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Operation Pallinup: Investigation Report released by the Integrity Commissioner

Corruption risks highlighted as part of investigation into the importation of illegal tobacco at Sydney Airport

The Integrity Commissioner and head of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) Jaala Hinchcliffe has published her report on Operation Pallinup.

Operation Pallinup was a corruption investigation into the potential involvement of an unknown law enforcement officer in the importation of illegal tobacco.

In November 2019 the Department of Home Affairs notified ACLEI of an allegation of an unknown law enforcement officer at Sydney Airport that was paid \$100,000 to “get the container through Customs, without being detected”.

The ACLEI investigation focused on identifying the unknown officer. ACLEI investigators interrogated the Integrated Cargo System (ICS) – the system maintained by the ABF to track the movement of goods across Australia’s border – to identify any evidence of unusual interest from Australian Border Force (ABF) or Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) officers in containers associated with businesses known for involvement in illicit tobacco.

The investigation found no evidence linking ABF or DAWE staff with the containers or businesses in question. Ms Hinchcliffe concluded the ‘unknown officer’ was most likely a civilian with access to the ICS, such as a customs broker.

As no person within ACLEI’s jurisdiction was identified, Ms Hinchcliffe made no findings of corruption.

“ACLEI takes all referrals seriously regardless of the challenges”, Ms Hinchcliffe said.

“Operation Pallinup highlights potential risks to the integrity of the Australian border posed by corruption in the supply chain and cargo logistics environment.”

Ms Hinchcliffe’s report is available on the ACLEI website: aclei.gov.au.

About the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI)

ACLEI is committed to preventing and investigating corruption issues relating to Commonwealth law enforcement agencies. ACLEI supports the Integrity Commissioner to provide independent assurance to government about the integrity of prescribed law enforcement agencies and their staff members. The office of the [Integrity Commissioner](#) and ACLEI are established by the [Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006](#). For more information, visit ACLEI’s website: aclei.gov.au

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