Your Australian smart hands services
vendor selection checklist

Use this checklist to rank potential smart hands vendors against the criteria that matters. That way, you'll make an informed decision that's vindicated every time your smart hands team fix a data centre issue before it can turn into a crisis.

Core service capabilities:
Verify the provider offers the following essential services:

Server Installation Services: Provide complete deployment, configuration, and functional testing of new servers.

Rack and Stack Services: Perform physical installation of equipment with a structured layout and clear labelling.

Network Infrastructure Support: Deliver network cabling, switch and router installation, and connectivity testing.

Equipment Testing Services: Conduct diagnostics and pre-deployment performance checks to verify reliability.

Hardware Support Services: Replace components, apply firmware updates, and perform hardware upgrades.

Break-Fix Services: Provide rapid-response emergency repair and hardware restoration.

Equipment Decommissioning: Carry out secure removal, data sanitisation, and compliant disposal in line with Australian data protection standards.

Cross-Connect Services: Manage carrier, network, and equipment interconnections for seamless operation.

Data Centre Maintenance Services: Deliver preventative maintenance and continuous system care to maximise uptime.

NBN Connectivity: Demonstrate proven experience in configuring and supporting NBN-connected environments.

Telco Relationships: Maintain strong working relationships with all major telecommunications providers, including: Telstra, Optus and Vocus.

Data Centre Partnerships: Operate in partnership with leading data centre operators such as NextDC, Equinix, Interactive, CDC Data Centres, and AirTrunk.

Geographic coverage & local presence

Local technicians based in your city (not interstate fly-ins).

Authorised access to your data centres and major facilities.

Coverage at key Australian facilities:

Sydney: Equinix SY3–SY6, NextDC S1–S3, Global Switch, Interactive.

Melbourne: NextDC M1–M2, Equinix ME1–ME4, Digital Realty, Interactive.

Brisbane: Equinix BR1, Polaris, NextDC B1–B2, Interactive.

Perth: Equinix PE1

Local backup resources within the same metro area.

No travel surcharges for metropolitan coverage.

Awareness of local data centre procedures and operator requirements.

Alignment with AEST, AEDT, ACST and AWST time zones.

Smart hands SLA, response times & availability
Here's what to ensure is included in your SLA for the highest level of operational assurance:

24/7/365 smart hands support: true round-the-clock Australian coverage.

Guaranteed response times: 2–4 hours for metro areas (verify site specifics).

After-hours support: Evenings and weekends without premium surcharges.

Australian public holiday coverage: Melbourne Cup, Queen's Birthday (state variations).

Emergency escalation protocols: Defined contact hierarchy and response flow.

Backup technician availability: Within the same city for redundancy.

Weather and disaster planning: Coverage during bushfires, floods, or storms.

Long weekend coverage: Australia Day, ANZAC Day, etc.

Summer period coverage: Operational assurance for the quiet (yet still crucial) December–January period.

Smart hands technician expertise & certifications

Confirm the provider uses Australian-based certified professionals, not offshore coordinators who subcontract local technicians.

Verify that technicians hold relevant certifications, such as BICSI or vendor-specific credentials from Cisco, NetApp, Dell, or HPE.

Check that all staff have Australian electrical licences where required for on-site work.

Ensure the team demonstrates multi-vendor expertise, with experience handling your specific hardware brands.

Confirm the vendor has a proven Australian presence, including years in operation, client testimonials and client retention metrics.

Confirm that all technicians have current Australian police checks and background verification.

Assess whether they follow standardised procedures and quality-control processes to reduce human error.

Ask about ongoing training programs to confirm technicians stay current with technology and compliance changes.

Security & compliance

Verify that the provider complies with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Ensure they have a clear data sovereignty policy guaranteeing Australian data stays within Australia.

Confirm that they maintain current Australian insurance coverage, including public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

Ask for proof of ISO 27001 (Information Security) and ISO 9001 (Quality Management) certifications.

For public sector organisations: Check for IRAP assessments or clearances if they support government agencies or sensitive clients.

Review their secure data destruction processes to ensure compliance with Australian disposal standards.

Make sure NDAs and confidentiality agreements are standard in all the vendor's engagements and contracts.

Pricing & contract terms: Australian commercial considerations:

Confirm that all pricing is quoted in AUD, GST-inclusive, and fully transparent.

Verify the vendor's ABN or ACN to confirm their legitimacy and Australian presence.

Clarify whether the pricing model is hourly, per-incident, or retainer-based, and ensure it suits your support needs.

Ensure there are no hidden fees, including travel, parking, or equipment hire charges.

Check for contract flexibility, such as month-to-month or annual options.

Confirm that standard 30-day payment terms apply to all invoicing.

Ask whether the provider offers volume discounts or multi-site pricing for broader coverage.

Communication & reporting

Ensure the provider offers Australian business hours support with local phone lines, not offshore call centres.

Confirm they provide real-time status updates in Australian time zones.

Request photo and video documentation as proof of completed work.

Expect detailed completion reports outlining all actions taken and results achieved.

Check that their systems integrate with your service management or ticketing platform for seamless communication.

Ensure you have a dedicated Australian account manager who understands your organisation.

Review the provider's escalation procedures to confirm you can quickly raise any issues to local management.

Red flags to watch for in Australian smart hands providers

When evaluating smart hands vendors, watch out for these red flags.

- **No local presence:** "national coverage" that relies on fly-in technicians means longer delays and higher costs. Make sure your smart hands vendor has boots on the ground in your city or state.

- **Offshore help desk:** if ticketing and coordination are handled overseas, expect slower responses and time zone confusion.

- **Vague, commitment-free SLAs:** "best effort" isn't a commitment. It's an excuse for mediocrity that becomes a liability when push comes to shove.

- **No data centre access:** vendors without pre-approved authorisations can't act quickly when incidents occur.

- **No Australian insurance:** operating without public liability or professional indemnity insurance leaves you exposed.

- **No ABN or ACN:** This one's self-explanatory.

- **Hidden travel fees:** some "metro" rates include a much smaller definition of metro, that often seem to end a few blocks away from your site. Always confirm what's included in a vendor's onsite travel costs.

- **Very low pricing:** as the saying goes, "pay cheap, buy twice". If costs are far below market rate, something's being cut — usually corners.

- **No local references:** established providers should be able to point to Australian clients.

- **Limited holiday coverage:** real 24/7 support doesn't pause for long weekends or public holidays.

Essential questions to ask Australian smart hands providers

Choosing a smart hands company means verifying that their promises will hold up under pressure. These questions will help you cut through the sales pitch and uncover how each smart hands service truly operates.

Local operations

- Where are your technicians physically based in my city?

- What's your typical response time for my specific data centre?

- Do you already have authorised access at facilities like NextDC, Equinix, or CDC?

Quality & compliance

- How do you ensure technicians follow procedures consistently? (Don't forget this one. According to the Uptime *Institute's Annual Outage Analysis*, 58% of outages are linked to procedural lapses.)

- Do all technicians hold current Australian police checks?

- Are you compliant with the Australian Privacy Principles for data handling?

Commercial

- Is all pricing quoted in AUD and inclusive of GST?

- Are there any additional travel charges within metro areas?

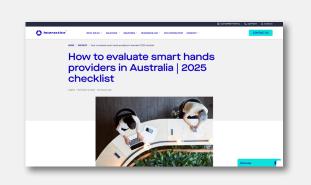- Can you provide Australian client references I can speak with?

Interactive®

For a more detailed guide, check out our comprehensive article:

How to evaluate smart hands providers in Australia | 2025 checklist

https://www.interactive.com.au/insights/how-to-evaluate-smart-hands-providers-in-australia-2025-checklist/

Ready to say goodbye to IT downtime?

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Or visit: www.interactive.com.au/services/data-centres/operations/tech-hands/

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