

Submission from: Lizz Higgins

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Interest: my experience as an experienced procurement professional seeking roles in SA Government procurement agencies

I would suggest you explore employment approaches to:

- both permanent and temporary staffing,
- attitudes and approaches to risk,
- outcomes of current approaches,
- level of employment of outsider staff,
- outcomes of placements under current practice.

If there are issues in SA procurement, these may well relate to an extreme risk aversion that has rendered SA Government Procurement a closed shop employment environment.

The level of risk aversion rather than risk management may also be feeding performance issues in other areas of operation, although I can't directly comment because I have never seen the inside of a SA Government procurement environment.

My experience:

A year ago, with 5 years experience in the most highly accredited government procurement agency in NSW, one temping agency refused even to put my CV forward for a known available position that I matched. The only gap was a lack of direct experience with the specific purchasing environment (I had worked in a different area of government in NSW).

In a workforce the size of SA, and with very little interstate movement, I concluded that they only wanted people that they already knew, since those would be the only people who had the experience they were seeking.

The agency in question appeared in search engines as the most prolific poster of temporary SA Government opportunities, and I chased them several times making clear that I was interested in all levels of work including general administrative. They did not once contact me so I gave up.

I also put my CV forward for a number of other permanent positions in SA Government procurement.

- From that I got two interviews.
- One seemed a reasonably likely competitive call by the agency.
- The other, at a lower grade than I had worked in NSW, involved feedback that from my point of view bordered on ridiculous.

I concluded that there was no real opportunity for entry to SA Government procurement. The sense of a closed shop also made me wary since it often comes with attitudes toxic to change, improvement and outsider perspectives.

I can no longer be bothered pursuing SA Government procurement employment, but recruitment practices, and the broader area of risk tolerance and management may be areas for fruitful exploration.

My intent is only to provide sufficient insight to support planning for discussions with agencies, but you are welcome to contact me if anything needs to be clarified.

Yours sincerely,

Lizz Higgins
