

INTEGRITY MATTERS



Message from the CEO

You may have noticed that the role of Chief Executive Officer of the Integrity Commission has recently been advertised. I will soon turn 65, and for personal reasons I've made the decision to retire. I will remain in my current role until my successor starts work, and will be focused on ensuring that the Commission continues to deliver outcomes for the Tasmanian community.

One of the key achievements we can report on in this edition of the newsletter is the tabling of our Annual Report. It was another big year for the Commission and we have made significant progress, particularly in our Prevention space where we have delivered education and resources across Tasmania to help strengthen ethical conduct and support good decision making throughout the public sector.

While each individual public officer has a responsibility to serve with integrity, organisations can make it easier for them to do the right thing. This edition looks at some of the learnings and outcomes from our recent investigations to provide practical advice on how organisations can support their staff to make good decisions. We have articles on conflicts of interest and reviewing policies, both of which are key areas where we have previously identified misconduct. Whether it's through establishing a culture where staff are encouraged to raise misconduct risks, or ensuring that staff are able to access guidance when needed, our key message is that having the right foundation prevents a lot of potential problems.

As always, our Misconduct Prevention team is available to work with all public sector organisations to design and implement an education plan that suits the organisation's specific needs.

Richard Bingham
Chief Executive Officer

17 October 2019

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Upcoming workshops

Workshop	Region	Date	Cost	Register
Managing and Investigating Misconduct	Hobart	18 Oct	Free	(Full)
Managing and Investigating Misconduct	Hobart	14 Nov	Free	Register
Practical Ethics for Managers	Hobart	12 Dec	Free	Register

Read more about our [free training services](#).

Special feature: Melbourne-based company New Intelligence is delivering an Interview Skills and Strategy workshop on 29 October. For details, visit the [TTC website](#).

Annual report tabled in Parliament

As the Commission approaches its tenth year, it operates with increasing clarity of purpose and priorities.

Our annual report, tabled in Parliament this week, outlines the Commission's achievements throughout the 2018-19 financial year. It provides insight into our operations and introduces some of our key initiatives coming soon. Further, our commitment to transparency continues, with summaries of all assessments (48) and investigations (6) concluded during 2018-19 included in the report.

Read the [Integrity Commission Annual Report 2018-19](#)

Read the [Media Release: Integrity Commission expands program to prevent public sector misconduct](#)



Assessment and investigation status updates

Did you know we publish bi-monthly status updates for our ongoing misconduct matters?

For more information about our operations, including the six investigations currently underway, visit the [Assessments and Investigation Status Updates web page](#).

Managing conflicts of interest - how can you make it easier for staff?

The six investigations the Commission concluded in 2018-19 confirm that conflict of interest remains a key misconduct risk area across the Tasmanian public sector. Our public sector is made up of a diverse, vibrant group of people who are invested in their communities and their public sector roles. As a group of interesting people, it is only reasonable that we have private interests. While we encourage and support people to invest in their private interests, it means that as people, public sector staff and representatives of our organisations, we need to be conscious of when these private interests conflict with the interests of our employers – the Tasmanian community.

While there is nothing wrong with having interests, conflicts of interest need to be managed as soon as they are identified. There are a number of ways organisations can support their public officers here:

Clear messaging: Don't be afraid of conflicts of interest – manage them

Public officers can have particular interests or skills that greatly benefit both the organisation and the community. It's when a personal interest conflicts with public duty (whether actual, potential or perceived) that issues can arise. The key is for organisations to establish policies, tools and procedures that support individuals to declare and manage these conflicts as they arise.

A culture of discussing risks

A culture where staff can raise and discuss misconduct risks is a healthy culture.

Organisations can work to build and maintain corporate awareness and an operational culture that acknowledges that conflicts of interest are ok as long as they are managed. This makes it easier for staff to talk about conflicts that do or might come up or address them with colleagues.

Clear processes for declaring

Processes for declaring conflicts of interest need to be embedded across an organisation.

For example, in recruitment, each selection panel member can be asked directly if he or she has a conflict (rather than a general question) at the beginning of the process.

Consideration can also be given to asking the question more than once throughout a process, giving people a genuine opportunity to reflect on any new information and ensuring that any potential conflicts are being managed appropriately.

Good policies, procedures and guidelines

These will clearly outline an organisation's approach to declaring and managing conflicts.

An organisation needs to consider, when asking for declarations, whether it is asking the right questions. In Investigation Eliza, for example, the individuals involved made the required disclosures in line with organisational guidelines. The disclosures, though, lacked a level of substantive detail which led to questions and concerns about whether the conflicts had been fully disclosed or appropriately managed. These concerns could have been avoided if the organisation had taken a different approach to the questions it expected people to answer.

When organisations create an environment in which staff are able to comfortably and effectively manage conflicts of interest, they minimise the risk that poorly-managed conflicts will negatively impact both the individual's and organisation's contribution to the community.

Congratulations to recruits

The Commission is proud to be part of the training courses for recruits from Tasmania Police, Tasmania Prison Service and Tasmania Fire Service. These recruits are taking on an important role in serving the Tasmanian community. The organisations they are joining are supporting them to perform their role and serve with integrity.

What's coming up in Prevention?

New online module

Our new online module, *Integrity in Public Service*, is scheduled for release at the end of 2019. When delivered, this program will assist Principal Officers to meet their requirements under the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* and will be a good starting point for providing training to staff at all levels.

Notifications

We encourage all public sector organisations to notify us when they receive allegations of misconduct or undertake a misconduct investigation. These notifications help us to gain a better understanding of the key misconduct risks and provide targeted training, resources and support.

Read more about [making a notification](#).

Regular newsletters

Integrity Matters will now be released quarterly. The next edition (due out in early December) will focus on managing gifts and benefits in the lead up to Christmas.

How we can help

Through education, support and advice, our Misconduct Prevention team works with organisations to identify and manage misconduct. We can:

- deliver customised presentations and workshops for staff and/or elected members
- provide resources, including videos, fact sheets and scenarios
- support you to develop your own resources
- review and provide advice on policies and procedures
- provide advice for individuals and organisations

Read more about our training options and services on our website or contact us today on 1300 720 289 or at prevention@integrity.tas.gov.au.

Reviewing our policies, supporting our staff

While developing and reviewing policies can take time, good policies support an organisation and provide guidance and clarity for staff.

At the Commission we recently undertook a comprehensive review of all of our policies. While this was a reasonably big project, the end results will continue to support the whole organisation moving forward.

Below are the steps we followed in our recent policy review:

Step 1: Considering what we had

We started our review by asking questions.

Were all policies necessary? Were we meeting our legislative requirements? Did our policies reflect the values and vision of our organisation? Were there any gaps?

We then developed new policies and updated or deleted old ones as required.

Step 2: Consistency and clarity

Because documents are updated over time, variations in style can develop. A consistent approach makes documents easier to use. We worked through our policies, procedures and guidelines to make sure they were consistent in style and that each had clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Step 3: Consultation

Policies provide guidance for staff so it's important staff are involved in the review process. We sought feedback from staff and provided enough time for input.

Step 4: Accessibility

Policies should be clear and concise. They should be easy to find and have a clear review date so staff know they have the latest version. They should also be made available to the public.

We made sure our policies were in plain English and filed them in a master policy folder in our electronic records management for easy access. Our policies in the public interest will be available on our website, while others can be accessed by contacting us.

While we reviewed our policies all at once, doing a little at a time also works.

The important thing is to keep working on it. Our Prevention team is available to provide advice to organisations reviewing policies related to ethical risks, such as conflict of interest.

7th Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference

The Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference (APSACC) is the leading anti-corruption event in Australia, with its focus on preventing, exposing and responding to corrupt conduct and corruption risks in public institutions, including all levels of government, elected bodies, the judiciary, police and statutory bodies.

Dates: 29-31 October 2019

Location: Melbourne, Victoria

Register on the [APSACC 2019 website](#)

Read the [APSACC 2019 program](#)

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