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Operation Starburst: Investigation report released by the Integrity Commissioner

Former Home Affairs Visa Decision Maker engaged in corrupt conduct

The Integrity Commissioner and head of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI), Ms Jaala Hinchcliffe, has today published the investigation report on Operation Starburst.

Operation Starburst considered an allegation that a Home Affairs employee, Officer T, used their position as a Visa Decision Maker to assist their associate in obtaining two Australian visas (a 457-visa and a 187-visa). It was also alleged that Officer T made multiple unauthorised accesses to Home Affairs Systems during their employment, without a business need.

The investigation led the Acting Integrity Commissioner to make three corruption findings:

- a. two corruption findings in relation to Officer T, pursuant to s 6(1)(a) of the LEIC Act, (abuse of office) on the basis that they used their knowledge as a Visa Decision Maker to assist their associate in obtaining two Australian visas, and
- b. a corruption finding in relation to Officer T, pursuant to s 6(1)(c) of the LEIC Act (corruption of any other kind) on the basis that they improperly accessed Home Affairs official information to benefit their associate (and their family).

Officer T's conduct was prosecuted, and they plead guilty to two counts of abuse of public office contrary to s 142.2(1) of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) and ten counts of unauthorised access to Commonwealth data contrary to s 478.1(1) of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). Officer T was subsequently sentenced in the Perth District Court to:

- 18 months imprisonment in relation to the abuse of office offences; and
- 12 months imprisonment in relation to the unauthorised access to Commonwealth data offences.

The judge ordered the terms of imprisonment to run concurrently. Despite this, Officer T was immediately released, after agreeing to be of good behaviour for 18 months, and undertake to forfeit \$25,000.

The investigation report for Operation Starburst is available on the [ACLEI website](#).

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.