

## MEDIA RELEASE

28 June 2024

### Police mismanaged investigations into girl's arrest

The Corruption and Crime Commission holds ongoing concerns about the quality and outcomes of WA Police internal investigations into the arrest of a 14-year-old Aboriginal girl in 2022.

The girl had been walking home late from a friend's house, pushing her electric scooter because it had run out of battery. Not far from her house, the officers in an unmarked vehicle saw her alone and stopped her.

In its latest report, tabled today in Parliament, the Commission details how WA Police initially found that its officers did not have sufficient grounds to request the girl's personal details.

But a second internal investigation reversed this, concluding that the officers had been entitled to reasonably suspect she may have been engaging in criminal activity, based on youth crime trends in the local areas.

After notifying the Commission of this outcome, the Commission identified concerns over the officers' arrest powers, prompting WA Police to conduct a third investigation.

While this eventually culminated in the officers being reprimanded for departing from various procedures, including handcuffing the girl for too long, the third investigation also concluded that the arrest had been lawful and the force used was reasonable.

After conducting a comprehensive review of all the evidence, including watching the limited Body Worn Camera footage of the girl being arrested and handcuffed, the Commission formed a different view.

In the Commission's opinion, the arrest and subsequent force used were unlawful, unreasonable, oppressive and unjust.

The mere fact of a juvenile walking late at night with a backpack does not objectively provide a reasonable basis for suspecting that they had committed, or would commit, an offence.

In the Commission's view, WA Police's management of this matter was inadequate. Its actions were incomplete, protracted and relied upon Commission intervention to identify and address key issues, including not informing the girl's parent of the outcome of their complaint.

The Commission remains concerned with the conclusions reached by WA Police. However, the Commission does not have the power to substitute its own view for that of WA Police, which is ultimately responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to misconduct risks within its ranks.

**ENDS**

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#### Contact the Corruption and Crime Commission



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