**Video Transcript**

**Goldfields Tender Briefing Overview of Tender Process and QA**

[Slide: North Central Victorian Goldfields Ground Release Tender Briefing Day - Fiona Clarke]

*Fiona Clarke*

We’ll just start on the last presentation of the day, the Tender Briefing.

So I’ll speak for around 20 minutes, hopefully not more, and I just want to make sure I give everyone a really good opportunity to ask questions.

A lot of the information that I’ll be talking about here is actually in the tender document, so I would imagine that many of you here have already downloaded the tender documents.

But if you haven’t I’d urge you to get onto the tender’s Vic website and to register and to download those tender documents.

[Slide: Tender Briefing Overview]

So what I’ll be covering is essentially what’s been tendered, the key tender details, key dates and the process of how to submit a tender.

Important points for tenderers to note, eligibility criteria, how the evaluation process will work and how successful tenderers will be selected.

We’ll look at the evaluation criteria both in summary and in detail.

I’ll have something to say about what happens post evaluation.

And then there’s a few further information items and we’ll open it to questions.

So what’s being tendered?

[Slide: What is Being Tendered?]

So, successful tenderers from this process will gain the exclusive right to apply to the Mineral Resources Regulator for an exploration licence over that relevant block for the proposed work program that has been put forward in the tender application.

As all of you would no doubt note that there’s four blocks offered, ranging in size from 327 square kilometres to 512.

In terms of the licencing process, once successful tenderers have been selected and licence applications are lodged, the normal Mineral Resources Sustainable Development Act licencing process applies.

You would note that the priority for this tender is on gold exploration.

Coal and gas are excluded, however we will accept tenders for other minerals but these will only be considered if no eligible tender response for gold for a particular block is received, or if an eligible tender response is received but it doesn’t meet the minimum scoring thresholds for each of the five evaluation criteria for a particular block.

And I’ll explain the evaluation criteria and how the scoring works a little bit later.

So, if a tenderer is deemed successful their tender response will essentially form their application to the Earth Resources Regulator for an exploration licence under the MRSDA.

So tender details, as I said, register on the website.

Tender reference number is there.

[Slide: Tender Details]

Yu need to register on the website as a supplier, so it’s a procurement – Victorian Government Procurement website, it’s a bit of a nuance in the way that the website works, but that’s what you need to do, you need to register as a supplier.

Once you’re registered there are tender documents available on that website.

The tender document package comes in five parts.

There’s Part A which is the specifications and requirements for tenderers.

Part B is the conditions of participation in the tender.

Part C we outline a number of information sources that are available to help tenderers in preparing their tender responses and data as well, Geoscience data that was referred to by our GSV colleagues this morning.

Part D is a block summaries document, so Craig Clifton alluded to that in his presentation, and essentially that’s a summary, just a short summary, introductory summary if you like, of some Geoscience features, the main imagery features, minimum exploration expenditure requirements under the licence and the relinquishment requirements of the five years of the licence term.

And then Part E is the tenderer’s response template.

[Slide: Key Dates]

So key dates to note, so tender opened, I think that should be the 29th of October, tender briefing is today.

We are closing the period for the tenderers asking questions shortly before the tender closes, so that period will close at 12:00pm on the 24th of January.

The tender itself closes at 6:00pm Australian eastern daylight time on Friday the 31st of January, and we will then undertake the eligibility assessments and the overall tender assessment.

Now exactly how long that process will take will depend on how many tender responses we receive, and the time involved in evaluating those tenders.

So indicatively we’re suggesting that it might be April or May that you’d be notified, but that timeline may change depending on those factors.

And both successful and unsuccessful tenderers will be notified in writing.

[Slide: How to Tender]

So, how to tender, as I said you need to register on the website.

It’s the portal that we’re using to manage the tender, so the tender documents are only available on the Tender’s Vic website.

And we will only be accepting tender responses in electronic format through that same website as well.

The tender reference number is there.

Lodgement, so tenders must be received before the closing date and time in their entirety, and it is a tenderer’s responsibility to ensure that sufficient time is allowed such that we in the department would receive those tenders by the closing time on that date.

Updates: We’re managing any updates to the process and questions and answers that might be asked through that Tenders Vic website, so any questions that the tenderers submit to us, other than for a simple administration thing such as, you know, I can’t seem to register on the site, but other than the things that are material we will be publishing all questions asked and all responses as well to ensure that the process is fair and that everyone has access to the same information.

And those types of questions and answers will be added to the forum throughout the tender period, and once you’re registered you’ll get a notification if there is any questions and answers, or any updates, that have been lodged or responded to on that website.

[Slide: Important points to note]

So, just a few important things to note, tenderers are welcome to apply for more than one block.

A separate application for each block is required, so it’s a separate Part E Tenderers Response for each application is required.

And tenderers must indicate if an application for one block is contingent on the outcome for another, so for example, if you apply for three blocks you prefer for example block one, but you apply for block two and three as well, then if you were successful for block one and would therefore no longer be interested in pursuing your application for block two and three, you need to make that very clear in your tender application.

As I said, the application must be in the form of a completed Part E Tenderer’s Response.

Word limits do apply for each of the sections, those word limits are outline in that document.

Attachments are permissible but they must referenced and Part E.

Evaluation of tender blocks is going to be conducted on a separate basis so you don’t get any particular advantage if you apply for four blocks or three or two, but each block will be assessed on its own merits.

And it’s important to note that the evaluation will be performed on the basis of the information that provide in your tender response.

So if required the Secretary for the tender process may seek clarifications on behalf of the evaluation panel if required.

However, at this stage no provision has been made for tenderer presentations, so don’t assume that you can provide a completed Part E and then you’ll have an opportunity to come and present to us, because that’s not part of the process at this stage, so you need to really make sure that your Part E applications are complete.

[Slide: Tender is being conducted within a strict probity framework]

I should also mention that the tender’s being conducted within a very strict probity framework, so that’s something that the Victorian Government takes very seriously.

We have appointed an independent probity advisor who is here today, and Ann is overseeing all aspects of the tender process including the evaluation, and will actually be present at the panel evaluation deliberations when it’s over.

And I should also remind people that there is, apart from the tender documents themselves, there are a number of information items available on the Tender Vic website to assist tenderers, Geoscience data and Cameron mentioned this morning, land inventory and datasets as Craig Clifton mentioned, and we’ve got some fact sheets as well that may assist in preparing responses.

[Slide: Eligibility criteria]

So eligibility criteria, so the first stage of the evaluation will be an assessment of eligibility criteria, so basically are you a minerals exploration company?

Do you have the right to conduct minerals exploration work here within Australia?

Are you proposing to explore for gold or for other eligible minerals?

And then the last one is are you proposing a work program that at least meets the minimum expenditure requirements, or exceeds the minimum expenditure requirements, for the blocks that you’re proposing to bid for, for each year of the licence?

This is a direct extract from the tender documents, so those are the eligibility criteria, so all eligible tenders post that assessment will then progress to evaluation.

[Slide: Tender evaluation process]

This might be a little bit hard to see but it’s a schematic about how the evaluation process will work.

So we have five evaluation criteria, four of them are technical and one is responsible exploration which has four parts.

The technical assessment will be done by an independent panel of technical exports who have been drawn together to undertake the evaluation.

And that panel will undertake the assessment, or assessment and scoring for each block for all of those technical criteria.

It is a requirement as outlined in the tender documents that tenders are being scored on a zero to ten point scale against each criteria, and that a tender must score at least six or above for each criteria to be eligible to be a successful tenderer.

So tenders that meet that requirement for the technical criteria will progress to being considered for the responsible exploration criteria.

As I mentioned that has four parts.

One part is the traditional owner component.

As Jane Burton mentioned we have convened a traditional owner assessment panel to undertake that assessment on that criteria only.

And we’re also convening a responsible exploration panel to undertake the responsible exploration assessment for the other three criteria.

So the scoring if you like of tenders from the traditional owners’ assessment will carry over into the responsible exploration assessment process and be added to the other three sub-criteria.

Those results will then be taken forward and collated and the overall scores for each tender response will then be determined based on the overall score times the weighting for each criteria and ranked accordingly for each block.

[Slide: Selection of successful tenderers]

Look it’s probably worth mentioning that it is possible that there may be, for a particular block, that there may be more than one tenderer on the same score that is ranked first.

So if that happens then the successful tenderer will be determined on the basis of whoever has obtained the higher score for the responsible exploration criteria.

And if that score is the same then it will be the tenderer who proposes the larger work program in overall exploration spend over that five years.

So the evaluation criteria, I’m sure most people would be familiar with this, but in case anyone isn’t there’s five of them.

[Slide: Evaluation criteria - summary]

They’re separated into assessing company’s strategy and capability if you like, and then the work program.

So we’ve got the weightings there, so the fit of your proposal with your overall company minerals exploration strategy is weighted at five.

Minerals exploration capability which relates to your organisation and also the people who’ll be undertaking the work, and financial viability has a ranking of 20.

And then under work program, the exploration model that you’re proposing has a ranking of five.

Your exploration program 25, and then the responsible minerals exploration component is 45 overall, broken down into 20 for the working with traditional owners component, 15 for working with landholders and local communities, five for sustainability and five for local content, so you know, ow do you intend to incorporate using local content in your exploration program.

[Slide: Evaluation Criteria in detail - The Company (1) Minerals exploration strategy]

Now this detail, it’s probably going to be a little bit hard to read but this is an extract directly out of the tender documents.

So when we talk about minerals exploration strategy we’re asking for your to demonstrate how your proposal forms a coherent part of your overall company strategy.

[Slide: (2) Minerals exploration capability & financial viability]

For the second component the capability and financial viability, so we want to understand the experience and qualifications of the team that you’re proposing to undertake the work, including any contractors that you might be proposing to use.

So how it will actually manage and deliver your proposed program.

We are asking for examples of three recent projects or programs including the key senior personnel that have run those programs, preferably demonstrating a whole range of experience which includes advancing early stage projects, applying contemporary methods and approaches, exploring for the eligible minerals being targeted undercover.

And then the third element is demonstrating how you intend to fund your program, including whether funds would need to be raised and if so how do you propose to do that and what are the timelines involved.

So we’d like to know of your past successes that you and the principles have had in raising funds for programs in the past.

If you have any arrangements with funding partners or strategic partners that would be contributing funders we’d like to know about that.

And we need to see verifiable financial statements and reports, and any partners, and for your partners that you’re proposing also, that would fund the program.

So we’re asking for that last three years being provided as attachments.

And also we’re asking for the company’s annual minerals expression budget and expenditure in the past five years, including any commentary as required.

So criteria three is the expression model.

[Slide: The Work Program - (3) Minerals exploration model]

So we’re asking for an outline of the targeting criteria that you would use, and a discussion and review of currently geoscience data which has informed the model and relevant commodities targeted.

So there’s plenty of data as we’ve already mentioned is available.

So for exploration program we want to see a phased program over the licence term.

[Slide: (4) Mineral exploration program]

And detail around the indicative activity, expenditure and timing, including the number of elements.

We understand that projects like this there tends to be more certainty in the immediate term rather than longer term, but as much detail as you can provide would be suggested with any caveats that you see fit.

So that includes geophysics, geochemical, geology, research and innovation, and then we’d like to know about your target testing program.

So any proposed types of drilling that you’re intending to execute in that first five years.

Any proposed techniques that you’ll apply to those processes, sampling of drilling, any proposed programs highlighting geological, geochemical, geophysical and geometallurgical measures and properties to be collected.

Data integration analysis, so how you are proposing to do that, how that information will be stored and integrated and interpreted to determine validity and evaluate and priorities results from targets tested.

And research innovation, so if there’s any emerging technologies or techniques that you’re proposing to use as part of the target evaluation we’d request that you include that in your application.

Third element, the research evaluation program, so the same sorts of things again for your resource evaluation program, and that rounds out the exploration program.

[Slide: (5) Responsible minerals exploration - Slide 1]

And then criteria five, responsible minerals exploration, so what we want to see here, is we want to understand ow you are intending to carry out exploration in a responsible way that demonstrates strong social values.

There’s four elements to this, the first one I mention is working with traditional owners.

So this is the element that will be assessed by the traditional owner panel.

We’re really interested in your attributes and capacities for effective engagement with indigenous people as part of your program.

We’ve outlined a number of specific components there that we’re seeking information on, so do you have any policies in place in relation to engaging with indigenous people?

Where does responsibility for that sit within your organisation?

How do you actually ensure that all of your personnel are aware of those policies and are committed to implementing those policies in the work that they’ll undertake?

What’s your experience in negotiating and implementing agreements with indigenous people?

And it might be here or it might be overseas experience.

And any details of any systems that your company has in place to review and improve its performance in relation to indigenous engagement.

And do you have a feedback mechanism to deal with situations where indigenous people believe engagement has not been satisfactory?

We’d like to know about that also.

So the next three criteria will be assessed by the responsible exploration panel.

So the first of those three is working with landholders and communities, and that’s really around your approach and plan for engaging with landholders in the area, local communities, and other stakeholders throughout your proposed mineral exploration program.

So it’s not just landholders that you may be targeting to get access to ground, but the context is broader than that.

[Slide: (5) Responsible minerals exploration - slide 2]

Sustainability, so what’s your approach for sustainability and risk management as part of your exploration activities?

We’ve listed a number of components there that we require information against, so risk assessment, registers, tools and procedures.

How do you manage risks?

Do you have an environmental policy, if yes can you describe it?

And how your activities performed and informed by that policy?

Do you have an environmental management system?

Any environmental occupational and health breaches of legislation, if you have any of those within the last five years we’re asking for that information to be provided.

How will relevant risk and safety controls be communicated to employees and contractors to ensure that they’re aware and monitored and reported on as appropriate?

And outlining your sustainability measures that you will seek to employ in work programs, which might include safety, rehabilitation, baseline monitoring, those sorts of things?

And then the last of those sub-criterias, local content, so that’s really, as I mentioned, around demonstrating that your program will source, where possible, local goods and services to benefit local communities, particularly in employment and upskilling, local industry participation and development including research programs, initiatives, indigenous and regional development?

[Slide: Post Evaluation]

So one the evaluation has been conducted, as I mentioned, successful and unsuccessful tenderers will be notified in writing at the conclusion of the process, again timeline dependant on number of tender responses.

Successful tenderers will then be invited to apply for a minerals exploration licence to the Earth Resources Regulator within the department, covering the block for which the tender was successful, for the proposed work program that you’ve submitted through the tender process.

[Slide: Further information]

So there’s further information on the department’s website, general information if you like, so I encourage you to look at that.

I’ve mentioned registering on the Tenders Vic website as well, so it’s important that you do that.

If you have any specific questions on the tender process you are welcome to submit those in writing to mdv@vic.gov.au.

As I mentioned, questions and answers will be published on the Tenders Vic website to ensure fair access for everyone.

If you’re not sure then you’re welcome to email us and have a conversation with us, whether your question sort of qualifies, it might be a simple administrative question, but if you’re not sure then we’ll advise you whether it’s the type of question that it’s appropriate for us to publish.

And you’ll then be given an opportunity to withdraw that question if you so choose.

So the best way to be kept informed of all the questions and answers is through the forum, and as I mentioned when questions and answers are posted you’ll get an email notification.

So that concludes the presentation itself, so I’d just like to open the floor for any questions that people might have.

*Question*

When the questions are published on the website will it say who’s asking the questions?

*Fiona Clarke*

No. No. No.

Questions will be de-identified.

*Question*

Just in relation to the questions again, what sort of timeframe would you likely get back for those answers to those questions?

*Fiona Clarke*

Look, it’s usually pretty quick.

So many it would be within a day, but we understand that speedy clarification of those questions is very important for tenderers.

We understand and appreciate that you’re all putting an enormous amount of time and effort and money into this, so it’s an absolute priority for us to answer those questions quickly.

*Question*

Given the way some of your points have been framed in terms of the company or the applicant needing to be able to demonstrate certain capabilities or certain experience, it strikes me that on reading it one gets the impression the whole process could be seen to be tilted in favour of large companies that are deep-pocketed.

How can a junior or a private company, which as a corporate entity has zero experience, but is associated with individuals who have deep sector experience be adequately comforted in relation to this process?

*Fiona Clarke*

Yeah, absolutely.

It’s a great question.

But we ask specifically for the demonstrate experience and capability of company – of the company and the key individuals who will be undertaking the work.

So that’s a critically important element and if it was to be, you know say a small company of a number of individuals that have fantastic ex-industry experience but have come together for this particular proposal if you like, that wealth of experience from previous corporate lives counts towards the overall assessment, that’s a critical part of it.

*Question*

You mentioned that you want to know in the tender documents whether there is a partner involved in what the department’s credentials area, now that obviously applies for right now being planned at this stage, is there any restrictions if a company was to be the successful tenderer, is there any restrictions afterwards to form a joint venture or bring a partner in, or is it as applied for that’s how the project will run?

*Fiona Clarke*

Yeah, that’s a really good question.

I think that’s one that we’ll take on notice, so we’ll publish that question and a response to that question on the website.

Any more questions?

*Question*

Yeah, Fiona what’s the planned process for any commitments that are made in a successful submission for how that will get carried across to EL application or a licence?

*Fiona Clarke*

Okay, so what we’ve done is we have structured the tender process and the tender documents to require the information that would be required for an EL licence application, so that we’re not coming back to you twice.

So, essentially the tender response that you put in, the information in that becomes the licence application, so I’m not from the regulators, so I’m sure that there’s probably a form that you have to fill in, but essentially that submission is the basis for your application.

Any more questions?

*Question*

Is it possible for any of the information that was provided at the community briefings to be put on the tender website, so language that’s been provided to the communities is able to be replicated and consistent in applications?

Because I’ve spoken to some farmers that have been there and I just came to make sure that the information they’ve been provided that all tenderers are aware of the same.

*Fiona Clarke*

Understand. Understand.

I think that’s something we can definitely look into again.

I’ll take that one on notice and we will get back to you with an answer on that one very quickly through the Tenders website, so if you haven’t registered please register.

Any more questions?

No.

Okay, fantastic.

Well I hope that everyone’s found this day today really informative.

It was our intention to assist you to understand the context for this tender and to provide information about useful information resources that are out there, and the government’s expectations for the tender process, so I hope we’ve achieved that.

Thank you so much for devoting a whole day of your valuable time to come in to join us today to hear about this opportunity.

We look forward to receiving your tender responses.

We look forward to receiving your questions and answers.

And I wish you all the best of luck, thank you.

[Victoria State Government / Jobs, Precincts and Regions - Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne]