

MEDIA RELEASE

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CCC investigation highlights misconduct risks in WA Police Force

The Corruption and Crime Commission has tabled a report in Parliament which details two misconduct risks in the WA Police Force, illustrated by the poor judgement and misconduct of a senior police officer.

The *Report on serious misconduct by a senior police officer* is the result of a Commission investigation undertaken in cooperation with WA Police Force (WAPF). The Commission formed two opinions of serious misconduct relating to the repeated disclosure of confidential information to media reporters, and the repeated misuse of a Police vehicle.

Detective Senior Sergeant Cameron Blaine worked on a number of high-profile cases. In 2021, he formed a relationship with a young reporter and repeatedly disclosed confidential information to her and other reporters. The Commission investigation found that DSS Blaine released confidential information in relation to his and other WAPF investigations, without any rational basis for doing so.

In the Commission's opinion, DSS Blaine's actions in releasing confidential information involved the misuse of information he acquired as a police officer as it was for his own benefit in maintaining a relationship and the benefit of the journalist.

The report highlights the symbiotic relationship between Police and the media – and the importance of respecting the limits when publication of some information might hinder or jeopardise an investigation, affect a fair trial of an accused person, disrespect a person's privacy or expose investigative methods that should be kept secret.

The Commission also uncovered substantial deviations from the WAPF vehicle policy. This is a significant misconduct risk because officers may be 'bending the rules' in order to provide a rapid response to suspected crime. Further, the WAPF Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) liability may be at risk.

The Commission investigation identified 62 instances of DSS Blaine's breach of the WAPF vehicle policy, related to the use of the vehicle for personal reasons. On some occasions, DSS Blaine recorded the purpose for taking the vehicle as police business. In the Commission's opinion, DSS Blaine's misuse of the motor vehicle is a breach of the trust placed in him as a senior police officer.

Commissioner John McKechnie KC said "The Commission's report highlights two misconduct risks in the WA Police Force illustrated by the conduct of DSS Blaine. WA Police officers are in positions of trust. They have access to information which should remain confidential. They have access to police assets to do their work effectively and efficiently. When that trust is abused, public confidence is lessened."

The Commission made two recommendations to WA Police and considers WA Police Force has responded appropriately to both.

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