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CCC | Corruption and Crime Commission

MEDIA RELEASE

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Report into the Misuse of a WA Police Information System

The Corruption and Crime Commission has tabled a report following its investigation into a senior WA Police officer found to have inappropriately accessed information on a police computer system. The Commission formed an opinion of serious misconduct in relation to the officer.

The report outlines the actions of Officer A in accessing the WA Police Information Management System (IMS) for personal reasons. At the time, Officer A was attached to the Internal Affairs Unit (IAU), the area responsible for continuously improving the integrity of the WA Police Force. The officer retired during the investigation after over 35 years' service in WA Police.

IMS is a restricted access computer system (RACS). It holds a vast amount of personal information, which is confidential and should only be accessed for operational purposes – for Police business.

After concerns were raised by another Police officer, IAU commenced an investigation into the unauthorised access. The investigation found Officer A's actions were 'likely well intentioned, possibly borne out of frustration or a misplaced attempt to assist in a legitimate police intervention …'

The Commission, not satisfied with the WA Police investigation, commenced its own investigation. The Commission identified additional IMS accesses by the officer.

WA Police also re-allocated their investigation from IAU to Major Crime and identified yet further instances of access to IMS by Officer A.

The Commission concluded that Officer A's access of IMS was unauthorised. It was contrary to WA Police policy and a breach of the code of conduct. Officer A knew his access was unauthorised. Further, the Commission's investigation concluded he disclosed some of the information to people outside of WA Police.

This report demonstrates how easily unauthorised access of restricted information can occur. The temptation for police officers to access WA Police RACS for personal reasons is obvious and significant. The need for WA Police to deter, educate and properly investigate breaches is crucial to maintaining public confidence.

In response to the report, WA Police acknowledged the seriousness of Officer A's conduct and the need to further educate officers on the policy for RACS access and use. WA Police committed to reviewing its RACS policy and the effectiveness of pro-active auditing.

An opinion of serious misconduct is not a finding of serious misconduct and is not to be taken as a finding that a person has engaged in serious misconduct. Further, the Commission has not made a finding about whether Officer A committed a criminal offence by reason of the matters considered in this report.

Full details are available in the report.

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