



Case study – Operation Genoa

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In early 2017, IBAC commenced an investigation called Operation Genoa following a Victoria Police notification made pursuant to section 64(1)(b) of the *Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011*.

Background

Victoria Police notified IBAC that information had been received that a sworn member of Victoria Police, a Detective Leading Senior Constable (DLSC) was attending an adult entertainment venue and associating with the manager.

Operation Genoa sought to determine whether the DLSC had a continuing inappropriate relationship with the manager, the extent of the relationship and whether the DLSC had any criminal involvement and/or was potentially compromised in their position as a Victoria Police officer.

What did IBAC do?

In the course of the investigation, a range of IBAC's powers were used including: issuing summonses for documentation and financial records; access of historic and prospective telecommunications data; telecommunication interception; the execution of search warrants and coercive examinations

What were the outcomes?

The DLSC resigned from Victoria Police while under investigation. Further, the DLSC was charged and subsequently pled guilty to two charges of unauthorised access to police information, one charge of unauthorised use of police information and one charge of unauthorised disclosure of police information. They were fined \$3000 without conviction.

Lessons learned, challenges and outtakes

IBAC found the officer had established an ongoing association with the adult entertainment venue and received favourable treatment in the form of free entry and alcohol. This treatment was not isolated to the officer, with the venue having a business practice of giving free entry to Victoria Police employees and other occupations and groups of people and supplying complimentary drinks. This practice can encourage police officers to give preferential treatment to these venues when enforcing the law. Operation Genoa also found the officer had substantial debt which placed them at risk of compromise. The officer was found to frequently drink alcohol to excess and drive their Victoria Police vehicle after consuming alcohol at the venue.

IBAC also substantiated allegations that the officer accessed Victoria Police information holdings, namely the Victoria Police's main database (LEAP), to obtain information about their associates, some of whom the officer met when they attended adult entertainment venues or through the sex work industry. On at least one occasion, the officer accessed and then disclosed police information to an employee of the adult entertainment venue. On another occasion, the officer accessed and used police information for the purpose of gaining the personal details of a sex worker they had hired, and had lent money to.

IBAC identified opportunities for Victoria Police to review its procedures for preventing and detecting information misuse, and to consider ways to strengthen its audits of information systems. It was suggested that Victoria Police could consult with the Office for Victorian Information Commissioner regarding these opportunities. Victoria Police responded in December 2018 regarding the development of a more robust framework for information security.

Vulnerabilities and prevention measures

IBAC identified the following vulnerabilities and prevention measures as a result of Operation Genoa. Public sector agencies, and others can build their corruption resilience by identifying if they are susceptible to these vulnerabilities and undertake appropriate prevention measures.

Issue	Vulnerability	Prevention measures
Management inaction	Not acting on previous warning signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a complaint is received that an employee is engaging in a behaviour and it is substantiated and a sanction is implemented, after a reasonable time, managers/supervisors should follow up and enquire if the behaviour has actually ceased
Employment risks	Employment welfare and financial stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of prevention and education initiatives that lead to the early identification of stress and risk indicators Random drug and alcohol testing of staff Welfare based periodic psychological testing for high-risk roles
Gifts and benefits	Discount or gifts and benefits offered generally creating an obligation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations must determine if discounts or offers made generally to their industry sector are acceptable Policy should clearly state if certain generally offered discounts are forbidden from certain classes of suppliers
IT systems	Lack of a robust prevention and audit plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review procedures for preventing and detecting information misuse Regular and proactive audits of employees' use of information systems System users must record a reason for accessing and altering information
Declarable associations	Undeclared or poorly managed conflicts of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review policies and procedures to ensure they are clear, and to address gaps If the management action taken in relation to a declarable association is that the contact should cease steps should be taken to ensure this has occurred Regular mandatory training and awareness raising conducted within the organisation

Useful links and information

IBAC research report examining the corruption risks associated with conflict of interest, highlighting many examples of good practice:

www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/managing-corruption-risks-associated-with-conflicts-of-interest-in-the-victorian-public-sector

IBAC research report reviewing integrity frameworks in a sample of Victorian state government agencies, identifying examples of good practice and opportunities for improvement. A key objective of this project is to help state government agencies review and strengthen their own integrity frameworks, to improve their capacity to prevent corrupt conduct:

www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/state-government-integrity-frameworks-review

IBAC research report highlighting the corruption vulnerabilities associated with employment practices across the Victorian public sector and ways public sector agencies can strengthen their systems and practices to mitigate those vulnerabilities. The findings of the report are based on consultations with relevant Victorian public sector agencies, IBAC research, investigations and data holdings and other materials:

www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/corruption-and-misconduct-risks-associated-with-employment-practices-in-the-victorian-public-sector

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IBAC is Victoria's anti-corruption agency responsible for preventing and exposing public sector corruption and police misconduct. We do this by:

- investigating serious corruption and police misconduct
- informing the public sector, police and the community about the risks and impacts of corruption and police misconduct, and ways in which it can be prevented.

To report corruption now, visit **www.ibac.vic.gov.au** or call **1300 735 135**.

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