

MEDIA RELEASE

21 May 2019

Entanglements led to corruption

The Corruption and Crime Commission today tabled a report that underlines the need for public servants to ensure personal matters do not compromise their commitment to the best interests of the Western Australian community, and the need to make an early declaration of potential conflicts of interest.

The Commission's report '*Serious misconduct in procurement of environmental services*' details how a public servant, Ms Sarah Jane Bellamy, allowed her personal relationship and personal priorities to lead her into serious misconduct – damaging her own reputation and that of the consultancy she corruptly favoured.

Ms Bellamy developed and implemented the innovative Abandoned Mines Program and was involved in the procurement of services from consultants. She told the Commission she loved the program and that it was the best thing she'd ever done.

Ms Bellamy was responsible for authorising payments to consultants when she started a romantic relationship with the owner of Soil Water Group and became involved with that business while still employed as a public servant. She arranged for Soil Water Group to provide services and authorised payments for work that had not been carried out.

She did not declare either conflict to the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety and, when questioned, by the Department gave misleading information and concealed her personal relationship.

Ms Bellamy left the Department in 2017, but not before she'd taken confidential documents from the Department, and emailed ministerial correspondence and briefing note to the Soil Water Group.

At one stage, as Ms Bellamy prepared for her departure, she received a text message saying 'Hi Love, how's the afternoon going and the rape and pillage of data for your own personal benefit?' – concluding with a love heart emoji.

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Her response was short but clear, 'I am copying contacts as we speak.'

The Commission formed an opinion that Ms Bellamy had acted corruptly and engaged in serious misconduct on at least three occasions when she procured or attempted to procure the payment of invoices to Soil Water Group totalling more than \$24,000 and disclosed confidential information.

Her behaviour shows the need for ongoing vigilance and oversight of procurement, even when relatively low amounts are involved. It also shows the need for an early disclosure of potential conflicts of interest. Had there been an early disclosure, the problem may not have escalated.

The Commission noted that the prompt advice of this matter from notifying authorities, the Public Sector Commission and the Department, was of great assistance.

Related resources

- [*Serious misconduct in procurement of environmental services*](#)

ENDS

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