



MEDIA STATEMENT

Report on English language test bribery

18.9.12

Sharing user names and passwords contributed to the falsification of scores in an English language test formerly conducted by Curtin University according to a Corruption and Crime Commission report tabled in Parliament today.

As a result of a Commission investigation, 12 people including a former employee of the unit at Curtin that conducted the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), have received sentences for 73 counts of bribery ranging from two years jail to suspended jail terms and fines.

Public hearings into the case held in March last year heard that the former Curtin employee, Mr Kok Keith Low, took bribes to alter test scores which are used as part of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's application process for visas or permanent residency.

The report said a number of factors allowed Mr Low to alter the scores of those doing the IELTS tests including:

- Curtin staff involved in the testing shared usernames and passwords to access the Australia-wide IELTS database if it crashed. This allowed Mr Low to logon using the name of other staff.
- The IELTS database could only detect the last score entered and could not track changes made to test scores.
- Periodical audits of the test forms used in the tests were not conducted.

The Commission has been advised that the IELTS database has been upgraded.

The report concluded that the investigation showed the importance of having secure computer user names and passwords and the need for management to ensure compliance with policies and procedures.

Curtin University no longer conducts IELTS tests. The University, IELTS Australia and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship fully cooperated with the Commission throughout its investigation.

The report is available at
<http://www.ccc.wa.gov.au/Publications/Reports/Pages/PublishedReports2012.aspx>

Media Contact: Owen Cole 9215 4802, 0439 910 161