take-up of electronic procurement in the public and private sectors.

In developing the *Government Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Procurement*, a number of principles have been considered:

- That governments will work cooperatively;
- That solutions need to support procurement policies, and should not determine operational practices;
- That infrastructure and procedures should support a cooperative relationship between trading partners;
- That the confidentiality and integrity of information exchanged between trading partners should follow standard commercial practice, as is the case with existing non-electronic systems;
- That, unless otherwise agreed by both parties, trading partners should comply with relevant privacy and security legislation and not use information collected as a result of transactions for purposes other than those originally intended;
- That individual governments are at various stages in developing electronic commerce strategies and will build on their existing systems in an evolutionary manner;
- That the implementation time-frames for APCC member governments will be determined by the prevailing capability and environment for each government;
- That electronic procurement systems developed and implemented for communication between trading partners should use open standards, be easy to use, flexible, and cost effective;

- That the guidelines provided within this *Government Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Procurement* should be easy to understand and implement; and
- That governments will work collaboratively with industry to ensure the most efficient and effective outcomes.

The APCC acknowledges the imperative that Australia and New Zealand maintain pace with and lead in the deployment of electronic commerce in comparable economies. This is a key consideration in supporting an open framework for electronic procurement in Australia to assist and encourage Australian and New Zealand suppliers to develop their ability to compete in international markets.

In formulating this *Government Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Procurement*, the APCC was aware of the need to develop and implement solutions that facilitate an active relationship between industry and government.

The APCC will continue to support the adoption of evolving commercial practices and technologies for electronic procurement in Australia and New Zealand.

A prime consideration in the development of this framework has been the likely impact on regional suppliers and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). To minimise this, APCC members want to ensure that governments adopt electronic commerce technologies to facilitate low cost supplier participation that offers suitable return on investment.

Implementation of open solutions will facilitate interoperability, thus allowing governments and businesses to benefit through:

- Reducing the processing costs for trading partners;
- Simplifying interface development across linked internal supply chain systems (eg procurement, financial and stock control); and
- Providing trading partners with the opportunity to access and deliver improved, more timely services.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

PROVIDING CONSISTENCY

Adopting a nationally consistent and interoperable interface between trading partners can simplify business processes and reduce the cost of doing business.

The aim is not to have identical business processes in every organisation, but to ensure that trading partners can interact through interoperable systems.

Australian governments acknowledge the need for, and the benefits of, providing a nationally consistent trading environment. As a consequence, governments will work together to implement the guidelines detailed in this *Government Framework for National Cooperation on Electronic Procurement (the Framework)*, and encourage the take-up of electronic procurement by all trading partners.

SUPPLIER PARTICIPATION

Governments will encourage all trading partners to take advantage of the business benefits and opportunities offered by electronic procurement.

It is important that all businesses, regardless of size, location, resources, or technological infrastructure have an opportunity to provide information and to sell goods and/or services to government. Electronic procurement initiatives should offer cost-effective participation for organisations including those based in, or supplying to, regional and rural Australia.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUPPLIER OFFERINGS

Many factors are used to differentiate between suppliers of similar goods and services. Value for money is the key criterion; not price. Suppliers should, therefore, be able to highlight differences in their product, service and support including innovative solutions through electronic catalogues.

OPEN SYSTEMS FOR ELECTRONIC TRADING

An open electronic trading environment supports global business transactions over the Internet, in a consistent manner, using any of the major open standards. This *Framework* supports the adoption of these standards.

Some electronic procurement solutions currently do not support open trading. As interfaces to link disparate electronic trading solutions become more readily available, users of all solutions will benefit from wider interoperability.

MARKETPLACES THAT SUPPORT GETTING BUSINESS ON-LINE

An electronic marketplace is an online facility where trading partners can come together to trade and exchange information. Some marketplaces are built around corporate organisations, others around industry segments or geographic regions. They offer a combination of different functionality which can include a directory service; a hosted catalogue; hosted buyer side software; hosted supplier side software; and settlement/payment capability.

The adoption of open electronic trading solutions (i.e. using open marketplaces) allows trading partners to operate in separate marketplaces. The *Framework* supports interoperability between marketplace solutions which reduces the need for trading partners (including SMEs) to join multiple marketplaces.

THIRD PARTY PROVIDERS IN THE OPEN ELECTRONIC TRADING ENVIRONMENT

Trading partners may contract with third party providers who offer specific services (eg. directory, hosted catalogue, transaction management, buyer management, settlement etc). Implementation of electronic procurement solutions should not necessarily require trading partners to use and pay for any third party provider's services. Suppliers may elect to use a third party provider for catalogue services but this decision should be a business decision by the supplier.

Where a trading partner engages the services of a third party provider, proprietary links and/or processes may be used. In such cases, where appropriate, the third party provider should offer an open interface to other trading parties.

STANDARDS FOR OPEN ELECTRONIC TRADING

Standards for identifying data and exchanging information are essential in electronic trading markets.

Some of the key standards for data that can be used to support the electronic business environment include:

OBI:	Open Buying on the Internet;
XML:	Extensible Markup Language;
ABN:	Australian Business Number (for Australian organisation identification)
DUNS:	Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (for international company identification);
UNSPSC V5.01:	Universal Standard Products and Services Code, which provide a detailed product and service classification ¹ ; and
EAN:	European Article Number/UCC Barcode.

The APCC will continue to monitor and consult with appropriate bodies on new and evolving standards including the United Nations proposed developments with the Organisation for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS)², electronic business Extensible Markup Language (ebXML)³ and the Universal Description, Discovery and Integration (UDDI)⁴ initiative.

Where international agreements exist in particular market sectors, the continued use of existing stock numbering and messaging systems is supported.

¹ Copyright in this code is currently (June 2002) the subject of legal determination in the USA. The APCC is keeping this issue under review and will adjust the Framework as required. As at June 2002 the APCC supports Version 5.01 of the code.

² www.oasis-open.org

³ www.ebxml.org

⁴ www.uddi.org

CATALOGUE MANAGEMENT IN THE OPEN ELECTRONIC TRADING ENVIRONMENT

In the open electronic trading environment suppliers have control and responsibility for their catalogues. The open trading environment should minimise the need for suppliers to duplicate catalogue data on other sites. Appropriate arrangements for this are encouraged by the APCC. Suppliers can, however, tailor their catalogues to support specific contractual arrangements with individual buyers.

CUSTOMISING SOLUTIONS IN THE OPEN ELECTRONIC TRADING ENVIRONMENT

The concept of open electronic trading allows individual buyers and suppliers to manage their own systems. Trading partners may agree to adapt technology and procedures to support specific business relationships, while at the same time maintaining an open and consistent infrastructure for use with other trading partners.

SUPPLIER REGISTRIES/DIRECTORIES

Supplier registries/directories contain information required to do business with suppliers. Buyers can use this to locate suppliers and make purchases. In some organisations they may also be used to direct buyers to specific contracted or preferred suppliers. These databases can either form part of an organisation's internal procurement system or may be offered by third party providers.

Organisations may determine individual approaches to the procurement process and their use of supplier registries/directories. Some may use third party registries/directories to locate suppliers; others may rely on their contracted suppliers for the ongoing supply of goods and services.

Australian governments have agreed to develop national design principles for supplier registries/directories to facilitate interoperability between registries/directories in the longer term.

ONLINE AUCTIONS AND REVERSE AUCTIONS

Online auctions provide an electronic version of the traditional auction process, where suppliers offer particular goods or services to seek the highest price from buyers.

Reverse auctions are a development that allows buyers to source the minimum price through competition of suppliers to deliver specifically defined requirements. This activity is an adoption of non-electronic practices in specific markets that secure minimum price from suppliers of comparable products/services.

The APCC will keep this issue under review.

SUPPLIER ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Electronic Tendering Systems can provide improved access for suppliers to government business opportunities. They provide a way of managing the transmission of information between trading partners for the procurement of goods, services, property or capital works. They encompass the initial seeking of information from potential suppliers, through to electronic tender lodgment and the awarding of a contract or placing of an order.

Governments have agreed to examine the options for making government business opportunities locatable through a single discovery point. This will improve the visibility of, and access to, government business opportunities, particularly for SMEs and rural and regional suppliers.

Governments will increasingly provide online access to tender and contract information.

ONLINE FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

Australian governments and business organisations have independently developed individual approaches to outgoing and incoming online financial transactions. This includes the selection of financial institutions and the use of credit cards and electronic funds transfer.

While acknowledging various strategies in this area will have an impact in the Business-to-Business (B2B) environment, the same level of openness and consistency across governments and business will provide benefits to trading partners. It is noted that trading partners will wish to retain the freedom to use their financial institution of choice.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Federal Government's *Electronic Transactions Act 1999* removes existing legal impediments that may prevent a person using electronic communications to satisfy obligations under Commonwealth law. States and Territory Governments have enacted, or are enacting, corresponding legislation dealing with electronic transactions in their own jurisdictions.

While a comprehensive body of electronic commerce law will only develop as specific cases are decided in the courts, these Acts mean that for the first time in Australia, the law clarifies the general principle that a person can enter into contracts electronically. This legislation assists in the successful implementation of electronic commerce in Australia. Legislation dealing with such issues as privacy, copyright, and fair trading is also relevant to the online environment.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Organisations should conduct a risk analysis by:

- Identifying the possibility of a risk becoming a reality;
- Assessing the impact of this happening and how to effectively manage the consequences; and
- Implementing risk mitigation strategies.

A number of risk assessment options are available to organisations including security, system and legal risk analyses. A legal risk analysis, for example, must take into account two important considerations; the potential and actual legal risks and opportunities represented by the online environment, and the Australian legal framework.

Guidelines for managing risk are set out in the Australian and New Zealand Risk Management Standard published by Standards Australia (AS/NZS 4360:1999 – Risk Management).

SECURITY

Security refers to the confidentiality, integrity, access and availability of data during its transmission and its storage in all formats.

Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that trading partners maintain appropriate levels of security.

PRIVACY

Privacy concerns the rights of individuals who may be concerned that the privacy of provided information may not be adequately protected. Since December 2001, Commonwealth privacy legislation has applied to both the public and private sectors and specified classes of business are required to comply with National Privacy Principles. The Commonwealth and ACT governments are regulated by the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth). The NSW Government has the *Electronic Transactions Act 2000* (NSW), which was updated on 7 December 2001 and the Victorian Government has the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic) which came into effect on 1 September 2001. Other State and Territory governments may apply guidelines based on the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth).

BUSINESS CONFIDENTIALITY

While privacy concerns the rights of individuals, information about businesses may also be sensitive and need confidential treatment. Appropriate discretion should be exercised when providing trading partners with confidential corporate information particularly when direct or indirect personal information on employees is provided.

AUTHENTICATION

Authentication is the process of identifying the entity that sends or receives information. This may include the additional process of verifying a previously unknown entity by a trusted, independent third party. Authentication systems can also ensure the integrity of data during transmission and storage.

Authentication is a critical component of trusted and open electronic commerce. It can provide assurance of:

- The identity of the message originator;
- The message integrity in transmission and storage;
- The confidentiality of the transmitted message; and
- An intention to enter into a binding relationship.

An effective approach to authentication acknowledges that technology is not the sole solution. Authentication is as much about management and cultural issues as it is about technical solutions.

One of the early issues for consideration is a realisation that online authentication may be a costly exercise in comparison to a manual authentication process. Organisations will need to consider cost in relation to an identified level of risk associated with failure to properly authenticate a party to an online transaction. That is, the likelihood and consequences of such a failure, against the cost of implementing authentication, should be fully analysed. The consequences may be measured in a number of ways including the financial and legal/liability outcomes.

However, if managed as a business issue rather than a technology issue, organisation authentication needs can be effectively addressed and implemented in a cost-effective manner as the benefits of transacting online are realised.

In November 2000, Australian State and Territory governments agreed at the Online Council to use, where appropriate, Public Key Infrastructure certificates which comply with the Commonwealth's Gatekeeper framework. The Gatekeeper framework provides a technology-neutral accreditation of digital certificate services and service providers. The APCC continues to be involved in Gatekeeper policy development and in promoting the need for a low cost and consistent universal authentication scheme for Australian businesses.

Digital certificates are not the only means of providing authentication. Most computer and Internet users are already familiar with authentication involving the use of unique user identifiers and passwords.

The level of authentication selected by trading partners should be appropriate to the business risk of the transaction.

GUIDELINES

These guidelines aim to create an open, consistent and secure environment for conducting electronic business transactions between trading partners.

OPEN SYSTEMS FOR ELECTRONIC TRADING

Australian governments support and promote the development of an open electronic trading environment for Business-to-Government (B2G) trading over the Internet. This open environment allows buyers to access supplier catalogues then exchange business documents (using defined open standards) without requiring either buyers or suppliers to implement specific software, hardware, or be liable for any third party provider charges. (Note: This approach does not limit trading partners from engaging third party value adding service providers of their choice, but clarifies that where this is done the engaging party will assume liability for any resultant charges).

Australian governments recommend and encourage the use of open standards to facilitate Internet trading. These include:

- Internationally recognised electronic trading protocols such as Open Buying on the Internet (OBI) and XML;
- The ABN as a unique Australian business identifier;
- Dun & Bradstreet's DUNS number as a unique International business identifier;
- UNSPSC V5.01 for product and service classification; and
- The EAN/UCC barcode number for article identification.

Australian governments will work to monitor appropriate standards and technologies as they evolve.

When implementing electronic procurement initiatives, trading partners should promote equitable access for all members and sectors of the community. It is expected that governments, corporate bodies and service providers who implement open solutions will support all major open standards, including OBI, XML and EDI. This will allow trading partners to participate in a consistent and cost effective electronic market that supports practicable interoperability.

CATALOGUE MANAGEMENT

Australian governments support the proposition that suppliers have the ultimate responsibility to manage, operate and maintain their Business-to-Business (B2B) Internet catalogue, using open standards.

SUPPLIER REGISTRIES/DIRECTORIES

It is important for supplier registration or directory services to be interoperable and able to exchange information across registries or directories. This avoids the need for suppliers to register with more than one registry/directory, and promotes the wider use of electronic commerce.

Where third party service providers offer supplier registration or directory services, full and transparent exchange of information with other providers of this functionality should be provided.

If using externally provided supplier directories/registries, Australian governments will engage service providers who are working to support the transparent exchange of directory services and supplier registration.

ONLINE AUCTIONS AND REVERSE AUCTIONS

Governments and their trading partners will determine if the use of online auctions and/or reverse auctions is to their strategic and operational benefit.

Where governments elect to procure goods or services through online or reverse auctions, they should try to ensure barriers to SME participation, such as auction service provider charges or the cost of using proprietary software or hardware, are minimised.

SUPPLIER ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Interested parties should be able to access government tender advertisements and documentation via the Internet. Documentation should be protected from unauthorised and undetected alteration. Bidders should be able to lodge tender responses via the Internet safe in the knowledge that they are protected from unauthorised and undetected alteration or interception.

Governments should ensure that access to electronic tender information is cost effective and user friendly, particularly for the online preparation and lodgement of responses.

It is expected that the majority of communications between contractual parties will progressively migrate to electronic means.

Governments recognise the benefits for individual tender management systems to share a common 'look and feel'. This will simplify operations for suppliers who deal with more than one government.

ONLINE FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

Australian governments acknowledge that trading partners will determine if the use of online financial transactions supports their strategic and operational business objectives.

Where they are implemented, online financial transactions should not require the receiving trading partner to implement proprietary software or hardware. Nor should they be required to participate in a third party provider marketplace, or take out membership with any particular financial institution.

SECURITY

All trading partners are expected to provide appropriate levels of security for Business-to-Business (B2B) Internet trading data on, and passing through, their networks. By conforming to the requirements of Australian Standard AS 4444 (Information Security Management) and AS 4360 (Risk Management), or some similar public standard, trading partners will have greater confidence in each other's security.

PRIVACY

Organisations should have regard to the legitimate concern of their trading partners that any personal information provided be protected in accordance with relevant privacy provisions.

BUSINESS CONFIDENTIALITY

Organisations should have regard to the legitimate concern of their trading partners that any corporate information provided be appropriately protected.

AUTHENTICATION

The need to provide authentication, and what level and type of authentication is used, is an issue for trading partners to determine. Where used it should, wherever possible, use cost effective open solutions.

Where strong authentication is required, the Commonwealth specifies the use of Government Public Key Infrastructure (Gatekeeper) compliant certificates. In November 2000, Australian State and Territory governments agreed at the Online Council to adopt this strategy. In other circumstances trading partners will develop their own approach to authentication, but are encouraged to make use of Gatekeeper compliant certificates and support the progressive development of a consistent national authentication capability.

GLOSSARY AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, the following terms are defined to mean:

ABN:	Australian Business Number – A unique identifying number issued under the Australian Business Number Act 1999 so that an entity can identify itself reliably in all dealings with the Australian Government. (www.taxreform.ato.gov.au)
APCC:	The Australian Procurement and Construction Council Inc. representing the jurisdictions of: New South Wales; Victoria; Queensland; South Australia; Western Australia; Commonwealth of Australia; Northern Territory; Australian Capital Territory and New Zealand. (www.apcc.gov.au)
Authentication:	The means by which the recipient of a transaction or message can make an assessment as to whether to accept or reject that transaction.
Digital Signature:	Unique electronic identification used to authenticate the sender of a message and to verify the completeness and accuracy of the message.
D.U.N.S.:	Data Universal Numbering System – Internationally recognised supplier numbering system provided by Dun & Bradstreet.
EAN/UCC:	European Article Number/Uniform Code Council for numbering products.
EDI:	Electronic Data Interchange is a standard format for exchanging business data.
Electronic Commerce:	Value adding business transactions within businesses, between businesses or between businesses and consumers that are conducted electronically. In the context of this framework it is limited to the transaction of goods and services by government agencies however it is encouraged for general application.
Gatekeeper:	A public key trusted infrastructure to be used for mechanisms and processes to secure electronic transactions with Government. (www.noie.gov.au)

Internet:	A worldwide linkage of many individual computer networks into a single logical network, all sharing a common addressing scheme. Networks in the Internet use the same protocol (TCP/IP) and provide electronic mail, remote login, and file transfer services.
OBI:	Open Buying on the Internet – a standard intended to facilitate Internet-based purchasing.
Online Council:	A forum for the Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local governments to coordinate government efforts in relation to online services, to encourage collaboration where appropriate and avoid duplication in the delivery of online services.
Privacy:	All aspects of holding, using and maintaining personal information in accordance with agreed privacy principles. (www.privacy.gov.au)
Response:	The response to a tender opportunity provided by a prospective supplier.
Security:	The measures taken to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information.
Server:	A computer that stores information on a network and delivers it to a client.
SME:	Small to Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) – The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS catalogue 8141) defines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • micro business, as one which employ fewer than five people; • other small business, as one employing five or more, but fewer than twenty people; • medium business, as one employing twenty or more people but fewer than two hundred.
Supplier Registry:	Central site keeping records of a supplier and the products and services they offer.
Supplier Registration:	Placing records on a Supplier Registry for the purposes of conducting electronic commerce for procurement over the Internet.

Tender Documentation:	Includes documents issued by jurisdictions seeking responses from interested parties for the procurement of goods, services or capital works. Tender Documentation may be in the form of an Expression of Interest, Registration of Interest, Request for Tender, Request for Proposal, Request for Information, Tender or Quotation.
Third Party Providers:	A Third Party Provider is an entity separate to the buyer or supplier who provides a service or technology (to either or both parties) that facilitates the access to, or exchange of information in the Business to Business (B2B) market. This includes, Directory, Hosted Catalogue, Transaction Management, Buyer Management, Settlement, and communication services.
Trading Partner:	A party involved in either a buying or supplying activity in a cooperative and open manner.
UDDI:	Universal Description, Discovery Integration – UDDI is a cross-industry standard driven by platform and software providers, marketplace operators and e-business leaders. The Standard creates a platform-independent, open framework for describing services, discovering businesses, and integrating business services using the Internet.
UNSPSC V5.01:	Universal Standard Products and Services Code – an international classification system for goods and services. (Copyright in this code is currently (June 2002) the subject of legal determination in the USA. The APCC is keeping this issue under review and will adjust the Framework as required. As at June 2002 the APCC supports Version 5.01 of the code.)
Website:	An organisation's own Internet presence, published through an Internet server, addressed and located by a URL (Universal Resource Locator).
XML:	Extensible Markup Language, an evolving standard for creating World Wide Web documents. XML defines how documents appear in browsers, enables their contents to be categorised and creates the hot links between documents.

THE APCC

The Australian Procurement and Construction Council Inc. (APCC) is the peak body coordinating the procurement and construction policies of the Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments. New Zealand also participates in the APCC network. The APCC co-operates on a national basis to provide consistency in the Australian Governments' procurement policies.

The APCC's goal is to promote excellence in the way government delivers its services to the community and to provide leadership to industry in procurement matters.

The Council is committed to a wide range of policies aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Government procurement, together with the delivery of goods, services and construction works to the Australian community.

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