**INTEGRITY COMMISSION TASMANIA**

## Protecting Kate at all costs

### The story

Melissa, a constable in her second year with the police, drops in to see her good friend Kate after work. When Kate opens the door it's obvious that she has been injured. Her face is swollen and she has a severe black eye. Melissa is shocked and asks what happened, but Kate is evasive and says "it's from an accident at hockey last night".

Melissa sees Kate's boyfriend watching TV inside the flat. She asks Kate if everything is ok between them. At that point Kate says she has to go and quickly closes the door. Melissa is disturbed by this and suspects that Kate has been assaulted by her boyfriend. She doesn't trust him and thinks that Kate has been acting differently since she moved in with him.

During her next shift at the police station, Melissa uses a quiet moment at her desk to do some checking up on the boyfriend. She accesses police information systems and does some checks on him. He has a past record, which she looks through in detail.

Strictly speaking, Melissa knows that she isn't following procedure and that she is taking some risk. But her 'gut feeling' on this and the urge to protect her friend from further harm is very strong. She knows that the police treat family violence very seriously. Melissa then calls Katie during a break. She doesn't divulge the boyfriend's police record, but tells her "Trust me, he's bad news".

### Questions

1. What are the misconduct risks here?

2. Should this conflict of interest be avoided?

3. If this can't be avoided, what management strategy would be appropriate?

> The information used in this scenario is not factual – we created it for education and discussion. Any likeness to actual persons or events is coincidental.



### The Commission can help

We are available to provide support and assistance with identifying, reporting, investigating, managing and preventing misconduct: prevention@integrity.tas.gov.au or 1300 720 289.

For more Misconduct Prevention resources go to www.integrity.tas.gov.au/resources