

ProcureNet closes shop

At the end of August, specialist procurement and supply chain recruiter, ProcureNet, will cease trading.

In a newsletter issued to his clients, ProcureNet founder Graham Duncan says it is with regret but also satisfaction that he announces they will cease operating at the close of business on Friday, 30 August 2013.

Started in 1997, the company was Asia Pacific's first specialist recruiting agency for procurement and supply chain vacancies.

The company had a wealth of experience in the industry, with Duncan himself starting his career back in 1968 in as a Commercial Trainee in BHP's purchasing department.

"I learned to make sound ethical buying decisions – not to just be a consumer who is sold things by sales representatives," Duncan says.

Over the next 26 years, Duncan worked his way up into supply management roles before starting his own contract consultancy business.

"My main motivation was to help clients and colleagues improve their supply and contract administration processes. I soon had to contract out other procurement professionals to meet growing client demand."

Duncan worked hard in his new company, achieving a degree of respect and status within the supply fraternity. He wasn't chasing wealth but a healthy work/life balance, which is why he decided to franchise the business.

However, in recent years, Duncan experienced increasing pressure from government regulations.

"Governments have never made it easy for small business. The introduction of GST, payroll tax, fringe benefit tax, superannuation, work cover and insurance have all made compliance more difficult, not simpler," Duncan says.

He hoped for change but it never came.

The global financial crisis hit that hit the world in 2008 took another toll on business, making people less inclined to take a risk. ProcureNet survived by maintaining as simple an approach as possible, and by giving clients and candidates alike the best customer service and value.

But with the advent of technological changes came the need for social media in business and recruitment, something Duncan found difficult to keep up with. He did try to find younger business partners and consultants but when his search came up dry he made the decision to close the business for good.

“I had achieved all I could with the business,” Duncan says, adding that in retirement he hopes to find artistic motivation and fulfilment in his studio.

In the meantime, Duncan remains conservatively optimistic about the future of the industry.

“I am confident the market and economy will start growing again soon, but it will be hard going. We need to evolve from tribal politics and start serving the electorate by working together to find simple solutions that will motivate workers and entrepreneurs to have a go.”