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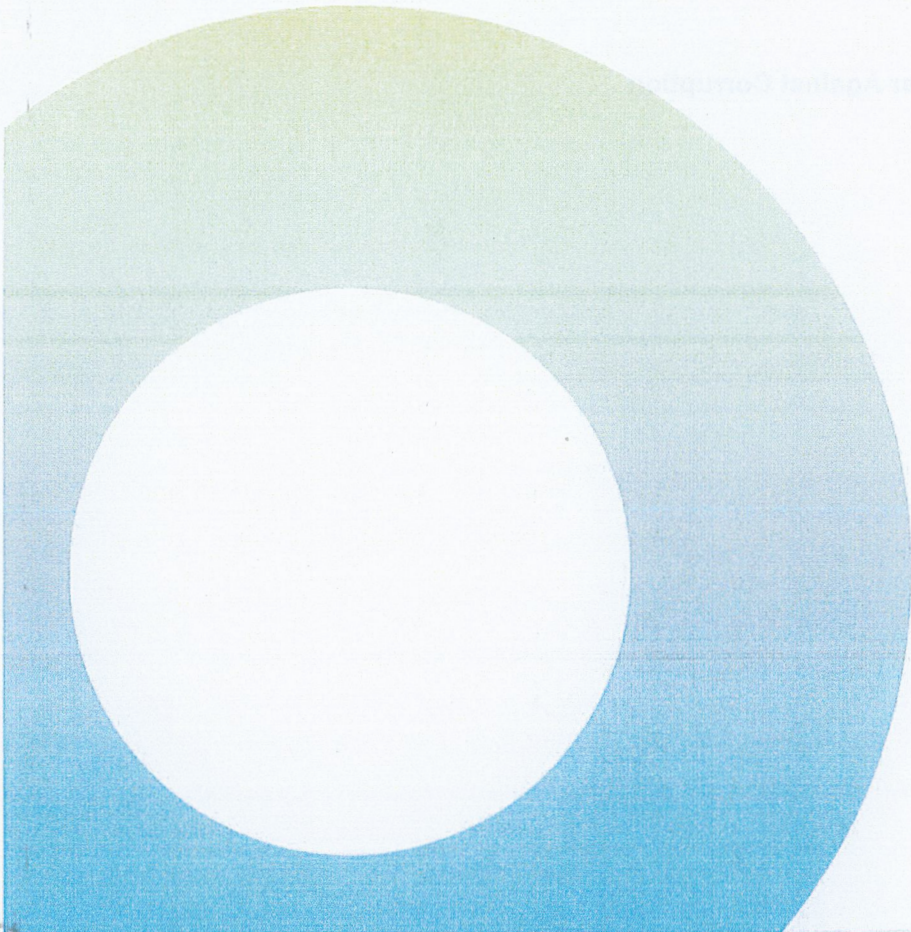
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# General Report

Section 48 – Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017



Office of the  
Independent  
Commissioner  
Against  
Corruption NT



## Letter of transmittal

The Honourable Robyn Lambley MLA  
Speaker  
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Dear Speaker

I submit a report in accordance with section 48 of the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017* (NT) (ICAC Act).

In accordance with section 49(3) of the ICAC Act I recommend that this report be made public immediately. If you do not accept the recommendation, then I note section 49(2) of the ICAC Act requires you to table the report in the Legislative Assembly within 6 sitting days after you have received it.

Yours sincerely



Naomi Loudon  
**Acting Independent Commissioner Against Corruption**

7 May 2026

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## Office Update

My last day with the Office of the ICAC is 7 May 2026.

After nearly 14 years in the Territory, I will be returning home to Queensland having accepted a position as an Assistant Commissioner at the Office of the Information Commissioner in Queensland.

During my time with the Office of the ICAC I have acted as the ICAC and CEO for a combined period of 18 months.

Some highlights from the last two years include hosting the national Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference in July 2024 with over 500 delegates attending in Darwin; establishing the strategic intelligence function; finalising 16 historic matters commenced by the former ICAC; Operation Apollo; Operation Tasman; Operation Falcon; and establishing an education program which has engaged with over 11 800 public officers since July 2024. There has been a significant increase in reports received by the office, alongside continued efforts to pursue innovative ways to engage with public officers. An online learning module will be launched early in the next financial year, making it easier for NTG public officers to develop a better understanding of the ICAC Act.

As I look back on the last two years in particular, I am most proud of the staff of the Office of the ICAC. Their continued hard work, commitment to improving public administration in the Territory, and willingness to innovate during times of increasing pressure and public scrutiny have been exceptional.

The pending commencement of the Office of the Integrity and Ethics Commissioner will result in further change for the staff; however, it will also bring opportunities. I am confident they will rise to any challenges and remain focused on the intent and purpose of the work of anti-corruption commissions. The Integrity and Ethics Commissioner will inherit a highly capable staff who remain motivated to excel in the work they do.

The Territory has been a truly amazing place to live and work. First with the Department of Corrections, then the Director of Public Prosecutions and finally the Office of the ICAC. I have had many opportunities and gained experience of the most valuable kind.

# Snapshot of the Office of the ICAC from 1 October 2025

## Assessments

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 March 2026 inclusive, the Office of the ICAC:

- received 262 allegations of improper conduct
- completed assessments of 284 allegations of improper conduct
- referred 27 allegations to referral entities under Section 25 of the ICAC Act, 2 allegations under section 30A of the ICAC Act and is awaiting 20 reports back under Section 28 of the ICAC Act
- finalised 11 reports back from referral entities under Section 28 of the ICAC Act.

For comparison with the same time last year, between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025, the Office of the ICAC:

- received 202 allegations of improper conduct
- completed assessments of 197 allegations of improper conduct
- referred 31 allegations to referral entities under section 25 of the ICAC Act, and was awaiting 15 reports back under section 28 of the ICAC Act
- finalised 3 reports back from referral entities under section 28 of the ICAC Act.

The number of allegations of improper conduct received and assessments completed in the reporting period has increased by at least 30 per cent when compared to the same period last year.

## Investigations and reviews

As at 1 October 2025, 2 investigations were in progress.

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 March 2026, 3 investigations have been completed with 4 new investigations having commenced in the half year.

As at 31 March 2026, 3 investigations remain in progress.

As at 1 October 2025, a total of 68 recommendations were being monitored for implementation by a public body.

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 March 2026, 10 recommendations were issued to public bodies and 15 recommendations were implemented and closed.

## Prevention and engagement

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 March 2026, 84 engagement and training activities have been undertaken with approximately 3060 participants across a range of public bodies.

# Strategic Intelligence and Reviews

## Operation Banksia

In September 2025, I commenced a review under section 23 of the ICAC Act, referred to as Operation Banksia.

The scope of the review was the practices, policies and procedures of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (the Department) relating to recruitment and selection processes. The review considered 10 advertised and 10 non-advertised (e.g. expression of interest, contract extension and direct appointment) recruitment and selection processes, reviewing adherence to legislation, policy, delegations, determinations and the identification and management of conflicts of interest.

On 26 February 2026, a draft review report was provided to the Department for feedback, including the findings and proposed recommendations.

Overall, most recruitment activities were compliant and demonstrated alignment with key merit-based principles. However, several recurring gaps were identified that present improper conduct risks:

- Conflict of Interest management: panels did not evidence discussions of conflicts of interest prior to shortlisting, declared relationships were not consistently supported by management plans, and referee and delegate conflict of interest declarations were at times absent from selection reports.
- Merit integrity and recruitment controls: Inconsistent practices were identified in verifying applicant qualifications, approving job descriptions, maintaining current merit selection training, documenting referee checks and ensuring appropriate panel balance in terms of level and composition.
- Timeliness of recruitment processes: Advertised recruitment processes showed extended timeframes from commencement to finalisation, averaging 67 days across the samples analysed.
- Delegate approval and governance oversight: Evidence of delegate approval to fill vacancies was often unclear or incomplete, with reliance on unsigned spreadsheets, inconsistent records and a bulk email approval process covering multiple recruitment actions.

On 31 March 2026, the final review report was provided to the Department. The report included the following recommendations:

- 1) The Department deliver training on conflicts of interest, including a specific section on conflicts of interest in recruitment.
- 2) The Department update its internal guidance for expression of interest recruitment processes to clearly outline the minimum requirements, including referee checks addressing conflicts of interest and any relevant performance or disciplinary matters. The guidance should reference the applicable NTPS Merit Selection Training manual sections, and these expectations should be communicated across the department.
- 3) The Department update the Human Resource delegations to include a delegation for approving the content of job descriptions and communicate those updates to the department.

- 4) The Department review and update online internal recruitment and selection information and practices to include:
- A reference to the [NTPS Merit Selection Training manual](#)
  - that the merit selection training status of all panel members is verified before recruitment activities commence.
  - clear and consistent documenting of approvals to fill a vacancy within the eRecruit system.

The Department has been asked to provide advice on the steps taken or proposed to be taken to implement the recommendations by 31 August 2026.

In making recommendations to a public body or public officer, I must be satisfied that the recommendations are within the functions of the public body to implement, as per section 56(1) of the ICAC Act. Where a matter reflects a systemic issue across the broader public service, recommendations are made to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) for whole of government implementation.

I also made the following recommendations to the OCPE:

- 1) OCPE update the whole of government recruitment and selection templates and corresponding policies, procedures and guidelines, requiring the mandatory conflict of interest declaration form to be completed by the panel and signed by the delegate prior to shortlisting, irrespective of whether any conflicts of interest are identified.
- 2) OCPE update the whole of government mandatory selection report template to include:
  - a) a section requiring panels to outline how they verified an applicant's claimed qualifications.
  - b) a section requiring panels to provide documented evidence of all pre-employment and suitability checks performed, including confirmation that referee enquiries considered any conflicts of interest between the referee and the applicant, and any relevant performance or conduct issues.

The OCPE has been asked to provide advice on the steps taken or proposed to be taken to implement the recommendations by 31 August 2026.

I acknowledge the assistance given by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries staff during this review and thank them for their efforts.

# Education and Training

## Nominated Recipients

### February forum

In February 2026, 40 participants came together for a half day workshop designed specifically for Nominated Recipients.

Nominated Recipients are public officers in organisations that are identified and formally nominated by their CEO to receive voluntary reports of improper conduct, specifically misconduct and unsatisfactory conduct and fulfil the responsibilities of the head of a public body to provide information to a protected person.

Nominated Recipients have the following responsibilities in their agency:

- Receiving a protected communication
- Actioning a protected communication
- Protecting a protected person

The forum aimed to strengthen the capability of Nominated Recipients, support effective handling of improper conduct matters, and foster connections both across agencies and with the Office of the ICAC.

The forum included the Department of Home Affairs' Counter Foreign Interference Coordination Centre delivering a session on the risks of foreign interference and impact on improper conduct in the NT public sector.

### March seminar

In March 2026, the office hosted an online seminar for Nominated Recipients, with 26 participants attending.

The seminar featured a presentation by Dr Alistair Ping from Ethics Advisory Australia, who delivered insights from his research report *Why do good people do bad things?*

The presentation explored ethical decision-making and the factors that contribute to the emergence of improper conduct, providing participants with a foundational understanding of how such conduct may arise within the public sector and how it can be mitigated.

### April seminar

In April 2026, the office hosted an online seminar for Nominated Recipients, with 22 participants attending.

The seminar aimed to provide Nominated Recipients with an understanding of the types of improper conduct allegations that can be made to them as a voluntary protected communication. The seminar also explored how reports of misconduct and unsatisfactory conduct provide the Office of the ICAC with valuable intelligence about improper conduct risks which is relied on for developing and delivering education and training, making recommendations and referrals, conducting reviews, and identifying and investigating systemic misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct.

Nominated Recipients seminars are held bi-monthly and provide an ongoing platform for support, capability building and education, strengthening public officers' capacity to fulfil their critical role in responding to reports of improper conduct. The next seminar will be held online in June 2026.

## Short educational videos

Over the past 6 months, the ICAC has released a series of four short educational videos for all Territorians. The videos provide information relating to the ICAC's functions, including the following topics:

- What can the ICAC investigate?
- Conflicts of Interest
- Making a report to the ICAC
- What are whistleblower protections?

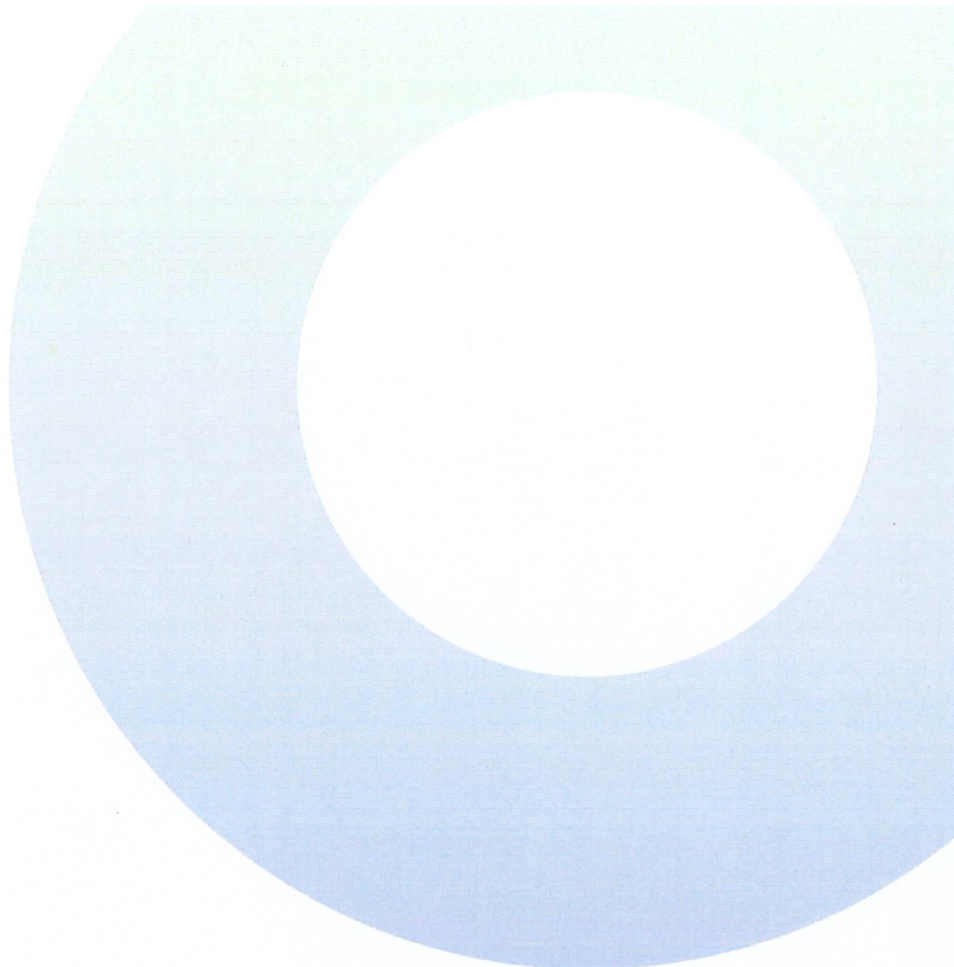
The videos are accessible for non-NT Government public officers, public bodies, and the general public on the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC) website: [Educational videos | Independent Commissioner Against Corruption \(ICAC\)](#).

## Regional prevention activities

Throughout April the Prevention and Engagement Team members travelled to Katherine, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy to deliver training to public officers. Travel to regional centres also enabled the Acting ICAC to meet with Local Council CEO's, elected members and regional government leaders to discuss improper conduct data for the region as well as discuss integrity needs of agencies.

In addition to meeting with leaders in the regions, these visits included training for:

- Department of Logistics and Infrastructure staff across 4 sessions
- Gove District Hospital staff
- Chief Minister and Cabinet staff
- NT Health staff
- Department of Education and Training staff across 2 sessions
- Alice Springs Town Council Elected members
- Victoria Daly Regional Council Elected members
- East Arnhem Regional Council Elected members



**Contact the ICAC**

Freecall 1800 250 918

Level 7, 9 Cavenagh Street  
Darwin NT 0801  
GPO Box 3750 Darwin NT 0801

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