

MEDIA RELEASE

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CCC finds corrupt conduct by ex-Shire of East Pilbara senior officer

The Corruption and Crime Commission has formed an opinion of serious misconduct by a Shire of East Pilbara employee, in a report tabled in Parliament today.

The report outlines the conduct of Bevan Klein, former Manager Operations of the Shire of East Pilbara (SOEP), while engaging contractors to deliver capital works projects for the Shire.

The investigation found Mr Klein failed to disclose pre-existing relationships with directors of Dick Tracey Contracting Australia Pty Ltd (Dick Tracey), VicFlow Pty Ltd and VicFlow Civil Pty Ltd (VicFlow Companies), and used his position at SOEP to favour the companies in exchange for gifts and other benefits.

The Commission found Mr Klein deceived SOEP and deliberately exploited weaknesses in its procurement processes. This included routinely issuing purchase orders and authorising payment of invoices to Dick Tracey and VicFlow Companies in a manner which bypassed standard tender and quotation requirements, and issuing 'ad hoc' purchase orders without means to properly assess whether the contracted work was necessary, had been satisfactorily completed and represented value for money. On occasions, he authorised payment of invoices even though the contracted work had not been undertaken or completed. Mr Klein also solicited numerous gifts and other benefits from the VicFlow Companies as a reward for securing the contract work, with a pattern of issuing purchase orders and approving invoices at inflated prices to offset the cost of providing the gifts.

While acknowledging the Shire of East Pilbara has since undertaken improvements to its procurement processes, the report also recommends the SOEP engages its internal auditor or other consultant to undertake a complete review of its procedures. The recommended review should include a range of focus areas including the separation of functions between issuing purchase orders and payment of invoices; quote and tender policy compliance; monitoring use of delegated authorities; and appropriate documentation and reporting processes.

The Commission and the Western Australia Police Force (WA Police) conducted a cooperative investigation. WA Police are currently determining whether sufficient evidence exists to commence criminal proceedings against any of the parties involved.

Commissioner Michael Corboy SC said procurement fraud was a key concern within the public sector.

"Local governments face particular vulnerabilities in terms of managing procurement and other serious misconduct risks. This report highlights the need for all government agencies and authorities to not only ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place, but that they are rigorously applied with effective monitoring, governance and reporting systems, in order to prevent those vulnerabilities being exploited," he said.

The 'Report on Corrupt Procurement Practices of a Senior Officer at the Shire of East Pilbara' is available [here](#).

NOTE: An opinion that serious misconduct has occurred does not mean, and should not be understood to mean, that any person named in the Commission's report has committed a criminal or disciplinary offence.

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