

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER AGAINST CORRUPTION (NT)

## Operation Beaufort

26 March 2024

I am satisfied that it is in the public interest to issue this public statement. I will rarely comment publicly on ongoing investigations. In this case, I have decided to do so in order to obtain assistance from persons who have information relevant to the investigation.

I am investigating allegations of improper conduct within the Territory Response Group of Northern Territory Police. I am conducting that investigation jointly with NT Police. I am not resourced to conduct that investigation without NT Police assistance.

This morning I have been briefed on evidence collected thus far.

That evidence further supports the allegation that, in past years, awards have been issued within the Territory Response Group that are racist towards First Nations people. I have formed that view based upon the material I have been shown and the language used in that material. I express no view about who participated in those awards and who had knowledge of them. It is premature to do so.

The purpose of this public statement is threefold.

First, to make it clear that I know about those awards.

Second, that in light of that evidence my investigation will now consider all awards issued in the period from 2007-present, and the circumstances in which those awards were given.

Third, to invite current and former police officers with first-hand information to come forward. I thank those who have already come forward.

These are serious matters and they need to be addressed without delay. Those involved need to take responsibility and be a part of the process to address these matters. Such occurrences must never be allowed to occur in the future. It is not in the public interest that these issues be drawn out over numerous months, with defensive and combative positions taken by those who have information relevant to the investigation. In an effort to get to the truth of these matters and to do so without delay, I state as follows.

A current or former police officer who voluntarily provides truthful information to my office relevant to this investigation will not be the subject of an adverse finding under the ICAC Act.

A current or former police officer who voluntarily provides truthful information to my office relevant to this investigation will not be the subject of a referral to NT Police for potential disciplinary action.

A current or former police officer who voluntarily provides truthful information to my office relevant to this investigation will not be named in a public statement or report for which I am responsible.

The above **does not extend to current or former officers:**

- whose conduct may amount to criminal conduct
- who may have deleted documents or information from NT Police systems that relate to the subject matter of this investigation.

I ask that current or former police officers who have first-hand information relevant to my investigation make contact with my office before **COB 5 April 2024**.

Contact is to be made via email [icac.executive@icac.nt.gov.au](mailto:icac.executive@icac.nt.gov.au) or via telephone **1800 250 918**. You will be advised of the process for providing further information.

If you do not wish for your identity to be revealed to NT Police, that will be accommodated. The information you provide will be shared with NT Police in a manner that does not identify you.

A current or former police officer who comes forward with information relevant to this investigation will be a protected person under the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017*. Should a current or former police officer wish for additional assurance, the making of a declaration of a protected communication will be considered.

Let me be clear. If you have information, this is your opportunity to come forward. Please take advantage of this opportunity.

I have nothing further to say at this time.

Michael Riches  
**Independent Commissioner Against Corruption**