

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **CCC report exposes corrupt licensing behaviour jeopardising public safety on WA roads**

The Corruption and Crime Commission's (CCC) latest report, *Report on Corruption in Respect of Truck Driving Licence Applications*, has uncovered corrupt behaviour at a former Neerabup truck driving school which resulted in hundreds of drivers being licensed without having their competence adequately assessed.

The report follows a co-operative investigation by the CCC and Department of Transport (DoT) into the licensing activity at Mines West Driving School (Mines West), a business owned by Mr Previn Narayanan who were contracted by DoT in July 2015 to conduct Practical Driving Assessments (PDAs) for classes of heavy vehicles.

Mr Narayanan was the only approved assessor under the agreement with DoT.

The investigation revealed that Mines West identified a niche in the WA licencing market, and targeted a specific ethnic group, Indian immigrants - particularly those from the Punjab, and employed Punjabi-speaking staff to attract clients.

The report details corrupt behaviour by Mr Narayanan, including:

- not conducting assessments;
- making false entries into the DoT Licence Assessment Provider System (LAPS);
- not carrying out assessments on designated routes;
- training and assessing two students, in one truck at the same time;
- not having students complete a required theory test prior to conducting the PDA; and
- counselling interstate applicants on how to appear to be a WA resident to obtain a WA learner's permit and heavy vehicle licence from DoT, and converting it to an interstate licence.

The CCC formed an opinion of serious misconduct in relation to Mr Narayanan's behaviour, in that he corruptly failed to conduct assessments - a critical function of his employment.

Corruption and Crime Commissioner John McKechnie QC said, "Driving a vehicle of any sort on a public road is a serious responsibility. A licence is an assessment of competence. When students are not properly assessed, there is an obvious danger that incompetent drivers are on the road. When such a driver is in charge of a heavy rigid or multiple combination vehicle, the danger is magnified."

As part of the investigation, DoT conducted a review of licences obtained by people who participated in a PDA at Mines West, 678 licence holders had their licences suspended in part or

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in full. New driving assessments were conducted for 370 of the suspended licence holders, and disturbingly 201 applicants (54 per cent) failed their reassessment. The review is ongoing.

This is the CCC's third report relating to the activities of vehicle or driver's licence assessors in the past two years. The report serves another worrying reminder for the WA public sector about the misconduct risks in the licence and regulation industry.

The CCC recommends that the Minister for Transport considers an amendment to the *Road Traffic (Authorisation to Drive) Regulation 2014* to provide:

- A licence issued under a foreign law becomes invalid three months after the holder first arrives in Western Australia; and
- A PDA failure automatically cancels a foreign or interstate licence.

ENDS

#### **Media contacts**

Marie Mills: (08) 9421 3600 or 0418 918202

Louisa Mitchell (08) 421 3600 or 0434 308 208

#### **Related reports**

- [Report on the Activities of Certain Vehicle Examiners Contracted by the Department of Transport \(24 January 2017\)](#)
- [A Report on Corruption in Respect of Driver Licence Applications \(16 December 2016\)](#)
- [Report on the Investigation of Alleged Public Sector Misconduct by Employees of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure in relation to the Inspection, Licensing and Registration of Motor Vehicles \(16 September 2010\)](#)