

AFP ESTABLISHES PERTH-BASED TEAM TO INVESTIGATE FOREIGN BRIBERY

07 September 2016 | Australia

Legal Briefings - By **Elizabeth Macknay** and **Samantha Bellini Nadilo**

The Commonwealth Government has announced the creation of a new specialist fraud and anti-corruption team in Perth.

This follows recent high-profile corruption allegations against Western Australian companies, and signals an increasing focus on bribery and corruption, particularly foreign bribery, in Western Australia and Australia more widely.

On 5 September 2016, the Commonwealth Government announced that the Australian Federal Police (**AFP**) has established specialist complex fraud and anti-bribery and corruption teams in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne. The Government's announcement focused on the Perth-based team, which comprises 6 officers across multiple disciplines. The Perth team will prioritise foreign bribery investigations, as well as investigating other serious financial crimes.

The announcement comes a fortnight after the widely published allegations of foreign bribery involving (among others) a Western Australian resources company, and the Federal Opposition's announcement that it would seek to relaunch the lapsed Senate inquiry into foreign bribery. The timing and focus of the Government's announcement is unlikely to be coincidental.

Cynicism aside, the Commonwealth Government has continued to respond to [enduring criticism](#) about Australia's approach to addressing foreign bribery and corruption. The new AFP teams will be funded using some of the \$15 million in additional funding that the Government has already allocated to tackling foreign bribery. In the past 12 months, the Government has also made a number of changes to Commonwealth bribery and corruption laws, introducing new [false accounting offences](#) and [closing perceived 'loopholes'](#) in existing laws.

The Senate Standing Committee on Economics had been undertaking an inquiry into foreign bribery, and was due to release its report by 1 July 2016. However, the Committee ceased to exist on 9 May 2016, when both Houses of Parliament were dissolved. As noted above, the Federal Opposition has said that it will reinstate this inquiry. Assuming the inquiry is relaunched, it is likely that the Commonwealth Government and its agencies will continue to focus more attention on foreign bribery and corruption. With this, we can expect to see an uptick in the number of Australian companies being investigated and prosecuted for foreign bribery offences.

KEY CONTACTS

If you have any questions, or would like to know how this might affect your business, phone, or email these key contacts.



**ELIZABETH
MACKNAY**
PARTNER, PERTH

+61 8 9211 7806
Elizabeth.Macknay@hsf.com

LEGAL NOTICE

The contents of this publication are for reference purposes only and may not be current as at the date of accessing this publication. They do not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. Specific legal advice about your specific circumstances should always be sought separately before taking any action based on this publication.

© Herbert Smith Freehills 2020

SUBSCRIBE TO STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH LATEST THINKING, BLOGS, EVENTS, AND

MORE

Close

© HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS LLP 2020