

# ICAC witness: \$195,000 paid for work that was never done

SMH 03 MAR 2016

Leesha McKenny

"Ms Baccam, have you been to Centennial Park?" ICAC commissioner Megan Latham stopped to ask the former Botany Bay Council employee on Tuesday.

A corruption inquiry had just heard that Marny Baccam planned to tender for a \$250,000 Centennial Park contract, despite having no qualifications, no equipment and barely any staff.

"Yeah, I've been," responded Ms Baccam, whose idea went nowhere. However, the invoices certainly did.

Nine days after Ari Landscape Solutions was registered, Ms Baccam's company started billing the council, the Independent Commission Against Corruption heard.

ICAC is investigating the alleged misdirection of more than \$4.2 million in Botany Bay Council funds through fake invoices, including \$195,000 paid to Ari Landscape Solutions for work never done.

Ms Baccam admitted to the inquiry that she shared money paid to Ari Landscape Solutions with her friend and former lover Gary Goodman, the council's former chief financial officer and the cent-



Marny Baccam was questioned about fake invoices.

ral person of interest to ICAC.

"Whenever you wanted money, you put in a false invoice with Ari Landscaping," counsel assisting the inquiry, Murugan Thangaraj, SC, said.

"Yes," Ms Baccam responded.

The inquiry, which is also examining the alleged misuse of council resources, was also told that Ms Baccam lives in a house paid for by Mr Goodman, never saw a bill for her phone, had a council Officeworks card and ETag.

She also used a council car - as, for a time, did her niece and daughter, ICAC heard.

The former clerical assistant,

who had delegated authority to approve invoices, was grilled about other companies alleged to have fraudulently billed council.

Earlier, the inquiry heard contractor Aleksa Subeski submitted invoices to council for work done on Mr Goodman's home, as well as those of Ms Baccam, Ms Baccam's mother and Suman Mishra.

Ms Mishra, another council employee in a romantic relationship with Mr Goodman, gave evidence to the inquiry on Tuesday.

Mr Subeski told the inquiry he initially agreed to start submitting fake invoices "on the instruction of Mr Goodman" as a way to recover between \$50,000 to \$60,000 he was owed from the former long-time council employee.

However, Mr Goodman continued to borrow money, Mr Subeski said.

ICAC was told one company, Jovane, ultimately received more than \$1.8 million in misdirected payments from council.

"Do you agree that Jovane did not do any work for Botany Council?" Mr Thangaraj asked Mr Subeski.

"Yes, I do," he responded. The inquiry continues.