

Chairperson's report

In the past financial year, a number of events have challenged the Crime and Misconduct Commission – in particular, an external review of the Crime and Misconduct Act by the Honourable Ian Callinan AC, QC and Professor Nicholas Aroney, and the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee's Inquiry into the release and destruction of Fitzgerald Inquiry documents. Both of these recommended that some areas and operations within the CMC needed re-examination and renewal. To that end, the government appointed an Implementation Panel comprising the Director-General of the Department of the Justice and Attorney-General (Chair), the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Public Service Commissioner and myself to review those recommendations and suggest an optimal implementation plan. That process is now well under way.

The Commission's objective as an independent, government-funded organisation is to combat and neutralise, as far as possible, major crime in the community and serious breaches of integrity in units of public administration. It has a collection of functions unique among integrity bodies in Australia and uses multidisciplinary teams comprising police, civilian investigators, legal practitioners and forensic financial professionals. The government has indicated that it does not intend to disturb this unique functional mix, which, I think, is a soundly based decision. Queensland will therefore remain as the one major Australian jurisdiction whose integrity body is responsible for investigating major crime and corruption with special evidence-gathering powers, and where it also has oversight of police integrity.

It is important that the challenges presently faced by the CMC do not overshadow the important work performed by the Commission in its daily functions. In 2012–13, the Commission undertook 37 crime operations and 63 misconduct investigations. Our Crime staff tackled some of the most pernicious offences set out in the Criminal Code of Queensland, including those relating to the enticement of children – mainly by use of the internet – by sexual predators. I am impressed by the results achieved by police officers and other staff involved in investigation, intelligence and support work. Their professionalism, including the continual updating of their skills to be able to be at the forefront of crime fighting, is evidence of their dedication in the conduct of these operations.

In relation to misconduct, the 2012–13 financial year saw the successful prosecution of a major fraud involving almost \$17 million in the Queensland Department of Health.

The combined efforts of officers of the Commission, the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Audit Office and the Department of Health resulted in the arrest and conviction of an employee of Queensland Health, Mr Joel Morehu-Barlow. This case has drawn attention to the importance of fundamental accounting controls and the exercise of managerial oversight in the public sector. It also raised fundamental issues for government, and the public sector generally, about the values inherent in "serving the public" – that public servants must discharge their responsibilities in the best interests of the community – as well as highlighting the importance of diligence in the governance of public sector organisations.

The path ahead

It has become clear that the overall expectations of the Commission, as well as some of its processes and standards, must now be redeveloped. From the work currently being progressed by the Implementation Panel and the Commission's own officers, it can be confidently anticipated that the Commission will be in a very different state by the end of the next financial year in the way it focuses on more serious corruption in units of public administration, particularly in its response and throughput times. The work it does in attacking organised and serious crime is well regarded by other jurisdictions and will continue unabated.

I thank the Implementation Panel and the senior officers of the organisations involved for their efforts. I also thank the Commissioners and the staff for their professionalism over the past year and for their cooperation during this current period of change. They remain positive about their ability to continue making a highly professional contribution to making Queensland a safer place. So do I.

I have been privileged to be associated with the work of the Commission in all its challenges and successes. I commend this Annual Report as an accurate account of the substantive work of the Commission in the 2012–13 financial year.



Dr Ken Levy
Acting Chairperson