

Mr. Jason Li MP
Chair
Committee on the NSW ICAC
Parliament of NSW

BY EMAIL: icaccommittee@parliament.nsw.gov.au

10 March 2025

Dear Mr Li,

Supplementary questions

I refer to the email received from the Committee Manager on 20 February 2025 attaching supplementary questions from the Committee following the public hearing on 10 February 2025. The Commission's responses to the questions are set out below.

Cyber security

1. What is the risk appetite of the Commission for cyber risk?

Low - The Commission has no appetite for risk regarding actions that may impede the Commission's information security and management.

2. What is the current risk rating for cyber security and cyber readiness of the Commission?

We regard the overall cyber risk rating as significant. The implementation of a Security Operations Centre (SOC) would remove many of these risks to the low to medium range.

3. What is the expected cost and timeframe to bring the risk rating within appetite?

Our current focus in relation to Cyber Security is the establishment of a SOC, for which we are currently evaluating potential vendors. This initiative will substantially enhance our Cyber Security operations, enabling us to better plan the remaining elements of our cyber roadmap and define the necessary controls to mitigate risks within our acceptable risk appetite (low). At this stage, the Commission is unable to provide a total cost, as it depends on the outcome of the SOC process. The range provided by vendors is considered within available resources, although later benefits through moving to the cloud, will be dependent on Treasury funding.

4. To what extent is the Commission in compliance with the NSW Cyber Security Policy? Could you please provide to the Committee your Annual Attestation Statement for 2023-2024?

We have identified the controls to raise our maturity levels and formulated an action plan with estimate timeframes on when these will be achieved. The introduction of a SOC model will address higher level risks and remaining risks will be managed within the IT budget existing resources.

The Commission's annual attestation statement is no longer included in the annual report, however, is available for viewing by Committee members on a confidential basis at the Commission's premises.

Witness welfare

5. How does the Commission intend to monitor the responsibilities and workload of the Witness Liaison Officer to ensure the role remains sustainable and effective?

The Manager of Human Resources and Security conducts fortnightly meetings with the Witness Liaison Officer to review workload. These discussions involve reviewing reports to monitor volume and assess complexity. With the Witness Liaison function now operational, the goal is to further improve its effectiveness by examining data and trends. This approach will allow the Commission to closely monitor both the effectiveness and sustainability of the function.

Foreign interference

6. The Commission reported that it has developed a budget proposal surrounding a growing concern about managing foreign interference (Annual report, p 41). What activities would this proposed program involve?

As noted on page 15 of the Annual Report, the Commission sees a clear overlap between the risk of foreign interference and its work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. A position in the Commission's education team has been created to carry out much of the CALD work, aspects of which were explained in my opening statement to the Committee on 10 February and in separate written correspondence. Beyond an initial phase of work with the Ethnic Communities Council, the Commission intends to maintain an ongoing focus on community education and awareness raising. This education work may figure in the next version of the Commission's strategic plan.

In addition, the Commission:

- Will be addressing foreign interference risks at the May 2025 National Investigations Symposium.
- Has held a number of workshops and meetings with NSW-based universities, which are known targets for foreign interference.

- Has commenced work on a short publication addressing the risks of grooming and compromise (due for finalisation in 2025).
- Incorporated relevant messages from operations Aero, Keppel, Galley and Tolosa in its existing education programs.
- Is actively exploring intelligence-gathering opportunities that have the potential to identify public officials who may be targeted by foreign nationals or foreign interference.

Investigation improvement projects

- 7. During the reporting period, the Commission launched a project to automate financial investigation processes (Annual Report, p 32). Can you provide an update on the status of this project?**

The project has advanced. We are awaiting on more detailed information from the Commission's existing financial software supplier regarding a new product that may provide the requisite uplift to the data analysis and visualisation.

- 8. In what ways will the digitisation of search warrant procedures improve operational efficiencies and what is the current progress of trials assessing these procedures (Annual Report, p 32)?**

The search warrant digitisation project has concluded and a new procedure adopted, which enables:

- Information regarding recovered property to be recorded in the Commission's case management system in the field and immediately following the conclusion of a search warrant. Previously information was recorded in the field and not entered into the case management system until officers returned to Commission premises with the property. This efficiency means that the time taken to record property in the case management system is significantly reduced so the review can commence earlier.
- Digital receipts to be produced and signed in the field. Previously receipts were printed for manual signatures. This will enable the Commission to phase out the use of remote printers.

Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours faithfully,



The Hon John Hatzistergos AM
Chief Commissioner