



MEDIA RELEASE

OPERATION DREADNOUGHT: ACLEI investigation report released

A former ABF staff member disclosed information to assist a drug importation syndicate

Wednesday, 8 September 2021 (immediate release)

Integrity Commissioner and head of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI), Jaala Hinchcliffe, has today published her report on Operation Dreadnought. The investigation uncovered evidence that a former Australian Border Force (ABF) officer assisted a drug importation syndicate by providing sensitive operational information to an associate.

Operation Dreadnought was a joint investigation between ACLEI, the Department of Home Affairs, and the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

The referral stemmed from an AFP investigation called Operation Alate. That Operation was tasked with investigating a transnational crime syndicate involved in the importation of commercial quantities of Phenyl-2-Propanone (P2P), a methyl-amphetamine precursor into Australia.

Ms Hinchcliffe said, “Staff members of law enforcement agencies should never access or disclose information for personal reasons or to assist associates.”

As a result of the disclosure of information, the associate benefited by successfully importing a border controlled precursor into Australia, undetected by the ABF patrol vessels.

“The former ABF officer engaged in corrupt conduct, namely abuse of office. They used their position to obtain and disclose information to a drug importation syndicate, with the intention of assisting them to avoid detection by the ABF patrol vessels.”

The seriousness of the ABF officer’s conduct is compounded by the severe consequences resulting from providing the information. That is, the importation of a commercial quantity of P2P into Australia.

The AFP investigation, Operation Alate, resulted in the associate being charged with importing a commercial quantity of P2P into Australia. They were convicted on 24 August 2016 and sentenced to imprisonment for 2 years, 6 months, partially suspended after serving 10 months.

On 18 August 2020, the former ABF officer plead guilty to one charge of abuse of public office under section 142.2 of the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth). The following day he was sentenced to six months imprisonment which was suspended upon entering into a good behaviour order for 9 months.

The investigation found that the former ABF officer and the associate had been friends for many years, and the officer considered the associate to be family.

Operation Dreadnought demonstrates that corruption risks are heightened when personal relationships and values conflict with an official’s duties, and those who engage in corruption are not always motivated by financial gain.

“Staff members of law enforcement agencies must declare all actual and potential conflicts of interest, including relationships and associations. Don’t try to manage your own risks, your agency can help you.”

The Investigation Report for Operation Dreadnought 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](#) (the LEIC Act). For more information, visit ACLEI’s website: [aclei.gov.au](#)

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