

NT INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER AGAINST CORRUPTION

Investigation into the conduct of Ashley Brown

16 October 2020

The Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC), Ken Fleming QC has today published an Investigation Report that identifies serious and systemic improper conduct risks in the Territory Government's recruitment and disciplinary frameworks.

The report contains findings that former Department of Health Site and Security Manager Ashley Brown engaged in corrupt conduct when he lied about his qualifications and falsified Certificates of Aboriginality in order to win a Northern Territory Government position advertised under a Special Measures Recruitment and Selection Plan.

The investigation into Mr Brown's conduct showed that Northern Territory Government recruitment and disciplinary processes do not adequately detect candidates who falsify their applications and qualifications, or candidates who have been subject to disciplinary action elsewhere in the Northern Territory public sector (NTPS).

The report describes that public sector employees who have engaged in serious wrongdoing and resign before disciplinary proceedings are completed can continue to serve in the public sector because agencies have limited visibility of persons who have resigned while subject to disciplinary processes.

Further, there is no central register of NTPS employees who are, or have been, subject to disciplinary processes, whether or not they have resigned before these processes have been finalised. There is also no across government register of employees who have dishonestly attempted to obtain, obtained, or retained employment or appointment as a public officer.

The NTPS does not have a standardised approach to risk-based pre-employment screening, and there is currently no guidance regarding the application of criminal history checks and other screening processes common in other jurisdictions and industries.

The Commissioner has made a range of recommendations to strengthen recruitment and disciplinary processes, including the Special Measures Recruitment and Selection process.

In relation to the particular conduct that was investigated, Commissioner Fleming QC found on the balance of probabilities that Mr Brown engaged in corrupt conduct by:

- falsifying Certificates of Aboriginality in order to dishonestly obtain employment in roles subject to a Special Measures Recruitment and Selection Plan
- falsifying his resume and qualifications in order to dishonestly obtain employment as a public officer
- attempting 14 times to gain employment as a public officer using a falsified Certificate of Aboriginality.

To view the public statement visit: www.icac.nt.gov.au/publications.

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