



Australian Government

Australian Commission for
Law Enforcement Integrity

AFP Senior Officer Muster

“Integrity in law enforcement”

Michael Griffin AM, Integrity Commissioner
Monday, 9 February 2015

Edmund Barton Building
Canberra

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

[Introduction]

Thank you, Commissioner, for those words of introduction. It is a great pleasure for me and my senior staff, Sarah Marshall and Nick Sellars, to join you on this occasion.

Today, I want to open a dialogue with you.

ACLEI has strong relationships with many areas of the AFP – with the Executive, with Professional Standards, with strategic policy, with the legislative programme, with IT, with the Fraud and Anti-Corruption Centre, with Axiom, with surveillance, with high-tech crime, with the International Deployment Group, with the AFP College, with the International network, with the Confidante Network, with intelligence and with serious and organised crime, on Joint Taskforces such as Polaris and Trident, with CT, with Protection and with Aviation.

We have worked closely with the AFP National, with ACT Policing and with some of the international aspects of your role.

Our relationships were put to work in 2012 and 2013 during our joint corruption investigation at Sydney international Airport, Operation Heritage/Marca. They were also put to work last year during our joint investigation of an AFP officer who is now facing charges of releasing law enforcement information to a criminal figure.

These are deep and solid foundations, upon which I hope to build during my five years as Integrity Commissioner.

[About me]

As you heard in the introduction, among many other things I have been a lawyer in private practice, and been an Examiner for the Australian Crime Commission.

Most recently, I held the post of Director Military Prosecutions in the Department of Defence. It was a personal privilege for me to hold that role, since I had begun my military career in the Australian Regular Army as a rifleman and progressed through the ranks.

The entry ranks of the Army, especially when I was going through, provided a formative experience for a young soldier. Camaraderie and mateship were core strengths, as they still are today. And I saw first-hand the good and the bad of a culture that must be battle ready. One downside might be characterised as a sense of entitlement that undermines the higher calling of serving your community.

Of course—as you would know—there is tends not to be just one culture in any large organisation, although there can be a dominant culture. Normative values – the very air we breathe in our workplaces around the country and around the world –are shaped by the people we are with. They are mediated by leadership, by training, by rules. But they are played out by individuals – decision by decision.

Cultures can persist for decades or generations. It is also true to say that events can intervene and cultures can change very quickly.

The changes that the Australian Defence Force is going through at present are all about decision-by-decision changes – about human rights and the way we treat and regard one another, about merit appointments of women to senior leadership roles, about diversity more generally, and about accountability. As an organisation, and as an individual, you can't be the best if you aren't the best at these things too. In this regard, I recognise that the AFP has also strengthened itself in many of these areas.

I am mindful that many of you are leaders whose career paths are not unlike mine. You joined a career organisation at the bottom and are still here. And more likely than not, the organisation is vastly different to the one you joined.

Like me, you may have joined without any definite ambition to be a senior leader. But somewhere along the line you might have seen value in developing yourself, or someone might have seen in you the makings of a good leader and given you opportunities to reach your potential.

Others of you will have joined with a sense of ambition, and of wanting from the beginning to make a contribution through leadership. Some will have joined, because law enforcement is part of your family story. Others, because it is the way you have chosen to serve your community and your country.

Whatever your journey—you are here in this room. Here among your peers. Here serving in one of the most capable law enforcement agencies in the world. Here involved in shaping values. Here getting the job done.

[The dialogue]

In one way, the Integrity Commissioner's role is very narrow. Find the indications of corrupt conduct. Use coercive powers and covert capabilities to investigate. Prosecute wherever possible. Despite being a very small agency, ACLEI is already successful in these areas.

However, in another way, the Integrity Commissioner's role is very broad. I do not see integrity as being the absence of corruption. I see integrity as an agency enabler. Integrity – being at your best – is a building block that allows you to achieve your legitimate outcomes.

The dialogue I want to start with you is about being your best – as individuals, as teams and as an organisation.

Your agency is skilled. Your organisational capability is strong. Your relationships with the Parliament are excellent. Community support for your role is high.

Yet, there are challenges to face, as there always are. Let me name some:

- Pay rises are deserved, but there is the prospect that they will be much lower than in previous years, and achieving them will take far longer than you are used to.
- There is rarely ever one view about strategic direction and resource allocation.
- Maintaining relations with counterpart organisations is a constant task.
- And you have a new senior leadership team and the prospect of managing significant change as you pivot again to meet current and future needs.

Each of you has a positive and active role in dealing with these managerial challenges. Be at your best.

Because of the business you are in, the AFP will also continue to face corruption threats.

The drivers to be corrupt are overwhelming – the price of bribes to obtain law enforcement information can be more than \$100,000. We can expect corruption to happen, and we should be entirely suspicious when we don't see the evidence of it – even in the AFP.

However, things can get messy when there is the temptation to cover things up. If there is corruption, one of you – perhaps more – will be involved in bringing it to ACLEI's attention. The person or people whose conduct will be examined will be your colleague, someone you supervised, or perhaps someone who supervises you. If you are an SES officer it is a fact of life.

What will be your own response to that situation? I can only advise you to be your best.

[Integrity partnership]

As I have described, ACLEI works in very close partnership with the AFP, and you may ask how that situation has come about.

You may not know, but the AFP played a key role in creating ACLEI. The corruption threat picture began to turn in the mid-2000s, as the AFP was going through rapid expansion. Counter-terrorism work and the organised crime response model meant there was a need for greater sharing of sensitive information. It soon became clear that the new operating environment was high risk and needed the safeguard of some special integrity measures that could bring a focus to looking at corruptors as much as to people who might be susceptible to their advances.

The partnership model has proved a useful basis for our work together. ACLEI has been careful to treat your information with respect, to not grandstand in the media, and to treat witnesses fairly and according to the facts. As Integrity Commissioner, I intend that ACLEI will continue along that path.

[Conclusion]

Let me conclude my formal remarks with a reminder of some leadership principles that I have found useful over a long and eventful career.

- Have a practice of being loyal to a standard of behaviour, not to a person or clique or even an agency.
- Become known as a leader who promotes integrity, decision-by-decision.
- Don't self-manage risk. No one can be so wise or impartial as to make the right call on everything. As appropriate to the circumstance, make a habit of consulting your team, your colleagues, your confidante or your supervisor.
- You will frequently have difficult decisions to make. In exercising your professional judgement, demonstrate fairness and be consistent in your actions. Decide matters on the basis of objective criteria.
- Keep high standards of private as well as professional conduct. At your level, you are always on duty.

As I said earlier, you cannot be your best if you are not the best at all these things too.

Thank you for your attention today. The dialogue is open.

Sarah, Nick and I look forward very much to engaging with you and working with you to help you achieve your objectives.