



OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER AGAINST CORRUPTION (NT)

## Office of the ICAC releases two reports with findings of corrupt conduct

June 2021

The Office of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (OICAC) has concluded two investigations which have exposed existing weaknesses in the Northern Territory Government's employment and recruitment framework. Findings of corrupt conduct have been made in both cases.

The first investigation dealt with the alleged theft of patient money at Royal Darwin Hospital by Mr Ashley Brown, and made findings of corrupt conduct against Mr Brown, pursuant to section 10 of the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act (ICAC Act) 2017*.

The allegation involving the theft of patient money came to light during the course of an investigation into Mr Brown fraudulently obtaining a role as a public officer.

In his capacity as Security and Site Manager, a role which he obtained fraudulently, Mr Brown was responsible for securing patient valuables. While in this role, Mr Brown took \$2,635 in patient money from a safety deposit box and banked it into his personal account. After a query from a colleague about the missing money he claimed he forgot he had taken the money and was waiting for direction from his manager on where to bank it.

During the course of the investigation it also became apparent that Mr Brown had a prior conviction for stealing – a fact that, if known at the time of recruitment, may have prevented his employment in the first place.

In the second investigation, findings of corrupt conduct have been made against Ms Shaylee Sten.

Ms Sten impersonated her referee in order to obtain a position as a public officer in the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities. She provided her husband's phone number as her referee number, and then gave herself a positive reference from her previous employer. This was in stark contrast to information provided by the real referee, who stated that Ms Sten was dismissed after an internal fraud investigation.

The department uncovered the deception shortly after recruiting Ms Sten and dealt with it appropriately and swiftly.

Comments attributable to Commissioner Kenneth Fleming QC:

“There is a serious improper conduct risk associated with hiring staff who have lied or provided false statements in job applications. Hiring such people can lead to further corrupt conduct, poor provision of services, can affect an agency's reputation and can impact morale.

Taking preventative measures against improper conduct is preferable to managing the effects and costs of improper conduct after it occurs.

My office has made a number of corruption prevention recommendations to strengthen the Northern Territory Public Sector's recruitment framework.”

[Public statement - Investigation into the alleged theft of patient money by Ashley Brown at Royal Darwin Hospital](https://icac.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/1012171/2021.06.11-Public-statement-on-an-Investigation-into-alleged-corrupt-conduct-by-Shaylee-Sten-FINAL.pdf)  
[https://icac.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/1012171/2021.06.11-Public-statement-on-an-Investigation-into-alleged-corrupt-conduct-by-Shaylee-Sten-FINAL.pdf](https://icac.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/1012171/2021.06.11-Public-statement-on-an-Investigation-into-alleged-corrupt-conduct-by-Shaylee-Sten-FINAL.pdf)

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