



Case study

Operation Pelican

Operation Pelican investigated an employee of WSA Co Limited (WSA) who solicited a bribe from a company involved in a procurement process.

This was a joint investigation by the National Anti-Corruption Commission (the Commission) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

Mr Sajish Erasery worked for WSA and solicited the bribe from Marsenta, a company tendering for a WSA contract. In doing so, Mr Erasery attempted to use his official role for personal financial gain. This constitutes an [abuse of office](#) as defined by section 8(1)(c) of the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (the NACC Act).

This case study uses pseudonyms for the company, 'Marsenta' and the Marsenta employee involved in the investigation, 'Mr Stirling'.

Procurement, contracting and bribery

Procurement and contracting involve regular interactions between government officials and private companies. These interactions can create vulnerabilities that increase the risk of corrupt conduct, including close personal relationships with suppliers, unequal access to information, and inadequate management of conflicts of interest. If not appropriately managed, these factors can facilitate behaviours such as preferential treatment, bribery or other forms of corrupt conduct.

Employees and contractors of Government–business enterprises (GBEs) and other Commonwealth entities are [public officials](#) under the NACC Act.

WSA is a GBE and Commonwealth Company under the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#). GBEs can face particular corruption risks because they operate at the intersection of the public and private sectors. (See, [Government Business Enterprises: what the NACC means for you.](#))

Referral

WSA referred the matter to the Commission on 15 March 2024. The referral alleged a staff member, Mr Erasery, had solicited a bribe from Mr Stirling, in exchange for influencing the procurement so that Marsenta would win a \$5 million contract for the management of WSA's carpark systems.

WSA staff are Commonwealth public officials and therefore fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission.

What happened

Mr Erasery began working at WSA in May 2023 as an Executive Procurement Manager for technology.

In November 2023, WSA opened a tender for a \$5 million contract to provide car park management systems. Marsenta was one of the companies that submitted a tender.

On 11 March 2024, Mr Erasery invited Mr Stirling – a Marsenta employee – to a private dinner. During the dinner, Mr Erasery suggested he could ensure the car parking contract was awarded to Marsenta in return for a payment of 5% of the contract value (approximately \$250,000).

Mr Stirling did not commit to the proposal and (unknown to Mr Erasery) reported the incident to Marsenta's legal team. Marsenta notified WSA and WSA made a referral to the Commission as well as a report to the AFP.

The Commission and the AFP commenced Operation Pelican to jointly investigate the allegations. Investigators used a range of investigative techniques to substantiate the alleged conduct.

As part of a [controlled operation](#) (authorised under the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) to obtain evidence to support investigations into corrupt conduct), Mr Stirling continued communicating with Mr Erasery about the bribe.

During these conversations, Mr Erasery said he was willing to accept \$200,000 in monthly instalments of \$20,000, starting on 27 March 2024. Mr Erasery also said he could assist Mr Stirling in inflating invoices to cover Mr Stirling's cost in bribing Mr Erasery.

On 27 March 2024, Mr Stirling met Mr Erasery at a park and delivered the first \$20,000 payment.

AFP officers arrested Mr Erasery shortly after he left the meeting. The funds were recovered.

Outcome

The Commissioner found that Mr Erasery had engaged in corrupt conduct. Specifically, he abused his office by soliciting a payment to influence the awarding of a contract. A public official can commit an abuse of office even if they do not ultimately obtain a benefit.

Mr Erasery was charged with soliciting a corrupt commission, under [section 249B of the *Crimes Act 1900* \(NSW\)](#).

Mr Erasery pleaded guilty in the NSW Local Court on 17 December 2024.

On 25 July 2025, Mr Erasery was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment to be served in the community through an Intensive Correction Order. This included completing 500 hours of community service. Mr Erasery expressed remorse for his corrupt conduct.

Corruption prevention takeaways

Operation Pelican highlights corruption risks associated with procurement, particularly where public officials interact with private companies competing for government contracts.

WSA's procurement process involved multiple stages and decision-makers, which limited the influence of any one individual. Even if his bribe had been accepted, Mr Erasery may not have been able to ensure Marsenta was given the contract: he was involved in the tender evaluation process but did not have the authority to decide which company would win the contract. This demonstrates how structured procurement processes and shared decision-making can reduce the risk of corrupt conduct by limiting the influence of a single employee.

WSA had established governance and integrity frameworks in place. These included appropriate recruitment vetting and training on anti-bribery and corruption prevention in procurement.

The case reinforces the importance of strong governance, reporting mechanisms and ethical behaviour in identifying and responding to corruption risks. Mr Stirling's decision to report Mr Erasery's conduct to Marsenta, Marsenta's reporting to WSA, WSA's prompt referral to the Commission and their cooperation with investigators, were critical to the success of Operation Pelican.

Further information

- [Operation Pelican investigation report](#)
- [Government Business Enterprises: what the NACC means for you](#)
- NACC [corruption prevention and education](#) resources
- To report a corruption issue, see [report corrupt conduct](#)