

Wednesday 11 May 2016

Investigation into the conduct of a University of Sydney ICT manager

ICAC FINDINGS

The Commission found that, in 2012 and 2013, University of Sydney Information and Communications Technology (ICT) manager Jason Meeth engaged in serious corrupt conduct by improperly exercising his functions as a university official by giving preferential treatment to Canberra Solutions Pty Ltd in the selection of Canberra Solutions candidates to work at the university as ICT contractors.

The Commission found that while aspects of the evidence it examined may suggest that Mr Meeth received cash payments from Balu Moothedath of Canberra Solutions, there is no direct evidence that Mr Moothedath did pay Mr Meeth. Having carefully considered the available evidence, the Commission accepts the submission of Counsel Assisting that the fact and scale of any financial benefit flowing to Mr Meeth from Mr Moothedath cannot be established to the requisite standard.

ICAC RECOMMENDATIONS

The ICAC is of the opinion that the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) should be obtained with respect to the prosecution of Mr Moothedath for the criminal offences of:

- giving false and misleading evidence, contrary to section 87 of the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*, by giving evidence during a public inquiry that he did not discuss the Commission's investigation with Pranav Shanker on 29 June 2015
- giving false and misleading evidence, contrary to section 87 of the ICAC Act, by giving evidence during a public inquiry that Pooja Naik worked for Canberra Solutions
- attempting to procure false evidence from Mr Shanker on 29 June 2015, contrary to section 89 of the ICAC Act.

CORRUPTION PREVENTION

The Commission found that labour hire processes conducted by the university's ICT business unit were undermined through subcontracting from a whole-of-government labour hire arrangement and allowing Mr Meeth to have almost complete control over ICT labour hire processes. Since the occurrence of the conduct under investigation, a new whole-of-government labour hire process has been adopted, which forbids subcontracting arrangements, and the university has taken action to more tightly control its labour hire processes. In the circumstances, the Commission does not consider it necessary to make any recommendations concerning those matters.

BACKGROUND

The Commission commenced an investigation into this matter following a complaint it received on 14 July 2014 from Sean McNulty, the university's former procurement and contracts manager, about Mr Meeth. He alleged that Mr Meeth played a principal part in a corrupt scheme that led to the university being defrauded of possibly as much as \$1 million. It was alleged that, as part of the scheme, Mr Meeth directed the university's accredited personnel suppliers to put forward contractors sourced from Canberra Solutions, which then gained a significant benefit because it paid the contractor considerably less than it was paid by the university.

The Commission held a public inquiry, as part of the investigation, over five days between 9 and 13 November 2015. Commissioner the Hon Megan Latham presided at the public inquiry and 16 witnesses gave evidence. The report is available on the ICAC website at www.icac.nsw.gov.au.

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