



Date Tuesday, 14 December 2021

Former Border Force officer sentenced following ACLEI investigation

Operation Fortescue:

This afternoon, a former Australian Border Force (ABF) officer was sentenced at the Parramatta District Court for a corruption-related offence.

The prosecution of Ms Suzan Gogebakan arose from a joint investigation by the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) and the Department of Home Affairs into whether ABF officers were defrauding the Commonwealth via the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS). The TRS is an Australian Government initiative by which departing overseas travellers may claim a tax refund for goods purchased in Australia.

Operation Fortescue confirmed four former ABF officers knowingly made and approved fraudulent claims in the course of their TRS processing duties to dishonestly benefit themselves and cause detriment to the Commonwealth.

Ms Gogebakan processed 18 fraudulent TRS claims worth \$72,126.73 between 1 December 2017 and 21 July 2018 at Sydney International Airport.

Ms Gogebakan pleaded guilty to obtaining a financial advantage by deception under the Criminal Code.

She was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment to be served by way of intensive corrections order.

Ms Gogebakan is the last of the four ABF officers to be sentenced following the completion of Operation Fortescue.

Integrity Commissioner Ms Jaala Hinchcliffe said ACLEI welcomes the court's decision, "Corruption like this can cause significant loss to the Commonwealth."

"This investigation highlights the mechanisms in place to detect, investigate and prosecute corrupt conduct and fraud within Australian Government law enforcement agencies."

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