

Integrity Co-ordinating Group 2011 Forum

Parmelia Hilton, Perth, 16 June 2011

Chris Field

Chair, Integrity Co-ordinating Group and Western Australian Ombudsman

It gives me considerable pleasure to welcome you formally to our 2011 Forum, *Integrity in decision making: A discussion with the Integrity Co-ordinating Group*. Can I say how pleasing it is to see such a large attendance at today's event. On behalf of each of the Integrity Coordinating Group members, we sincerely appreciate the time you have taken to attend this morning's Forum and welcome the value that you, like us, place on the important issues that we are discussing today.

The Integrity Coordinating Group, or ICG, was established in January 2005 to promote and strengthen integrity in Western Australian public bodies and this remains its primary purpose. The ICG is a collaboration of each of the agencies that you will hear from today. While the work of each ICG member agency is different, and each office has specific and distinct jurisdictions, at the heart of all of our offices is the concept of integrity in government.

The ICG promotes and strengthens integrity in Western Australian public bodies in three principal ways:

- First, by encouraging coordinated research, evaluation and monitoring of integrity issues;
- Second, by ensuring that there is operational cooperation and consistency in communication between the ICG members; and
- Third, by undertaking education activities on integrity issues within the public sector.

Of course today's Forum and our new ICG product, *Integrity in Decision-Making*, being launched this morning, are key examples of the way that the ICG goes about promoting and strengthening integrity in Western Australian public bodies.

Since our last ICG Forum our membership has changed and expanded. Today's Forum is an opportunity for me to warmly welcome the two new members of the ICG, Mal Wauchope, Public Sector Commissioner and Sven Bluemmel, Information Commissioner. As Chair of the ICG, I am delighted that both Mal and Sven, clear leaders in promoting integrity in the Western Australian public sector, have joined the ICG.

As you know, today's Forum is focussed on integrity in decision making, a topic which is not just relevant to every ICG member, but also of critical day to day importance to all of us who serve the public interest. Indeed, the ICG defines integrity as earning and sustaining public trust by:

- Serving the public interest;
- Using powers responsibly;
- Acting with honesty and transparency; and
- Preventing and addressing improper conduct.

Ensuring integrity in decision-making increases confidence in the decision-making process, reduces complaints about decisions and strengthens trust in the public sector. Ultimately, decision making characterised by integrity best serves the public interest.

As I noted at the outset, the topic of today's Forum is a discussion with the ICG and we have very much designed today's Forum to be a discussion, one in which ICG members will discuss their perspectives on integrity in decision making, an opportunity for you to discuss with ICG members your perspectives and at the end of today's event, a further opportunity for discussion between you and senior representatives of the ICG members.

We have designed today's Forum in this way as it reflects the reality that integrity in decision making is ultimately a responsibility of us all, a responsibility that is best undertaken through active discussion, collaboration, cooperation and sharing of information. I hope you find today's event rewarding and enjoyable and I look forward to the discussion that we will have.