



ICAC BRIEFINGS AND TRANSPARENCY

ICAC TO ENHANCE INFORMATION SHARING AND TRANSPARENCY

20 March 2018

The Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, the Hon. Bruce Lander QC, will provide a suite of briefings to the new Government about issues and trends identified in the course of the work carried out by his office and the Office for Public Integrity (OPI).

The Commissioner said:

My investigation into maladministration associated with the Oakden Older Persons Mental Health Facility demonstrated the critical importance of ensuring that information about serious or systemic issues or trends affecting the integrity of public administration must be brought to the attention of persons at the highest levels of authority, including the responsible Ministers. It has become clear to me that that does not always occur.

As I said in my Oakden investigation report, I was astonished at the extent to which persons in senior positions were not aware of the systemic issues occurring at the facility.

As a consequence of my investigation, I formed the view that it could not be assumed that information relating to serious impropriety in public administration was being communicated to relevant Ministers. I decided that, to the extent that we are able to do so, my office and the OPI should play a part in ensuring Ministers are informed.

Because my office and the OPI have now been in operation for four and a half years, we have developed an increasing body of knowledge about integrity issues in public administration. We are now in a better position to identify trends and issues affecting public integrity in South Australia.

On 19 March 2018 I provided a letter to the new Premier offering briefings:

- To the Premier and Attorney-General by my Chief Executive Officer and me about current issues of concern associated with integrity in public administration and the operations of the ICAC and the OPI.*



- *To each new Minister about trends and issues of concern associated with integrity within his or her portfolio, and a briefing to the new Minister and his or her staff concerning the operation of the ICAC and the OPI and reporting obligations.*
- *To Cabinet on a quarterly basis outlining broad trends and issues associated with integrity in public administration.*

I made it clear that briefings would not extend to disclosing information about current investigations where the disclosure could compromise the investigation or where it would otherwise be inappropriate to disclose information.

The Premier accepted the offer of briefings. My Chief Executive Officer and I met with the Premier and Attorney-General on the afternoon of 19 March 2018 and provided a briefing on existing issues of concern, the operations of my office and the OPI and funding and resource needs into the future.

Arrangements are being made for briefings to be provided to each new minister upon his or her appointment later this week. Those briefings will focus upon issues relevant to the Minister's portfolio and the operations of my office and the OPI.

Subject to the availability of resources, my office will also offer Chief Executives of relevant agencies regular briefings about trends or issues of concern associated with his or her agency.

The aim of such briefings is to play a part in ensuring that Ministers and Chief Executives are provided with information that will assist them to ensure proper and accountable public administration. These briefings will supplement information already provided to Chief Executives through the routine referral of matters relevant to their agency and occasional referral of matters to Ministers where I am not satisfied that an agency has adequately dealt with the matter.

As soon as the composition of the Parliamentary Crime and Public Integrity Policy Committee is known I will offer that Committee a similar briefing to that provided to the Premier and Attorney-General.



The Commissioner's office is presently exploring other ways to expand the range of information about the office that is publicly available. Subject to obtaining the necessary resources it is intended to begin publishing on the ICAC website statistics on a monthly basis, including the number of complaints and reports received by the OPI, the number of investigations commenced and the number of investigations closed, the number of matters referred to another agency for investigation and the number of new prosecutions commenced. The statistics will be accompanied by a short discussion to highlight any trends or issues arising from the statistics. If resources allow, it is intended that monthly reporting will commence in August 2018 with a report on the July 2018 statistics.

This will allow the more timely disclosure of information to the public about the number of matters reported to the OPI and how those matters are addressed.

The Commissioner is also finalising a number of reports about integrity issues which will be presented to Parliament this year.

It is hoped that all of these measures will assist in making public administration more transparent and accountable.