

Public Statement

EVALUATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF SAFECOM AND THE CFS, MFS AND SES

28 AUGUST 2024

Statement by the Hon. Ann Vanstone KC Commissioner, Independent Commission Against Corruption

The Independent Commission Against Corruption plays an important role in preventing and minimising corruption in public administration. One way of achieving this is to conduct an evaluation of the policies and procedures of public authorities to examine in some detail the controls they have in place to manage corruption risks. This is one of our functions.

I have decided to conduct an evaluation of the policies and procedures of the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) relating to the management of conflicts of interests. SAFECOM oversees the governance, strategic and policy arrangements of the three emergency services, the South Australian Country Fire Service (CFS), South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and South Australian State Emergency Service (SES).

The principal focus of the evaluation will be SAFECOM. Due to the governance arrangements, aspects of each of the three emergency services will necessarily be encompassed in the evaluation.

These agencies serve crucial public functions in prevention, response to and recovery from emergencies and disasters. Corruption can damage the agencies and undermine their important work. The agencies have large workforces (including thousands of volunteers) administered by small staff teams, and the operational needs of each agency require administrative and financial resources.

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Undisclosed and poorly managed conflicts of interests increase the likelihood that corruption will occur. The evaluation will examine the policies and procedures of SAFECOM that apply to the CFS, MFS and SES relating to conflicts of interests.

The evaluation team will consider whether these policies and procedures, and the manner in which they are developed, reviewed, communicated and enforced, provide adequate safeguards against corruption. The evaluation will be undertaken at a systems level, based largely on analysis of corporate documents.

An evaluation is not an investigation of individual conduct. If during an evaluation conduct is identified which requires investigation, that conduct will be dealt with separately and in accordance with the relevant legislation.

I anticipate the Commission will provide a final evaluation report to both Houses of Parliament in the first half of 2025.

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The publication of this information has been authorised by the Commissioner under section 54 *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012 (SA)*.