



# Case study

## Operation Young

Operation Young investigated the disclosure of sensitive information by an Australian Border Force officer to a person under investigation.

This was a joint investigation commenced by the former Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI), the New South Wales Police Force, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, the Australian Federal Police and the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) and finalised after 1 July 2023 by the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

### **Abuse of office**

A public official may engage in corrupt conduct if they misuse their position. This includes using their role to gain a benefit for themselves or another person, or to cause a detriment to others.

In this case, a Commonwealth public official used their position to access and share sensitive information with an associate under investigation. This was found to be an [abuse of office](#).

See [Types of corrupt conduct](#).

## Referral

Home Affairs received information that an individual may have been importing prohibited goods with the assistance of 3 ABF officers.

The Secretary of Home Affairs made a formal notification to ACLEI in May 2020 under the *Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006* (no longer in force). A ‘formal notification’ is now known as a [mandatory referral](#) under the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022*.

## What happened

Mr George Andreopoulos, Mr Benjamin Collins and Mr Shamim Kalam were ABF officers in roles that provided access to sensitive information.

Mr Andreopoulos had a personal and business relationship with an associate involved in commercial activities linked to tobacco distribution.

A search warrant was executed on Mr Andreopoulos. From items seized, it was identified that Mr Andreopoulos had transferred a classified report outside authorised systems, including to personal devices and cloud storage. The report contained sensitive information about vulnerabilities in Australia’s supply chain for illicit goods. This transfer occurred around the time of ongoing discussions with the associate about potential business opportunities. Mr Andreopoulos also accessed two classified intelligence reports relevant to his associate’s business, shortly before indirectly sharing information about them with his associate.

Mr Andreopoulos, Mr Collins and Mr Kalam were also involved in proposed ventures in the security and technology sectors. These activities intersected with their official roles and were not appropriately disclosed or approved, increasing the risk of conflicts of interest affecting their official functions.

Overall, the combination of personal relationships, undisclosed business interests and access to sensitive information created a heightened corruption risk.

## Outcome

The investigation did not find evidence that the officers directly assisted criminal importation activities.

However, the Commission found that Mr Andreopoulos engaged in an abuse of office by improperly disclosing to his associate sensitive information obtained through his employment.

Mr Collins and Mr Kalam were not found to have engaged in corrupt conduct: their non-disclosure of their proposed security business may have been a breach of employment obligations and the APS Code of Conduct but was not corrupt conduct.

## Corruption prevention takeaways

Operation Young highlights the corruption risks associated with undeclared conflicts of interest, particularly where public officials have personal, or business relationships connected to their work. It demonstrates how these relationships can influence judgement and decision-making and increase the risk of misusing information.

The case illustrates how an undeclared relationship can influence the honest performance of an official's functions and reinforces the importance of declaring and appropriately managing relevant relationships.

## Further information

- [Operation Young investigation report](#)
- NACC [corruption prevention and education](#) resources
- To report a corruption issue, see [report corrupt conduct](#)