

Office of the Chief Commissioner

43292/184

4 August 2025

Mr Phillip Donato MP
Chair
Committee on the Ombudsman,
Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and
the Crime Commission

By email: ombolecc@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Donato

Re: Inquiry into the appropriations for the services of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Ombudsman's Office for the 2025-26 financial year

Thank you for your letter dated 23 July 2025 seeking further information on the Commission's 2025-26 budget including the outcome of budget proposals submitted by the Commission and the adequacy of funding provided.

The Commission's approved recurrent and capital funding is consistent with expectations and is set at a level that enables the Commission to operate in an effective manner.

As part of the 2025-26 budget process the Commission submitted 2 proposals for additional ongoing funding. The first related to additional staffing resources and the second related to information technology specifically to cover increased costs associated with maintenance and licence fees of specialised systems and equipment: the implementation of AI technology and the migration of on-premises systems to cloud systems. Both proposals were supported and approved in full.

Both funding requests directly support the Commission's ability to deliver on its strategic and statutory obligations as the State's independent body exercising royal commission powers to detect, investigate and expose serious misconduct within the NSW Police Force (NSWPF) and the NSW Crime Commission (NSWCC).

Budget bid # 1 – additional staffing \$13.5m over the 10-year budget cycle

The Commission sought ongoing budget supplementation to provide for 8 additional full-time positions.

The Commission has a statutory obligation to assess all complaints received and, through a triage system, decide on whether it is appropriate to refer the complaint to the NSWPF or NSWCC to investigate, the Commission will then oversight their handling of the complaint or can decide to conduct its own investigation of the complaint. The

Commission assessed 6,881 complaints in the 2024-25fy a significant increase to the 5,755 complaints assessed in the 2023-24fy.

The Commission also has the function of identifying systemic issues conducive to officer misconduct and assessing the effectiveness of programs run by the NSWPF and NSWCC to reduce officer misconduct. Seven of the 8 positions are operational positions.

The Commission took a careful and considered approach in assessing the need for new positions. The positions outlined below are considered essential to mitigate risk while enabling a proactive approach to workforce planning that meets ongoing compliance requirements and predicted increases in demand.

New positions – 8 in total (shown in order of priority)

- Governance Risk Officer – grade 11/12
- Team Leader Intake – grade 7/8
- Intake Officer – grade 3/4
- Senior Investigator – grade 9/10 (this position attracts an additional loading)
- Paralegal – Legal Officer grade 1
- Assessment/Customer Service Officer – grade 7/8 (targeted position)
- Intake Officer – grade 3/4 (targeted position)
- Manager Intelligence – grade 11/12.

Governance Officer at grade 11/12

The Commission does not currently have a standalone governance position. The Governance Officer will support the CEO to ensure sound governance practices and policies are in place. The role will lead the development and ongoing implementation of organisational governance, compliance, and risk assessment frameworks. The role will assume the role of Chief Audit Executive (CAE), overseeing and coordinating the Commission's internal audit and risk management programs.

Intake and Assessments

Funding was sought for 4 on-going positions. Two positions will be targeted to provide additional support to complainants identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Having roles that allow First Nations complainants to make a complaint in a culturally safe way is in line with the Government's Closing the Gap commitments.

1 x Team Leader intake at grade 7/8

The Intake Team was created following the review of the assessment process. The team serves as the first point of contact for complainants. The Team Leader coordinates the Intake team to ensure effective day-to-day management and delegation of tasks ensuring compliance with the Commission's operational standards.

1 x Intake Officer position at grade 3/4 (targeted position)

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The intake officer handles managing all complaints received by the LECC in the first instance. This includes prompt and accurate recording of complaints, enquires and other misconduct information. The Intake Officer provides high level customer service

through telephone support including assisting complainants to commit verbal complaints to writing as required under the LECC Act. Last year the Commission took over 3,000 calls from complainants.

1 x Assessment Officer at grade 7/8 (targeted position)

The 7/8 assessment officer is responsible for the timely and appropriate assessment of all notifiable complaints received by the Commission. Assessment officers interact directly with the public through the provision of prompt, accurate and considered advice about the complaint process, the status of a complaint, and the outcome of the Commission's assessment. Assessment officers review the action proposed by the NSWPF and NSWCC and may recommend further action.

Investigations & Intelligence

1 x Senior Investigator at grade 9/10

The Senior Investigator Integrity actively conducts, leads, and oversees the planning, preparation, development, and execution process of integrity investigations.

Senior Investigators must have a minimum of 5 years' service in a State or Federal Law Enforcement Agency and/or Integrity Agency. The Commission cannot employ current or former officers of the NSWPF or NSWCC. Commission Investigators must keep current certification in the use of firearms and other prohibited weapons and as they are investigating law enforcement officers require a higher skill level and awareness of contemporary policing methodology.

Manager Intelligence at grade 11/12

The Manager Intelligence provides direction to the strategic intelligence function ensuring utilisation of data driven analysis to identify emerging issues in law enforcement. The role also ensures the tactical and operational intelligence functions provide effective information gathering and analysis to support the Commission's multidisciplinary team approach, this is particularly relevant given the increasing complexity of Commission investigations.

Legal Services Unit (LSU)

Paralegal at legal officer grade 1

The paralegal undertakes research and aids as needed in the delivery of legal services to the LECC. The role provides support in the conduct of LECC investigations and the preparation for and conduct of LECC hearings. As required by legislation the role conducts integrity checks on serving NSW Police officers applying for promotion over a particular level. Paralegal roles are aimed at students currently studying law.

Budget bid # 2– IT related \$9.8m over the 10-year budget cycle.

The Commission sought ongoing budget supplementation to provide for an increase in the cost of maintenance and licence fees of specialised systems and equipment, the implementation of AI technology and the migration of on-premises systems to cloud systems.

This funding bid addressed:

- Increased licence and maintenance costs for the Commission's case management system, used by all Commission staff and fundamental to Commission operations
- Increased licensing costs of Microsoft business applications
- Costs to implement and use AI solutions, and
- Cloud migration.

Case Management System

This system is critical to ongoing business needs of the Commission. The current case management system contract expires in December 2025. Under the original contract the Commission paid for 5 years of maintenance upfront at a reduced cost. Contemporary pricing to support the system post-December 2025 is \$350k per annum. A renewed contract at this price is believed reasonable for the system capability in-place and includes increased support and maintenance by the vendor, cloud-hosting of the system/database, and ongoing development.

Microsoft Licensing

The LECC updated Microsoft licensing to Microsoft E5 allowing it to migrate services hosted on-premises to Microsoft 365 and uplift its cybersecurity posture. The migration was partially funded through the Digital Restart Fund (DRF) which covered operating costs to July 2025. The new Microsoft technologies will provide contemporary systems and applications for LECC staff.

AI

The Commission recently undertook research and business unit analysis for the application of AI across functions. It is expected that AI presents opportunities to operate at a higher level of effectiveness and achieve efficiencies. A bespoke implementation is needed given the sensitivity of, and security controls applied to, data holdings across the LECC. This project is scheduled to be delivered over a 2-year period.

Open-source intelligence (OSINT) Software

Open-source intelligence is the process of collecting, analysing, and disseminating information from a variety of publicly available online sources including social media, news outlets, online forums, and the deep and dark web. OSINT is a critical tool for law enforcement agencies facing increasing difficulty obtaining sensitive information. The volume of online information presents significant challenges for collection and analysis. OSINT tools (software) automate this process to identify hidden patterns and connections, significantly broadening the scope of intelligence, and improving decision making capabilities.

Cloud Migration Strategy

Most Commission data, systems and applications are stored within, and operate from, an on-premises server room, this presents significant risk to the Commission and does not align with the Digital New South Wales Cloud Strategy. The Commission's cloud migration strategy has been developed having regard to limited IT resources and the need to maintain security and minimise risk. The strategy will deliver the migration of all on-premises infrastructure to a public cloud over the 10-year budget cycle.

The strategy achieves full public cloud migration through 3 phases:

- Phase 1:** The migration of SaaS applications from on-premises to Azure, consistent with the NSW Government Cloud Policy 'public cloud first' principle.
- Phase 2:** Migrate server infrastructure to GovDC (private cloud). This phase will be staged to maximise hardware with respect to refresh cycles.
- Phase 3:** Decommission server room; Uplift and migrate legacy/operational systems from GovDC to Azure.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a trailing line.

The Hon Peter Johnson SC
Chief Commissioner