



MEDIA RELEASE

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Commission urges public sector agencies to take greater responsibility for their own corruption investigations

The Corruption and Crime Commission has tabled *Review of an inadequate investigation by the Department of Communities into allegations of bribery* in State Parliament today, which underlines the need for heads of all public sector agencies to have a robust integrity function in place.

The report details the Department's inadequate response to information from a member of the public that one or more of its employees may have been accepting bribes from potential tenants in exchange for being allocated priority or expedited public housing.

The Department of Communities' investigation was protracted. Their enquiries commenced in October 2017, however scant investigative avenues were explored, before the Department reached a possibly premature conclusion in July 2019 that serious misconduct had not occurred.

The Corruption and Crime Commission monitored and reviewed the Department's investigation; however, the Commission's oversight of the matter was inhibited by numerous staff changes within the Department and poor communication with the Commission.

Michelle Andrews, Director General of the Department of Communities acknowledged the issues, and put new arrangements in place to address the Department's serious misconduct risks before the results of the Commission's review were known.

The Department of Communities has recently introduced a new Governance, Capability and Reform Division and a new Integrity and Standards Unit to increase its capacity to manage serious misconduct.

The Commission's report has a critical lesson for all WA public sector agencies – that they have responsibility for managing and properly addressing serious misconduct risks as they arise, even when the Commission has oversight.

COVID-19 and managing corruption risk

The Corruption and Crime Commission cautions WA public sector agencies who are urgently diverting resources to the COVID-19 response and making plans for employees to work

remotely, that there is a risk that checks and balances built into their usual workplace practices may be compromised or undone.

The Commission encourages all Directors General, managers and supervisors to ensure good systems, processes, and controls are not over-looked whilst government is working in different ways.

All public sector agencies must continue to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity while also adapting and finding creative solutions to deliver government services in the current environment.

The Commission remains open for business during the COVID-19 pandemic, even though it may not be business as usual.

The Commission still has an essential role to play in improving the integrity of the Western Australian public sector, and assisting public sector agencies to minimise and manage serious misconduct.

Anyone can continue to make serious misconduct or corruption allegations to the Commission by visiting our website at www.ccc.wa.gov.au.

Read the report

[*Review of an inadequate investigation by the Department of Communities into allegations of bribery*](#)

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Media contacts

Marie Mills: 0418 918 202 or mariem@millswilson.com.au

Louisa Mitchell: 0434 308 208 or louisam@millswilson.com.au