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Operation Denmark: Investigation report released by the Integrity Commissioner

Investigation into the misuse of Commonwealth credit card by a former Home Affairs officer

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 Denmark.

Operation Denmark was an investigation into the misuse of a Commonwealth credit card by a former officer of the Department of Home Affairs (the Department).

The joint investigation by ACLEI and the Department found that the employee made 59 unauthorised transactions with the Commonwealth credit card for personal expenses in 2019. As a result, the employee caused a loss of \$1,578 to the Commonwealth. The investigation identified that on multiple occasions the officer used their Commonwealth credit card immediately after their personal credit card had been declined due to insufficient funds.

The officer was undergoing some difficult personal circumstances, including financial strain, at the time of offending and reimbursed the Department for the full amount of personal expenses charged to the Commonwealth credit card. Ms Hinchcliffe said, "I have decided to not make a corruption finding in consideration of the circumstances involved."

The employee was found to have breached the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct and resigned from the Department in December 2020.

The conduct investigated as part of Operation Denmark highlights a number of corruption vulnerabilities associated with the use of Commonwealth credit cards and remote management of staff.

Since this investigation was undertaken, the Department has implemented a new Credit Card Compliance Monitoring Program, which is aimed at identifying instances of non-compliance.

The officer pleaded guilty to one count of dishonestly intending to cause a loss pursuant to s 135.1(3) of the Criminal Code (Cth). They were discharged without proceeding to conviction pursuant to the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) upon giving recognizance in the sum of \$1,500 and to remain of good behaviour for 12 months.

The investigation report for Operation Denmark 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