



# MEDIA STATEMENT

## ACLEI OPERATION ZEUS

10 August 2017

Recent media attention has noted the involvement of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) in the investigation of an Australian Border Force Officer, who was arrested in a NSW Joint Organised Crime Taskforce operation on 8 August 2017.

This media statement is made in the public interest, in accordance with section 209 of the *Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006*. No other media comment will be made by ACLEI at this time.

- The Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity—[www.aclei.gov.au](http://www.aclei.gov.au)—is an Australian Government integrity agency that detects and investigates issues in high-corruption risk operating environments, such as at the border. To conduct its work, ACLEI has law enforcement powers, as well as statutory information-gathering powers similar to a Royal Commission.
- In OPERATION ZEUS—together with the Australian Federal Police and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)—ACLEI has been investigating allegations concerning corruption-enabled border crime.
- As part of a broader criminal investigation (AFP OPERATION ASTATINE), an Australian Border Force officer has since been charged with corruption-related offences. The AFP will allege in court that the Border Force officer assisted an organised crime syndicate to avoid detection by providing sensitive law enforcement information. A person who had at one point been employed by the (now former) Australian Customs and Border Protection Service has also been arrested for allegedly participating in similar criminal activity.
- ACLEI played a significant role in uncovering evidence that has enabled charges to be laid in Operation Astatine. However, as this issue is before the courts—and because the Integrity Commissioner has not reached conclusions about the conduct of any person—it is not appropriate for ACLEI to comment further.
- ABF officers will no doubt be disappointed upon learning of corruption-related charges being laid against a fellow officer. However—whether or not the allegations are found to be substantiated—such instances should serve to underscore for them:
  - Border Force officers work in an operating environment in which organised criminal groups are interested and highly active
  - The information that officials have access to is a valuable commodity which needs to be protected from misuse, and
  - Officers must be vigilant and prepared to report their suspicions.
- Anyone can report suspicious behaviour in-confidence to ACLEI, DIBP (Integrity & Professional Standards Branch) or through CrimeStoppers.