



MEDIA STATEMENT

OPERATION ANGOVE

9 September 2020 (immediate release)

The Integrity Commissioner, Jaala Hinchcliffe, has today published her report into the Operation Angove investigation.

Operation Angove was an investigation into corruption allegations concerning interaction between the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) and the Australian Border Force (ABF) with Crown Melbourne Limited (Crown) and their VIPs who travelled to Australia, particularly from China, to gamble in their facilities.

The investigation considered three allegations:

- whether there was corruption by Home Affairs staff in relation to the provision of Australian visas for Crown VIPs.
- whether there was corruption by ABF staff in relation to the clearing of those VIPs at the Australian border.
- whether an ABF staff member engaged in corrupt conduct while employed by a VIP junket operator.

The investigation did not find evidence of corrupt conduct by Home Affairs or ABF staff in relation to any of the three allegations.

While the investigation did not find evidence of corruption, it identified:

- There was an arrangement between Home Affairs and Crown which enabled Crown to provide support to visa applicants and, on occasion, it appears this support arrangement was given too much weight by those staff who were processing the visa applications; and
- There were policies and procedures in place for the clearing of passengers outside terminals that required the same immigration and customs checks that take place inside the terminal. The investigation was provided with insufficient information to comment on the adequacy

and frequency of baggage checks, other than it appears they were conducted rarely.

In releasing the report, Ms Hinchcliffe said: “This investigation identified a number of administrative, record keeping and communication concerns. While they do not necessarily lead to corrupt conduct, they heighten the risk for such conduct. Commonwealth departments and agencies should ensure they have strong administrative practices, which not only act as a corruption deterrent, but increase the ability to detect aberrant activity.”

Background

Operation Angove investigated possible corruption issues arising from the 60 Minutes program on 28 July 2019 and subsequent reporting in the Sydney Morning Herald regarding Home Affairs and its interactions with Crown.

This matter was referred to ACLEI by the Attorney-General on 30 July 2019.

On 31 July 2020 the Integrity Commissioner provided the report on the investigation to the Attorney-General, as is required by the *Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006* (Cth).

ACLEI’s jurisdiction relates to the investigation of corruption in Commonwealth law enforcement agencies. Operation Angove was therefore limited to investigating whether there was corruption by Home Affairs staff in relation to the provision of visas for Crown Casino VIPs, the clearing of those VIPs at the border and whether a former Home Affairs staff member had undeclared conflicts of interest with the VIPs.

The Integrity Commissioner’s report is available on ACLEI’s website at www.aclei.gov.au/investigation-reports.

All enquiries regarding this media release should be sent to strategy@aclei.gov.au.