

Exposing corruption risks in contract management

Thursday, 13 November 2025

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has commenced an examination into corruption risks in public sector contract management.

ICAC wants to hear the views and experiences of those involved in public sector contracts – both the public officers who manage and administer contracts, and the suppliers (contractors and subcontractors) providing public goods or services.

These parties are encouraged to [complete the Contract Management Survey](#) and/or send a public submission to prevention@icac.sa.gov.au.

[Research published last year](#) on the risks of corruption in public procurement uncovered several areas of concern, including:

- A quarter of suppliers surveyed believed that corruption is a moderate or major problem in the South Australian public sector.
A third of suppliers surveyed stated they had decided not to bid or quote for a contract due to concerns about corruption or impropriety in public sector procurement.
- A lack of knowledge as it relates to corruption risks.
Almost half of all procurement officers who responded to ICAC's survey stated that their knowledge of corruption risks was average or below average. Over a third had either not received training in procurement corruption risks, or were unsure.
Additionally, there was poor understanding amongst contractors and subcontractors of their status as public officers, and the associated obligation to report all instances of suspected corruption.

Findings were summarised in the 2024 *Buying Trust: Corruption Risks in Public Sector Procurement* report, which highlights how poor planning in the procurement stages of a project can increase opportunities for corrupt conduct.

However, even well-planned projects are susceptible to poor contract management. ICAC's new research into contract management aims to build upon previous findings and provide public sector agencies with a complete picture of corruption risks throughout the procurement lifecycle.

A final report, including any recommendations for improvement, will be presented to SA Parliament in 2026.

Commissioner Emma Townsend said corruption in contract management can have a serious detrimental effect on public services, as well as undermining trust in public administration.

"Contract management requires public officers to exercise discretion in assessing whether a supplier is meeting its contractual obligations, often with limited oversight," Commissioner Townsend said.

"Corrupt contract management may result in delivery of public services being delayed or not delivered at all.

"It can include instances where public funds are siphoned from projects for the personal benefit of contract managers or suppliers.

"Our research aims to identify contract management 'red flags' and, in doing so, help the state's public sector agencies implement sensible corruption safeguards."

To learn more and complete the survey, visit the [ICAC website](#). The survey closes Thursday, 18 December 2025.

Public submissions are welcome via prevention@icac.sa.gov.au until 23 January 2026.

For media enquiries, contact media@icac.sa.gov.au or 0428 389 493.