

Thursday 3 August 2017

Investigation into the conduct of a former NSW Department of Justice officer and others

ICAC FINDINGS

The ICAC found that Leslie Reynolds engaged in serious corrupt conduct by:

- entering into an agreement with Khader George Ghamrawi, sometime on late 2014/early 2015, where he accepted cash payments from Mr Ghamrawi of \$24,000, and agreed to receive a payment of \$95,000 at a future date
- accepting a benefit by way of a saving of around \$40,000 to \$50,000 when using G&S Building Group Pty Ltd to assist him with the installation of a swimming pool at his residence in around mid-2015 to mid-2016

in return for exercising his functions as a public official by recommending that Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) work be allocated to Mr Ghamrawi's businesses, G&S and Global Metal Works Pty Ltd, and influencing others to allocate such work to those companies.

The ICAC found that Khader George Ghamrawi engaged in serious corrupt conduct by:

- providing \$24,000 to Mr Reynolds, and agreeing with Mr Reynolds to give him \$95,000 at a future date
- providing a benefit by way of a saving of around \$40,000 to \$50,000 when installing a swimming pool at Mr Reynolds' residence

in return for Mr Reynolds exercising his official functions as a public official by recommending that CSNSW work would be allocated to G&S and Global Metal Works and influencing others to allocate such work to those companies.

ICAC RECOMMENDATIONS

The ICAC is of the opinion that the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions should be obtained with respect to the prosecution of Mr Reynolds, Mr Ghamrawi and his wife, Samantha Boyle, for various offences.

CORRUPTION PREVENTION

The ICAC has made 13 corruption prevention recommendations to the Department of Justice, including the need to review existing project scoping practices, develop accurate and comprehensive asset registers, improve budgetary management, and enhance contractor selection and monitoring procedures.

BACKGROUND

The Commission's investigation began after it received a report from the CSNSW Commissioner under section 11 of the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988* that, based on enquiries made by CSNSW's Investigations Branch, he was concerned CSNSW staff, including Mr Reynolds, and contractors may have engaged in anti-competitive practices, possible collusion and corrupt conduct. Section 11 requires the principal officer of a public authority to report to the Commission any matter that the person suspects on reasonable grounds concerns, or may concern, corrupt conduct.

The Commission did not hold a public inquiry into this matter, but instead determined to make a public report, given that a substantial amount of cogent evidence – including admissions made by Mr Reynolds and Mr Ghamrawi – was obtained during the investigation. Based on the evidence, it was unlikely that a public inquiry would uncover new evidence relevant to the investigation, however, a public report would make the community aware of the relevant conduct, system weaknesses, and set out corruption prevention recommendations. The report is available on the ICAC website at www.icac.nsw.gov.au.

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