

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **More powerful procurement lessons in Department of Communities corruption**

The Corruption and Crime Commission today tabled a report in State Parliament, detailing serious misconduct at the Department of Communities.

It involves a long-term employee of the Department, Mrs Kerry Ravi, and a long term 'contractor', Ms Maria Irdi. Together they ran the Department's Value for Money Efficiency (VFM) Project over eight years, despite deficiencies in their GST knowledge and experience.

Mrs Ravi and Ms Irdi were responsible within the Department of Communities for allocating GST specialty consulting work. They directed more than \$7 million worth of that work to their preferred consultants – an accounting firm and a law firm. This was of obvious benefit to the firms and, more particularly to Mrs Ravi and Ms Irdi's favoured practitioners within those firms.

While working on the VFM Project, the two women received benefits for themselves provided by the accounting and consulting firm and legal firm, including hospitality at high-end Perth restaurants.

Other benefits included alcohol, flowers, corporate box football and tennis tickets, international basketball game tickets, expensive glassware at Christmas time and spa vouchers. None were declared as required. While the dollar value of the hospitality was not huge, the conflict in accepting hospitality and not declaring it is evident.

Referral of work was presented as a personal favour. It was not the result of impartial competition, because Mrs Ravi and Ms Irdi breached procurement policy in ways that favoured the two firms.

In the Commission's opinion, Mrs Ravi engaged in serious misconduct over a number of years, using her position and control over consulting work to corruptly procure benefits for herself and a job for a family member. She approved payments to Ms Irdi for periods of time when she did not work. Mrs Ravi knowingly participated in Ms Irdi's manipulation of the appointment of the law firm to the Department of Communities legal panel (a subsidiary of the accountancy firm).

The Commission is unable to form an opinion of serious misconduct in relation to Ms Irdi's conduct because she was not technically a 'public officer', although she worked in the Department from 2012 to 2020. She was engaged via consulting and labour hire firms.

The Commission has recommended that its jurisdiction be expanded over people who work within the public sector as contractors but perform work ordinarily done by employees.

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#### **Contact the Corruption and Crime Commission**

The Department of Communities has informed the Commission that it has made changes to its operations to reduce the risks identified by this investigation. They include increasing funding for the Professional Standards directorate, including establishing a Corruption Prevention and Education business unit and a proactive intelligence function; reviewing key integrity policies; and enhanced analytical tools to explore financial and contractual transactions.

Both the accounting firm and the law firm have conducted investigations in relation to the events mentioned in the Commission's report, which have resulted in some personnel ceasing work at those firms.

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### **Read the report**

[A report on corrupt procurement practices and conduct in the Department of Communities](#)

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