



Tasmanian
Audit Office

Senior Executive Office and senior State Service appointments

Report of the Auditor-General

No. 3 of 2017-18

Today's presentation

- Context to the audit
- Objective, approach and scope of the audit
- Detailed findings by criteria
- Recommendations
- Conclusion
- Comments received

Context

- Follow on from *Report of the Auditor-General No.1 of 2014-15 Recruitment practices in the State Service*
- Report made recommendations relating to:
 - consistency in recruitment and selection processes
 - diversity of selection panels
 - management of conflicts of interest

Objective

To assess the practices followed in recruiting people to fill senior executive offices and employees in General Stream Bands 9 and 10 and Professional Stream Band 6 positions, including:

- creation, determination and classification of offices and positions
- recruitment and selection process
- appointment and determination of employment conditions
- consecutive appointments, mobility and variation of duties
- costs to fill vacant positions

SES offices

- Are accountable for the achievement of agency and government goals reflected in their statement of duties, instrument of appointment and performance review documentation
- Provide frank, impartial and timely policy advice
- Undertake high level responsibilities in and across agencies to achieve government objectives

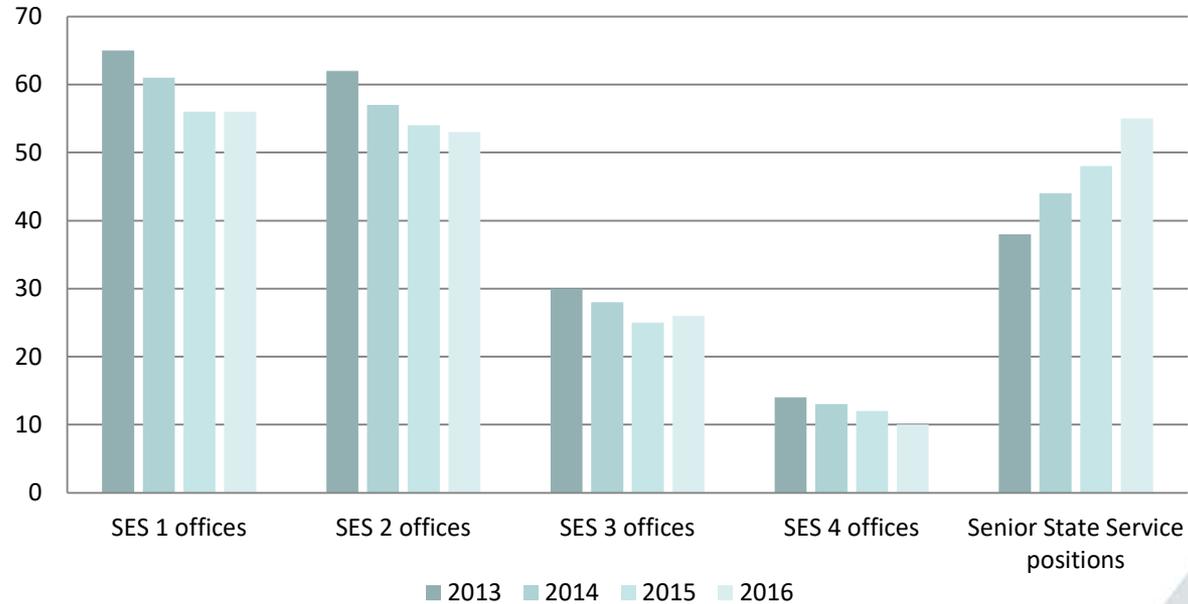
Senior State Service positions

- Refer to General Stream Band 9/10 and Professional Stream Band 6
- Provide specialist knowledge, skills and/or experiences
- Have multi-functional or multi-disciplinary responsibilities
- Contribute to government policy and strategic priorities
- Report to a member of the agency's senior executive group

Approach

- Obtained relevant policies and procedures
- Held discussions with staff responsible for recruitment and selection
- Analysed information supporting selected appointments in 2015–16
- Tested appointments in scope to determine whether:
 - requirements of the governance framework were met
 - good practice was followed

SES offices and senior State Service positions 2012-13 to 2015-16



Scope

- Sample:
 - 4 SES offices and 4 General Stream Band 9 positions
 - Represents 22% of relevant appointments in 2015–16
- In the following agencies:
 - Department of Health and Human Services
 - Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management
 - Department of Premier and Cabinet
 - Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

1 - Management of positions

Compliance (ED 17)

- An agency:
 - did not run an EOI process for assigning SES office duties to a State Service employee for a period greater than 6 months
 - assigned SES duties to an State Service employee for a period greater than 12 months
 - did not publish a notice of termination in the Gazette or consult with SSMO

1 - Management of positions

Good practice

- Agencies did not document the advantages or disadvantages of the options for vacancy management
- Records of the reassessment of duties performed by SES offices on vacancy were not adequate
- While SSMO approved the creation and classification of senior State Service positions, we were of the opinion that documentation did not:
 - demonstrate consideration of the suitability of surplus employees
 - clearly support the classification level for two positions

2 – Recruitment and selection

Compliance (the Act, ED 2, ED 17 and ED 18)

- Two agencies did not advertise senior State Service positions in the Gazette
- Documentation for establishing a suitable selection panel was not adequate
- Conflicts of interest were not reported in relation to 3 positions
- Shortlisting decisions were not documented
- Two agencies provided limited documentation of the comparison of candidates at the interview stage

2 – Recruitment and selection

Good practice

- Agencies had not documented a recruitment strategy that included participation by all diversity groups
- Some referee reports were not obtained, documented or provided to the entire selection panel for consideration

3 – Appointment

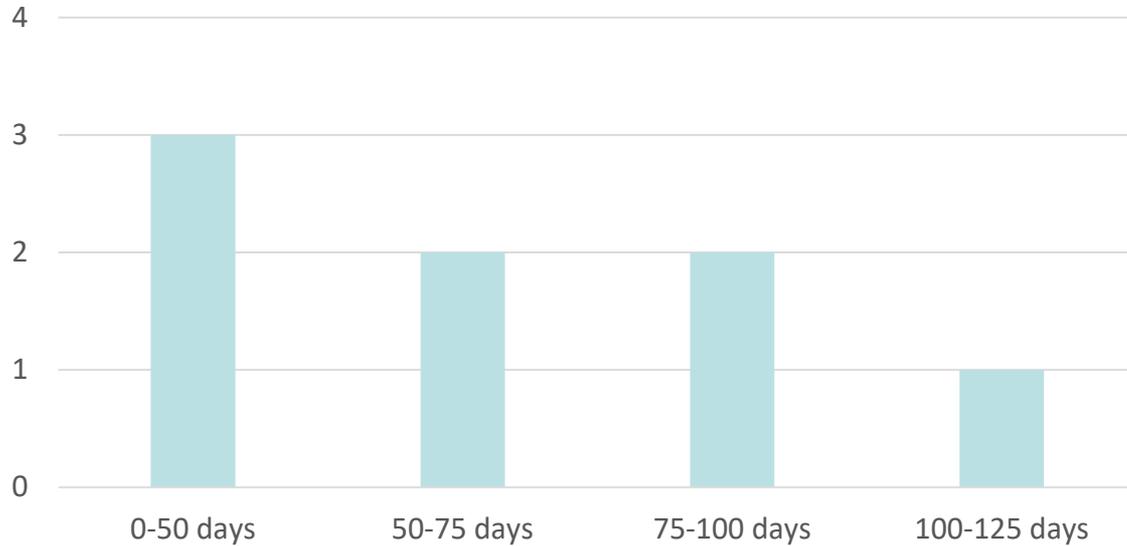
Compliance (the Act, ED1, ED 2, ED 7, ED 17)

- All appointments were finalised in an appropriate manner
- 4 appointments reviewed had not been placed in the Gazette

Good practice

- Agencies had not conducted pre-employment checks

4 – Time taken to fill vacancies



4 – Cost of filling vacancies

Agencies:

- had not prepared budgets for recruitment and selection processes
- had no means of capturing the actual cost of recruitment and selection activities
- estimated the cost of recruitment was between \$1 300 to \$10 600

Recommendations

Eight recommendations were made relating to:

- Reviewing workforce management approach
- Evaluating Statements of Duties upon vacancy
- Developing model templates for creation, determination and classification of SES offices and senior State Service positions
- Documenting skills and experience of selection panel members

Recommendations

Eight recommendations were made relating to:

- Declaring and managing conflicts of interest
- Documenting candidates' performance throughout the recruitment process
- Conducting pre-employment checks
- Adopting a project management approach to recruitment

Conclusion

- Practices followed generally complied with the mandatory requirements
- However:
 - Conflicts of interest were not reported for 3 of the 8 positions reviewed
 - Documentation supporting shortlisting, interviews, referee checks and selection decisions was, in some cases, not adequate

Comments received

SSMO and agencies in scope:

- Noted findings and agreed to recommendations.
- Advised significant changes in practices have been implemented since 2015-16.
- Advised recommendations have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

Questions?