

Public Statement

Statement by Commissioner Emma Townsend, Independent Commission Against Corruption

This is a public statement about an investigation into alleged misconduct committed by a senior South Australia police officer. This officer's recent absence from the workplace has been the subject of media coverage. Given that media coverage, I consider it appropriate that the South Australian community is informed of the steps being taken to investigate this matter.

Pursuant to sections 45 and 46 of the *Police Complaints and Discipline Act 2016* (PCD Act), I authorise the publication and disclosure of the information contained in this statement. Before making this public statement, I sought the views of the Director of the Office for Public Integrity (OPI) and the Commissioner of Police.

On 2 April 2026 the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) received a referral from the OPI with a report of alleged misconduct by the senior police officer. ICAC decided to investigate the allegation under section 30 of PCD Act. Such an investigation examines whether the officer has committed a breach of discipline contrary to the SA Police Code of Conduct; it is not a corruption investigation.

In most cases, the Internal Investigation Section of South Australia Police (IIS) conducts disciplinary investigations in relation to South Australia Police (SA Police) officers with independent oversight by the OPI. However, sections 29 and 30 of the PCD Act provide an important mechanism by which a disciplinary matter involving police officers can be investigated by an authority independent of SA Police. In some circumstances, an independent investigation might be important for maintaining public confidence in SA Police. This is such a matter.

I make two further observations. Firstly, it is not uncommon for an employee who is the subject of a disciplinary investigation to continue to be remunerated while the investigation proceeds. In the case of police officers, the Commissioner of Police has no legislative power to suspend an officer, whether with or without remuneration, while a matter is under investigation and before any charges have been laid or disciplinary proceedings commenced.

Secondly, the prohibitions on disclosure and publication in sections 45 and 46 of the PCD Act do not serve merely to protect a person who is the subject of an investigation. There can be good reasons why it is not productive, particularly when a disciplinary investigation is in its early stages, for information about it to be disclosed or published. For example, the publication of certain information may compromise the investigation or cause unnecessary distress to those impacted by it, including witnesses and their families. In my view, this is such a case.

I issue a reminder that information relating to investigations under the PCD Act must not be published without the authorisation of ICAC, the OPI or the Commissioner of Police. This public statement does not amount to authorisation to publish any further information about the particulars of the investigation. Publishing such information without express authorisation is an offence.

Finally, I note that reports about the conduct of a SA police officer can be made to the OPI. Disclosure by a public officer of information that they reasonably suspect raises a potential issue of misconduct in public administration will likely attract the protections of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* (PID Act) if made to a relevant authority. The OPI is a relevant authority. Reports can be made through the OPI [website](#) or via telephone on 1300 782 489.

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