

The Sydney Morning Herald

Federal Politics

# Feds fail to suppress details of bribery case

August 15, 2012

☆ Read later

Maris Beck

 submit

 Email article  Print  Reprints & permissions

THE federal government fought to stop the public learning the details of how former executives of two Reserve Bank of Australia subsidiaries allegedly conspired to pay millions in bribes to corrupt officials in Asia.

## Charge sheets in the committal of eight former executives from Securrency and Note Printing Australia

Debate about closing the court engulfed the entire first day of the committal proceedings against eight former executives of Securrency and Note Printing Australia, presided over by magistrate Phillip Goldberg.



**JOHN LECKENBY**

Former chief executive  
(Note Printing Australia)

**MYLES CURTIS**

Former managing director  
(Securrency)

**CHRISTIAN BOILLOT**

Former sales executive  
(Securrency)

Government Solicitor James Forsaith, at the request of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had argued on Monday that an open court would lead to exposure of information that would "damage Australian foreign relations and is prejudicial to the administration of justice".

But legal counsel for *The Age*, Veronica Scott, argued successfully that the case was "an extremely important proceeding of a matter of public interest" and that "embarrassment or sensitivity to the Commonwealth government or to DFAT or to any other Commonwealth official is not in itself a ground [to close the court]".

It was not until yesterday that prosecutor Nicholas Robinson, SC, delivered his opening statement, telling the court the accused conspired to bribe bank officials in Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia - which had code names such as "beanland" and "Kaiser country". "Each defendant knew of the corrupt arrangement," he said. The payments allegedly helped the companies secure contracts to supply plastic banknotes.

Mr Robinson said the accused believed their competitors, the paper banknote suppliers they called "the Brotherhood", would pay the bribes if they did not. He said the Reserve Bank was under pressure to get more business.

One of three agents who allegedly brokered the bribes, Colonel Anh Ngoc Luong had, according to correspondence from senior Australian trade commissioner Elizabeth Masamune to the accused, "been successful in obtaining contracts for a number of Australian companies to date".

The payments were allegedly disguised in some invoices as "fictional" media liaison, lobbying or translation, meetings and tuition for the son of a Vietnamese official.

In an email dated July 10, 2003, one of the accused, former Securrency sales executive Christian Boillot, allegedly wrote to former managing director Myles Curtis: "I'm afraid this is the nature of the game."

Boillot's employment, Mr Robinson said, had been terminated after he tried to take a cut of the commission payments for himself. Two other Securrency employees were allegedly fired after raising concerns about the integrity of agents used to secure contracts in Vietnam, and Mr Robinson said one was "escorted off the premises".

In response to the Commonwealth application to close the court, magistrate Goldberg ordered that more than 10 paragraphs from the prosecution opening remarks regarding alleged offences in Malaysia be suppressed.

Charges laid against former executives of Securrency - including former managing director Myles Curtis, former chief financial officer Mitchell Anderson, former business development managers Clifford Gerathy and Rognvald Marchant and former sales executive Christian Boillot - and Note Printing Australia former chief executive John Leckenby, former chief financial officer Peter Hutchinson and former sales executive Barry Brady - include offences relating to falsifying accounts and providing or conspiring to provide an illegitimate benefit to another person, with the intention of influencing a foreign public official. The alleged offences took place between 1999 and 2006. Full charges can be viewed online.

Securrency is half-owned and supervised by the Reserve Bank of Australia and Note Printing Australia is a fully owned subsidiary.

Former Securrency chief financial officer David John Ellery has pleaded guilty to false accounting charges and will be a prosecution star witness.

The hearing continues today.

[Follow the National Times on Twitter](#)

---

## Recommended



[Bali 9: Latest reports on executions of Andrew](#)

---

## Promoted Stories



[20 Pregnancy Photo Fails That Will Make You](#)