

Chairperson's report

This is my first annual report as Chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission following my appointment on 5 March 2012.

The perception of an organisation is obviously different from the inside. Since coming to the CMC I have been struck by the professionalism of the organisation across its spectrum of functions and the commitment of its staff. I have seen how it is uniquely placed to contribute to the disruption and prevention of criminal and corrupt activity.

The evolution of integrity bodies

This year is coincidentally noteworthy in that it represents 10 years since the CMC was created and 25 years since the Fitzgerald Inquiry commenced in 1987.

Since 1987, the general role of integrity bodies such as the CMC has changed. At that time, Commissions of Inquiry were considered exceptions to the rule. They required specific justification, including demonstrating that the problem to be addressed was so abnormal as to be beyond the ordinary processes of the criminal justice system. Today, an organisation such as the CMC – in a sense a standing commission of inquiry – is an accepted part of public life. The need for agencies performing integrity functions is widely recognised throughout the various Australian jurisdictions. Powers and procedures once thought of as temporary or exceptional have become a permanent part of governance in Queensland and nationally.

There is thus a growing body of thought that Montesquieu's famous three branches of government – legislative, executive and judicial – require modern augmentation by a fourth – integrity. The CMC is one of the prominent bodies in Queensland's governance landscape that collectively comprise the integrity branch of government.

Significant matters this year

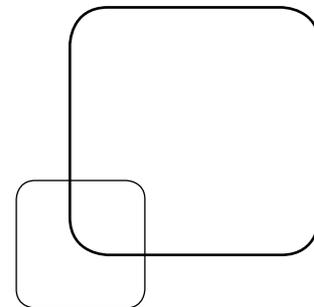
In 2011–12 the CMC vigorously pursued a range of issues. The CMC Crime Operations area disrupted two high-threat drug networks, enabled Queensland's first arrests under Commonwealth legislation targeting networked criminal paedophilia and restrained \$20m worth of property under its proceeds of crime function. The Crime area assisted the QPS in progressing 48 separate major crime operations. The Crime area of the CMC's function is effective and energetic, notwithstanding that it necessarily tends to fly below the radar of publicity.

In overseeing the public sector, the CMC's Misconduct section assessed over 5000 complaints (a record for the organisation), evaluated the integrity systems of seven departments, investigated matters arising in some of Queensland's most important public institutions (Queensland Health and the University of Queensland) and was asked to examine a significant matter arising out of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry.

The organisation also demonstrated its capacity to seamlessly tackle multifaceted issues. Two very different examples this year were the alleged fraud of \$16m from Queensland Health and our examination of internet-enabled crime.

In the case of Queensland Health, our proceeds of crime team acted immediately, with our colleagues at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, to restrain \$12m worth of assets, while our Misconduct area launched an investigation into the overall circumstances of the matter in the interests of transparency and prevention of future misconduct. The issues raised will be of significance across the public sector.

The issue of how new technologies enable major crime such as money laundering and drug and weapons trafficking brought together our capabilities in strategic law enforcement, research, policy making and crime prevention, providing a clear example of how we can engage at multiple levels on an issue. Our discussion paper on the subject went beyond local law enforcement to receive an audience nationally and internationally.



Strategic decision making

This year the CMC placed considerable emphasis on strategic networking, undertaking joint ventures and partnerships at all levels. Since my arrival, I have noted that the CMC is part of a much larger anti-corruption and anti-crime framework in this country. We play a substantial role in that network. Increasingly, our views and the benefit of our experience are being sought nationally and internationally on relevant matters.

This year the CMC continued to make focused decisions about its targets and resources, time and energy. Within each area, the Assistant Commissioners identified those investigations, activities and projects that would have the greatest impact. Since time is money, this year Misconduct achieved savings through improving timeliness – substantially decreasing the time taken in investigations and reviews. It also restructured its work program to give greater recognition to the importance of complaints made about the local government sector. All areas of the organisation, particularly those in frontline service delivery, are grappling with how a Brisbane-based organisation can work most effectively across Queensland's regions. Greater use of web technologies, whenever possible, is one means of doing so.

Transitions in leadership

I wish to acknowledge the significant contribution of my predecessor Judge Martin Moynihan AO QC. Although his time at the CMC was relatively brief, the impact made by his tenure is considerable. His interest in the possibilities of public engagement through new technologies saw a total redevelopment of electronic communications. Further, as a continuation of the Jameson review of governance and management at the CMC, in August 2011 he initiated a project to ensure that we had the right resource mix and structure. This work continues, and will stand us in good stead for the current economic environment.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of other senior staff who left the CMC this year. Ms Ann Gummow left the Commission in August 2011 at the conclusion of her five years as a part-time Commissioner, her tenure noted for her commitment to social justice and Indigenous issues. Following her departure, Mr George Fox was appointed to the five-member Commission in September 2011. Mr John Callanan retired in November 2011, having been the Assistant Commissioner, Crime for the life of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. The success of the Crime function over the last decade is in no small part due to his outstanding leadership. Ms Kathleen Florian was appointed to that position in January 2012. These seamless transitions illustrate the CMC's resilience and its ability to balance continuity and renewal.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff for all their hard work over the past year.

Ross Martin SC
Chairperson