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Operation Embla: Investigation report released by the Integrity Commissioner

Former Locally Engaged Employee engaged in corrupt conduct at the Australian Embassy in South Africa

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 Embla.

Operation Embla formed part of the Visa Integrity Task Force, established by ACLEI in 2017 to investigate allegations of corrupt conduct by staff members involved in the processing of visas.

The investigation, based on a notification by the then Department of Immigration and Border Protection in 2017, found that a former Locally Engaged Employee (LEE) at the Australian Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, Officer G, engaged in corrupt conduct by abusing their office.

Officer G was found to have provided information to visa applicants prior to the lodgement of their applications in return for money. The investigation also found Officer G had inappropriately granted visa applications, a number of which were linked to the persons that Officer G was giving advice to in exchange for payment.

The investigation also uncovered that Officer G had taken advantage of their colleague's (Officer H) workplace performance issues by referring flawed applications to them in order to increase the likelihood that they would be granted.

The investigation found Officer H had improperly granted visas and breached departmental policy. However, the investigation did not uncover any evidence to support a conclusion that Officer H had engaged in corrupt conduct in undertaking these actions.

Disciplinary proceedings were commenced against both Officer G and Officer H for a potential breach of the LEE Code of Conduct which resulted in the employment of both officers being terminated in 2017.

"Since the establishment of the Visa Integrity Task Force, numerous vulnerabilities in relation to locally engaged employees and offshore visa processing have been identified", Ms Hinchcliffe said.

"Operation Embla highlights the importance of robust frameworks for allocating visa applications and ensuring there is adequate management oversight of their processing."

Information was also provided to the Department of Home Affairs in the course of the investigation to deal with those visas which were suspected as being tainted by the conduct of Officer G and Officer H.

The investigation report for Operation Embla 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