



CASE STUDY

ALLEGATION A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER RELEASED CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

An ACLEI operation was established in February 2016 to investigate allegations that an unknown law enforcement officer disclosed classified information in circumstances where it became known to associates of an outlaw motorcycle gang (OMCG).

The officer was later identified working at an Australian international airport. It was established that this officer's daughter was connected via social media to women with OMCG associations. The daughter was peripherally known to these women as they had attended a secondary school in proximity to her own and she socialised with some of the same people. The daughter admired these women and the glamorous life they portrayed online.

No evidence of contemporary physical contact between the daughter and the women was identified. ACLEI investigators assessed that it was possible that the daughter of the officer may have inadvertently shared details about her parent's employment amongst the group. It was also conceivable this situation was already widely known. This may have subsequently resulted in:

- Discussion within friendship groups of OMCG associated members about the officer's position as a frontline employee at an international airport.
- The circulation in these friendship groups of rumours about law enforcement targeting of specific OMCG members and their associates as they travelled into and out of Australia.
- An OMCG associated person making statements at the border to the effect that they moved in the same social circles as the daughter of the identified officer.

The officer participated in a record of interview, under criminal caution, with ACLEI investigators. They acknowledged that their daughter was obviously aware of their employment with a law enforcement agency and would have gained a general understanding of their day to day functions and duties at the airport.

The officer told ACLEI investigators they had provided general warnings to their daughter about the dangers of socialising with people engaged in or connected with criminal activity, including OMCGs. These warnings were provided based on the assumption that these people could attract the attention of law enforcement.

The ACLEI investigation exonerated the officer, finding no evidence of unauthorised disclosure or misconduct of any kind. Investigations suggested that an amalgamation of circumstances involving the widespread knowledge of the officer's employment, online rumours and innuendo, and certain law enforcement activity at the border had manifested itself into a series of communications, amongst a tightknit group of OMCG associated

friends, which erroneously implied corrupt conduct on the part of the officer, and that was not supported by evidence.

Of concern to ACLEI investigators was the genuine risk of compromise of the daughter arising from peer group, social or other pressures. There was also a risk that this could lead to OMCG members or associates coercing the law enforcement officer into corrupt conduct through direct or implied threats of harm to the daughter.

This case study highlights the importance for law enforcement employees to consider:

- The implications of the information or opinions they share with family members or friends, and who this information is being shared with beyond your circle of association.
- The level of access to information or decision-making you hold, and the value of that information or access to criminal entities.

Supervisors and managers may wish to have a conversation with staff about:

- The risk of grooming or improper approaches by organised criminal entities, not just of law enforcement employees, but also their close family.
- Particular risks in your specific operating environments.
- The importance of integrity reporting, including declarable associations or adverse contact, online or real world, of themselves or family members.
- How integrity reporting can protect you and your colleagues. In this case, the officer who heard an OMCG associated person state they had a social connection to another law enforcement officer submitted an integrity report about the conversation. This protected them when the matter became a corruption investigation, but also assisted in exonerating their colleague.