

ICAC

Independent Commission
Against Corruption
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



ICAC PUBLIC INTEGRITY SURVEY 2024

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



**ICAC Public Integrity
Survey 2024**
South Australia

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Level 9, 55 Currie Street
Adelaide SA 5000
(08) 8463 5191
GPO Box 11066
Adelaide SA 5001
[icac.sa.gov.au](https://www.icac.sa.gov.au)

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COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

This report provides the results of the Commission's third Public Integrity Survey. The survey presents the perceptions and experiences of potential corruption and other improper conduct of over 7,000 South Australian public officers. I would like to thank participants for taking the time to complete the survey. The survey was undertaken before I commenced as Commissioner in February 2025. I would like to thank all Commission staff who have been involved in this piece of work.

The Commission uses Public Integrity Surveys to gauge public officers' views about types of conduct which may leave their workplace vulnerable to impropriety. This includes conduct such as nepotism and favouritism in recruitment, which are seen to be perennial problems in the public sector. It also reveals perceived emerging risks, such as potential corruption in procurement and contract management.

Many participants responded to survey questions with descriptions of poor workplace conduct, including by senior leaders. While those responses referred largely to potential misconduct rather than corruption, they remain of concern.

A major driver of corruption is poor workplace culture. A workplace where employees believe opportunities are based on favouritism rather than merit, that their work will not be valued, and poor conduct is tolerated are at increased risk of corruption. Conversely, risk is reduced in workplaces where integrity is promoted.

The conduct of workplace leaders is essential in ensuring workplace integrity. Leaders who promote public sector values, make accountable and transparent decisions, and welcome frank and fearless advice will assist their workplace to prevent corruption.

A workplace with integrity is also one where staff can safely report poor conduct, knowing they will be protected from retaliation, and reports will be appropriately investigated and actioned. Compared to the Commission's previous Public Integrity Surveys, participants in the current survey were increasingly worried they will be victimised should they report.

Public officers are obliged to report reasonable suspicions of corruption to the Office for Public Integrity (OPI). The OPI assesses reports and refers potential corruption to the Commission. However, it is likely fear of retaliation is preventing some public officers from reporting. I acknowledge that reporting can be difficult. However, there are a variety of protections in place for those who report to the OPI and I encourage you to have the confidence to do so. Public officers should report, not simply because they are obliged to do so, but because reporting is key to strengthening the integrity of South Australian public administration.



Emma Townsend

Commissioner
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION



THE SURVEY

The Commission uses Public Integrity Surveys to better understand public officers' perceptions of corruption and other improper conduct. This report provides the findings from the 2024 Public Integrity Survey, with previous surveys conducted in 2018 and 2021. The survey was conducted online and was open for six weeks from mid-October 2024 to the end of November 2024. All public officers in state and local government public authorities were invited to participate, and participation was voluntary.

This report examines the responses of all survey participants. Participants were asked about their views on workplace vulnerability to potential corruption or other impropriety. They were also asked whether they have suspected or observed improper conduct in their workplace. The Public Integrity Surveys provide an opportunity to focus on specific topics, and the 2024 survey asked questions about influences on decision making and use of discretionary powers.

The survey asked participants about their willingness to report, identified barriers to reporting, and examined participants' experiences of previous reporting in their workplace. The survey also provides feedback to the Commission about public officers' understanding of its role, interactions with the Commission, and levels of support. This feedback is used to assist in shaping the Commission's work in the future.

The sample

The survey received 7,060 usable responses. The response rate is given in Table 1. The responses are unlikely to be representative of all public officers. Public officers who believe they have encountered corruption or have strong views on the topic are more likely to have participated. This bias will be intensified with a relatively low response rate.

TABLE 1:
RESPONSE RATES¹

	OVERALL NUMBER	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSE RATE
South Australian public officers	118,036	6,232	5.3%
Local government	11,200	727	6.2%
Elected members	672	101	15.0%
Total	129,908	7,060	5.4%

The profile of participants is given in Table 2. Compared to public officers in state sector agencies, the sample is under-representative of female public officers, those above 44 years of age, those in executive roles, and public officers who have been in public administration for at least ten years.² The findings will be biased towards the views of participants in these groups. This bias should be taken into consideration when reading this report. Demographic information for public officers in local government sector is not available.

TABLE 2:
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANT

	PARTICIPANTS	% OF PARTICIPANTS	% OF STATE SECTOR PUBLIC OFFICERS
Gender			
Female	4,088	57.9%	69.8%
Male	2,686	38.0%	30.1%
Self described	23	0.3%	0.08%
Prefer not to say/no answer	263	3.7%	
Age			
20 years and under	34	0.4%	0.6%
21 to 34 years	1,056	15.0%	28.0%
35 to 44 years	1,516	21.5%	25.1%
45 to 54 years	2,074	29.4%	33.6%
55 years and above	2,063	29.2%	12.7%
Prefer not to say/no answer	320	4.5%	
Employment type			
Permanent/ongoing contract	5,320	75.4%	57.7%
Long-term contract	871	12.3%	9.3%
Short-term contract	424	6.0%	23.4%
Casual	199	2.8%	9.3%
Other	88	1.2%	0.4%
Prefer not to say	158	2.2%	
Executive or Senior Manager role			
Yes	955	13.5%	1.6%
No	5,728	81.1%	98.4%
Unsure/don't know	36	0.5%	
Prefer not to say	341	4.9%	
Time in current organisation³			
Less than one year	812	11.5%	14.1%
1 to 5 years	2,221	31.5%	29.2%
6 to 10 years	1,132	16.0%	18.9%
11 to 20 years	1,527	21.6%	22.4%
More than 20 years	1,175	16.6%	15.3%
Prefer not to say	193	2.8%	
Time in public administration⁴			
Less than 1 year	346	4.9%	11.4%
1 to 5 years	1,354	19.2%	25.6%
6 to 10 years	1,112	15.8%	17.7%
11 to 20 years	1,947	27.6%	24.9%
More than 20 years	2,114	29.9%	20.4%
Prefer not to say	187	2.6%	

Table 3 provides a breakdown of participants by agency. The perceptions of participants from agencies with a higher number of responses will be over-represented in this report. Those agencies generally have a higher number of employees.

TABLE 3:
AGENCY BREAKDOWN

AGENCY	% OF PARTICIPANTS
Adelaide Venue Management Corporation	0.3%
Attorney-General's Department	4.3%
Courts Administration Authority	0.9%
Department for Child Protection	2.0%
Department for Correctional Services	4.1%
Department for Education (excluding TAFE SA)	8.4%
Department of Environment and Water	2.8%
Department for Health and Wellbeing (SA Health and Local Health Networks)	22.5%
Department of Human Services	2.3%
Department for Infrastructure and Transport	4.0%
Department of the Premier and Cabinet	1.4%
Department of State Development	0.6%
Department of Primary Industries and Regions	2.0%
Department of Treasury and Finance	2.9%
SA Ambulance Service	1.9%
SA Housing Authority	1.2%
SA Water	3.3%
South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service/Country Fire Service	1.1%
South Australian Police	10.7%
TAFE SA	3.1%
State Government – Other	5.8%
Local Government	11.9%
Prefer not to say	2.8%

Interpreting the results

The survey collected information about participants' perceptions of corruption and other impropriety. Participants were directed to focus on experiences in their own workplace in the last three years. Nevertheless, some participants' views may be shaped by media reporting, experiences of acquaintances in other workplaces, or by older experiences.⁵

While responses may reflect participants' opinions rather than actual experiences, perceptions are important. Perceptions of corruption or other improper conduct shapes behaviour. Perceptions may not be entirely accurate, but they may contain a grain of truth and point towards areas where integrity could be improved. In addition, a public officer who perceives improper conduct is tolerated in their workplace is more likely to engage in corrupt conduct than an individual who believes their workplace has integrity.⁶

The survey asked a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions. Participants' comments quoted in this report have not been corrected or altered in any way, except for the redaction of some material to protect participants' anonymity.

This is the third iteration of the Commission's Public Integrity Survey, allowing for comparisons of results from previous surveys conducted in 2021 and 2018. The survey questions have been refined over time. Only data that is directly comparative has been reported.

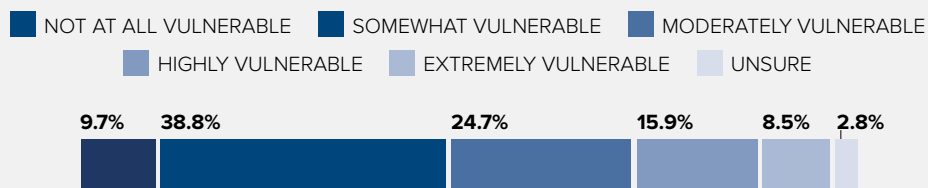
The survey covers sensitive topics. Some participants are likely to be uncomfortable being required to answer all questions, especially those asking for demographic information. No questions were mandatory. Participants were given the option to respond to demographic questions with 'I prefer not to say.' Analysis excludes responses where the participant skipped the question or answered they preferred not to say.

For demographic questions, information was collected only as broad categories. Only those participants employed in larger agencies were asked to identify their place of work. This measure was intended to further protect the identity of individual respondents.

VULNERABILITY TO POTENTIAL CORRUPTION OR OTHER IMPROPRIETY

Participants were asked if they believed their workplace was vulnerable to corruption or other impropriety. Approximately a quarter perceived their workplace to be highly or extremely vulnerable to corruption or other improper conduct (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1:
Perceptions of vulnerability to corruption or other impropriety



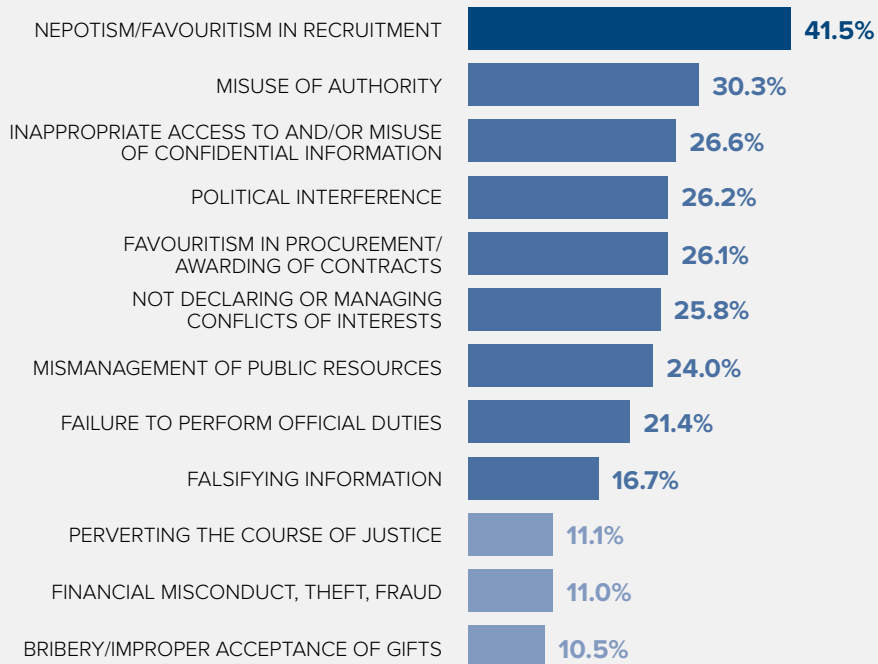
Participants were also asked if their workplace was vulnerable to twelve specific types of improper conduct. A higher proportion of participants responded that their workplace is highly or extremely vulnerable to at least one type of conduct identified in the survey than to the broader question (Figure 2). The proportion of participants who identified their workplace was vulnerable to at least one specified type of corrupt conduct or other impropriety has slightly increased from 2021 to 2024.

FIGURE 2:
Workplace is highly/extremely vulnerable to at least one specific type of corruption or other impropriety (2021 and 2024)



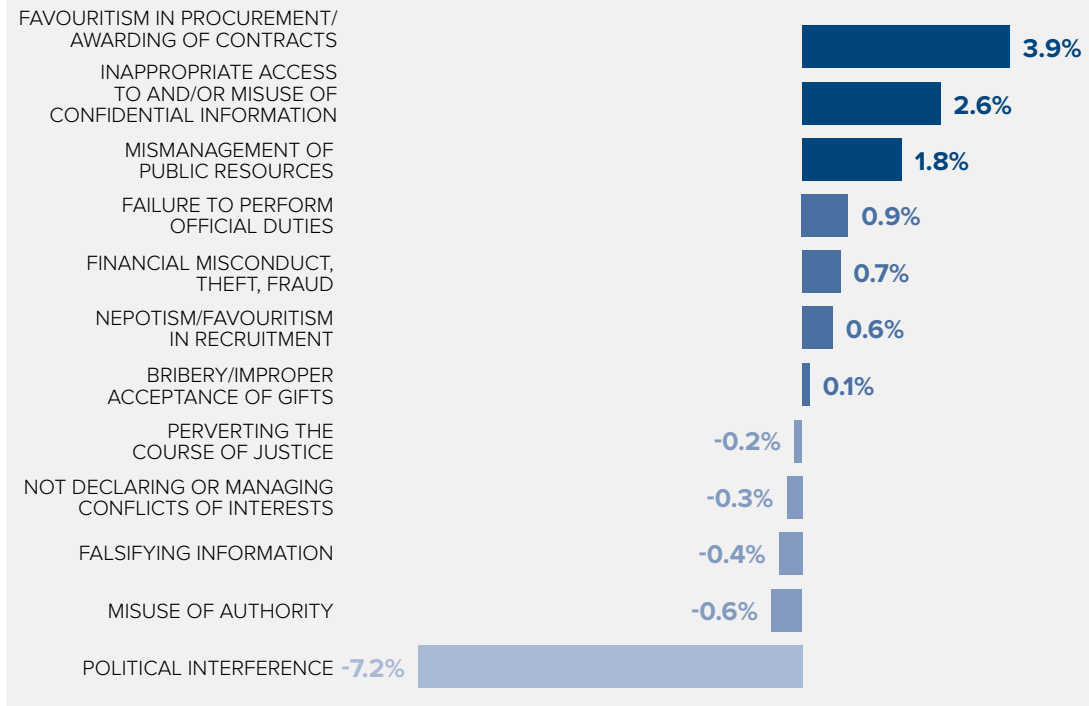
The most prevalent specific risk identified was nepotism and favouritism in recruitment, followed by misuse of authority (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3:
Workplace is highly/extremely vulnerable to specific types of corruption or other impropriety



Since 2021, participants have increasingly perceived favouritism in procurement and awarding of contracts to be a risk (Figure 4). Participants' perception that their workplace is vulnerable to political interference has decreased.

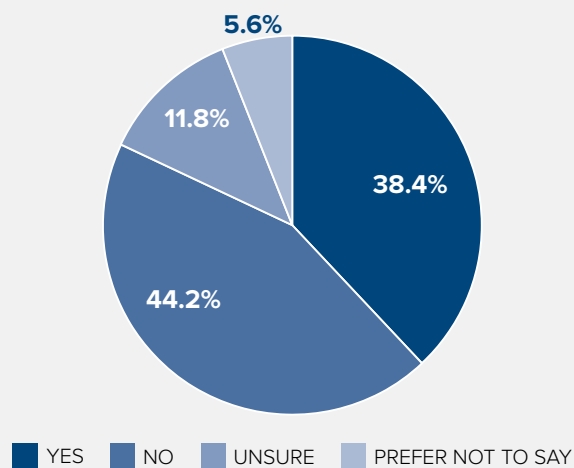
FIGURE 4:
Changes in perceptions of their workplace being highly/extremely vulnerable to corruption or other impropriety (2021 and 2024)



EXPERIENCES OF PERCEIVED CORRUPTION

A workplace may have specific functions or responsibilities that leave it vulnerable to corruption risks. That does not mean that corruption is occurring. Those risks may have been recognised and controls put in place. To ascertain participants' perceptions of encounters with wrongdoing, the survey asked if participants had personally observed or suspected corruption or other impropriety occurring in their

FIGURE 5:
Observed potential corruption or other impropriety

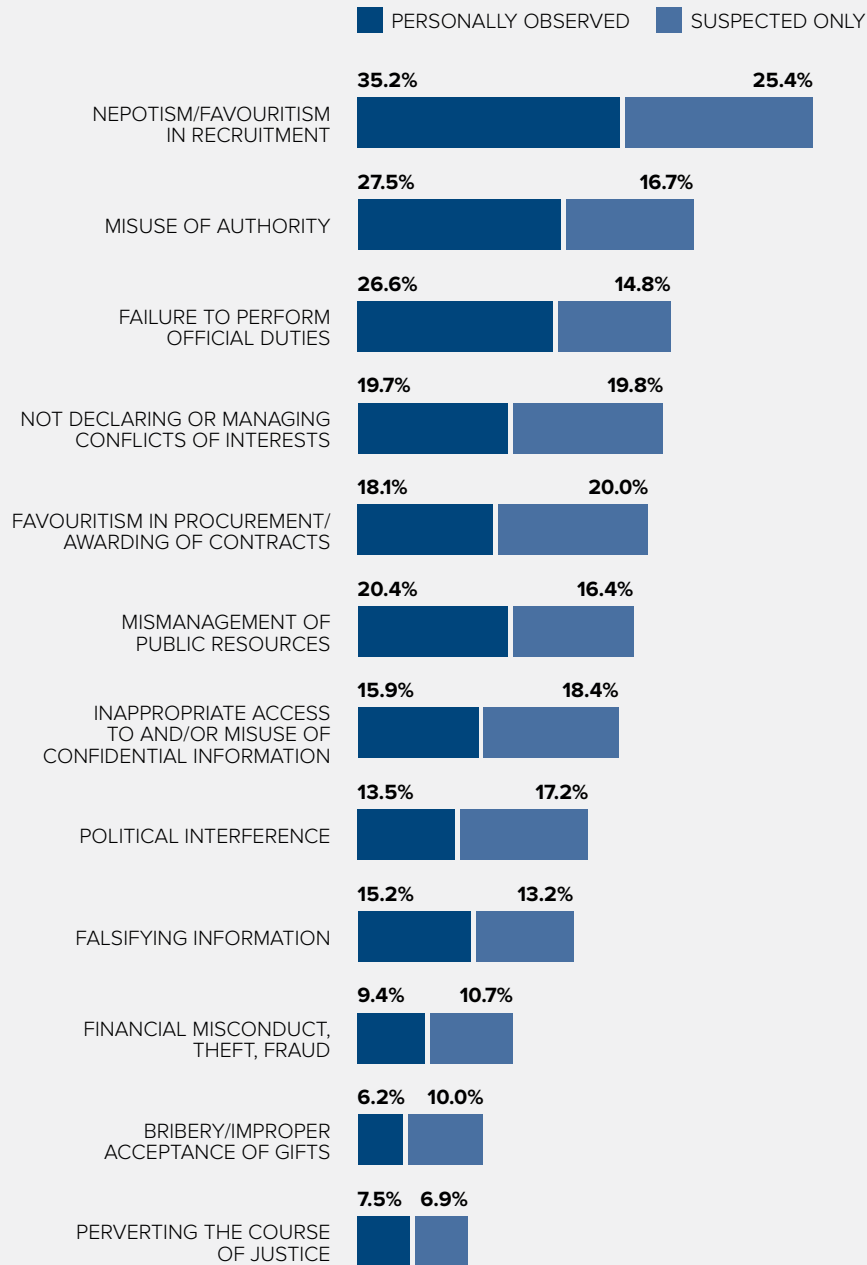


workplace in the last three years.

More than one in three participants believed they had personally observed corruption or other improper conduct in their workplace (Figure 5).

The most prevalent specific type of corruption or other improper conduct participants believed they had personally observed or suspected was nepotism or favouritism in recruitment, followed by the misuse of authority, and failure to perform official duties (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6:
Perceived observed or suspected specific types of corruption or other impropriety



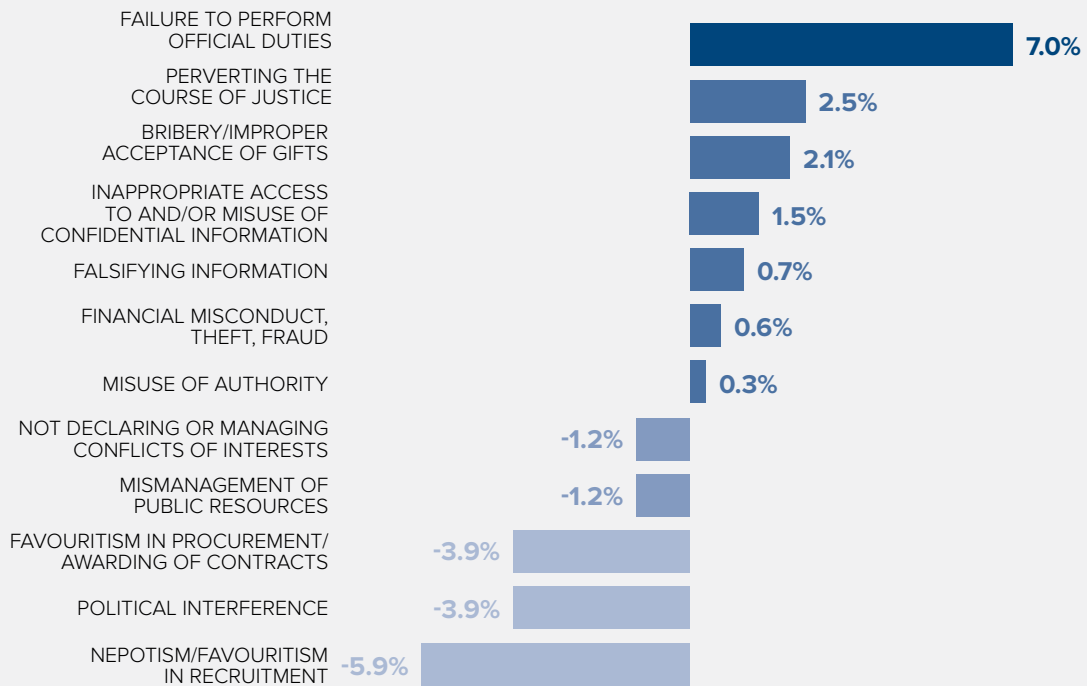
Since 2021, there has been an increase in participants’ belief that they have observed potential corruption or other improper conduct (Figure 7). There are several potential explanations for this. One is that there has been an increase in potential corruption or other improper conduct. Another is that there is increased awareness as to what constitutes potential corruption and impropriety. Ultimately it is difficult to ascertain what might account for this change in results.

FIGURE 7:
Observed potential corruption or other impropriety (2021 and 2024)



Since 2021, more participants believe they have observed failure to perform official duties (Figure 8). However, participants were less likely to believe that they have observed nepotism and favouritism in recruitment.

FIGURE 8:
Changes in perceived observed potential corruption or other impropriety (2021 and 2024)



IMPROPER FAVOURITISM IN RECRUITMENT

Favouritism and nepotism in recruitment was perceived as the most prevalent corruption risk facing public administration. This is consistent with the Commission's previous Public Integrity Surveys.⁷ Other integrity agencies have also reported that improper recruitment is perceived by public officers to be the greatest integrity risk in their workplace.⁸

Nepotistic recruitment was largely described as involving a senior leader recruiting a family member or friend into their workplace.



"Director employs family members without using the correct merit process..."

"Nepotism is extremely concerning. Senior staff members have employed or made sure that their friends and or family members have won or been moved into or promoted into positions."

"People in my workplace have gotten jobs because they are family members of managers and supervisors."

Some participants believed that a senior leader had appointed a former colleague based on prior working relationships rather than merit.



"...it is amazing how many people have worked together at previous sites."

"Management employing their mates from previous jobs who are not qualified for the role."

The Commission has regularly observed public officers allowing conflicts of interests to influence recruitment decisions. The Commission's report *Robust Recruitment* provides examples of how influence has been exerted, such as writing a role description to suit a favoured candidate.⁹ Some survey participants also provided examples of senior leaders attempting to improperly favour their preferred candidate. These included a senior leader:

- ▶ pressuring a selection panel member to interview and hire the senior leader's preferred candidate and overlook a more qualified candidate
- ▶ tailoring job specifications
- ▶ manipulating interview questions
- ▶ overriding the decision of the selection panel
- ▶ misrepresenting the selection panel report

Poor recruitment processes

Robust processes may protect recruitment from corruption or improper conduct.¹⁰ However, poor recruitment processes were a theme in the survey responses, as well as the Commission's other work.¹¹ Participants described job specifications being changed without going through proper processes, or the lack of a job specification entirely. Recruitment processes were described as being inconsistent, conflicts of interests declarations not completed, external members on selection panels not appropriately used, or advice from human resources not sought. Recruitments that were conducted quickly were seen to be especially likely to circumvent proper recruitment processes.

Several participants considered that nepotistic recruitment could follow from insufficient training in recruitment policies and procedures.



"...management staff are not diligent/adequately trained or are under resourced regarding appropriate recruitment/appointment."

"Little training on the process of recruitment. the interview panel selection process is not standardised and open for nepotism."

"Unfortunately, I don't believe that hiring managers are sufficiently trained to even realise their potential corrupt practices."

Direct appointments

Some participants described recruitments occurring without any process whatsoever, or an appointment made without advertising the position.



"Numerous executive contracts awarded without due process."

"I have seen employment contracts awarded without a proper recruitment process."

"Have had experiences where positions were not advertised and people were slotted in to these positions based or handpicked on friendships with executive team/friendship or just preferential treatment- there was no transparency. Nobody was aware of these positions or recruitment."

Those participants are most likely referring to direct appointments. For some participants, direct appointments, which involves a suitable candidate being appointed without the role being advertised, were especially vulnerable to misuse. Some participants observed that direct appointments lacked transparency and accountability, and allowed candidates to be appointed on factors other than merit.

Direct appointments are permissible under certain circumstances, and must be based on merit.¹² Senior leaders should be aware that the perception that direct appointments are vulnerable to misuse is common.¹³ Applying the same robust processes as used for other appointments will assist in protecting the integrity of direct appointments, and allow such appointments to be defended if challenged.¹⁴

Internal recruitment and career opportunities

Improper recruitment may occur beyond initial appointments. Some participants commented on nepotism and favouritism in internal recruitments, promotions and other career opportunities. Those participants claimed that career opportunities were sometimes based on personal relationships with senior leaders rather than merit.



“There is obvious favoritism within the workplace. Career advancement is extremely difficult and not based on merit.”

“I believe favouritism is a big issue within the department. Many decisions on career advancement, employment contracts etc, sit at the whim of individuals who can make decisions without following proper or fair processes.”

“If you have a family member that is of any high rank, these people appear to be able to climb the corporate ladder quicker and easier than others that do not.”

Participants described a senior leader favouring a specific candidate with whom they had a personal relationship by:

- ▶ initially appointing them to a temporary role so they can be later moved into a permanent position
- ▶ appointing them to an acting role or assigning higher duties so they will be advantaged once a position is advertised
- ▶ providing assistance to gain an internal position

The Commission has previously observed favouritism in the provision of career opportunities. The Commission’s report, *The Inside Advantage: Managing Corruption Risks in Recruitment Processes Involving Internal Candidates*, followed from an investigation of the use of public funds to assist internal candidates apply for internal executive positions.¹⁵ In that instance, the Commission determined it could not be established there was intention to unfairly favour any candidate, and therefore there was no corruption.

However, some participants described circumstances where internal candidates were provided with support that may have conferred an advantage to specific candidates.



“...selection processes are conducted from within - a confidential process which isn’t and assistance is given to some, but not others - on the face of it opportunities are provided to all, but development of applications or skills with interviews for instance are not offered to all.”

“Favourites are treated differently to other staff and receive more assistance. When it comes to contracts and permanency those who management favour are given a boost in application processes.”

“Staff being favoured over others assisted with their application prior to the position they apply for is advertised.”

Impact of improper recruitment and promotion

Even when improper recruitment or promotion opportunities do not amount to corruption, they may undermine the integrity and standards of public sector agencies. For many participants, improper recruitment potentially led to a better qualified candidate being overlooked.



“...management changing a [position description] to enable their mate to fit the job criteria and apply. Surprisingly, that person got the job over someone better qualified.”

“Applicants told they don’t get a position because they don’t have qualifications, whilst others get positions even though they are not qualified.”

Participants described appointees who they believed lacked the skills and experience necessary to perform their official duties.



“Getting jobs they aren’t best qualified for because of connections.”

“The director has recruited several of his previous colleagues into high-ranking positions, raising questions about impartiality and fairness. This favouritism is evident in how these individuals are supported, even when their performance is subpar.”

“Personal connections can sometimes influence hiring decisions, compromising transparency and fairness. This undermines team morale and can lead to suboptimal candidate selection.”

Improper behaviour can flourish in workplaces where leaders perpetrate or tolerate unfair conduct. Some participants described the ‘knock on’ effects of someone being appointed due to personal relationships rather than merit.



“Appointment of persons who are unsuitable to managerial positions who then bully and abuse their way into promotions, contract extensions and hiring or supporting inappropriate behaviour from friends or supporters.”

“...there was a misconduct issue involving one of the director’s hires. While this individual was removed from a management role due to their actions, they were allowed to retain their position and salary, which undermines accountability. The director continues to protect and back these hires, fostering an environment where merit and proper conduct are not prioritised.”

The negative consequences of improper or poorly run recruitments may be made worse if sufficient screening is not performed when appointing or promoting staff.¹⁶ Several participants believed that pre-employment checks were overlooked as the person overseeing the recruitment had a personal relationship with the appointee. This may have allowed someone with a history of misconduct or criminal offending to be appointed.

MISUSE OF AUTHORITY

Misuse of authority was seen to be the second most prevalent corruption risk facing South Australian public administration. For misuse of authority to be a corruption offence, it must involve an individual using their position as a public officer to exert undue influence to obtain a personal benefit. However, most participants' perceptions of misuse of authority would amount to potential misconduct rather than corruption. In particular, participants viewed poor leadership as misuse of authority.

Participants believed they had witnessed the misuse of authority where senior leaders had bullied or harassed staff, or overlooked bullying or harassment when it was reported to them.



“Bullying and improper conduct is not managed well in this department. Managers are aware of behaviours and do not address them early on, if at all.”

“Internal bullying and a couple people that should never have had directorial jobs that have seen a lot of really good reliable staff leave. This is after causing bullying issues in other similar positions in other places of work.”

“Some people higher up may speak to workers, disrespectfully, misusing their power to intimidate people.”

Some participants described senior leaders misusing their authority to engage in preferential treatment for “favourites.”



“I have seen leaders improperly use their power to try and fire people and I have seen nepotism with flexi time and the awarding of contracts.”

“The manager has her favourites. Uses her position of authority to distribute unequal work hours and clients to staff. She does not fairly allocate jobs to the staff, she gives certain work to staff she ‘likes’ and doesn’t allow staff that have expressed interest in that work to do it.”

Senior leaders were described by some participants as lacking accountability. Those participants believed senior leaders in their workplace were manipulative, covered up mistakes and misrepresented information.



"[Senior leader] lies and manipulates, saying one thing to one person, and something different to another. She shows herself to be unprofessional, holding grudges and letting her personal opinion of someone influence job prospects. She plays favourites, abuses her power. She lies about what people say, misconstrues words."

"Lack of checks and balances for people in positions of power. They can do what they want to subordinates and will just be supported by their cohort, even in the absence of evidence. They can and will even fabricate evidence to suit their narrative, to ensure they prove they are the most powerful."

Some participants believed that senior leaders misused authority by placing their personal ambitions above the public interest.



"Some of the Directors and Managers in State Government need to be reminded that they are employed to serve the public best interest and not their own career advancement at the cost of all other interests."

"...the department and its managers often make decisions and take actions primarily to enhance their own image."

"Managers act in the best interest of each other not the public. Covering up each others messes and being more bothered with brownie points and how they look than focusing on their actual jobs."

Some participants believed that the appointment of underqualified managers and inadequate training may result in misuse of authority.



"The favoritism being displayed is leading to a misuse of authority, as some individuals in higher positions lack the necessary expertise and qualifications to perform effectively. This not only damages the department's efficiency but also demoralises staff who are dedicated to their roles and are unfairly denied opportunities."

"...I believe this [misuse of authority] is due to a lack of training and accountability on the part of higher level and management staff."

"Appointment of persons who are unsuitable to managerial positions who then bully and abuse their way into promotions, contract extensions and hiring or supporting inappropriate behaviour from friends or supporters."

Perks of the job

Some participants suspected that senior leaders in their workplace have misused authority to misappropriate public resources. This included the perception that senior leaders misused public funds to upgrade their offices, hold unnecessary office social events, insist on being provided with a government fleet car, and award themselves “large bonuses.”

A few participants described senior leaders misusing their authority to accept gifts, benefits and hospitality from contractors. This included senior leaders accepting lunches, travel and accommodation for an interstate conference, hospitality in corporate boxes at sporting events, and “all-expenses-paid socialising in restaurants, bars and nightclubs after work.”

Some participants viewed the conduct of senior leaders sometimes exemplified double standards. They commented on senior leaders taking advantage of their position to receive “perks”, at the same time denying staff pay rises.



“Senior management celebrating [staff’s] low wages despite facing the cost of living... I feel fully betrayed and undervalued.”

“Upper management awarding themselves huge bonuses for doing their normal job that is expected of them. Under paying lower staff... to lower than reward rates.”

“Taking money from wage accounts to put into fulfilling major projects so as to make an obvious statement of ‘Look what I’ve done’, but short listing a fair payrise to struggling low paid employees.”

Consultants and contractors being granted authority

Participants' comments about misuse of authority mostly focused on the conduct of senior leaders. However, a few participants believed that consultants and contractors in their workplace have too much authority. Some consultants and contractors were seen to have uncontrolled access to sensitive information, authority to appoint subcontractors without oversight, and being able to represent themselves as government employees.

Several participants described consultants being deeply embedded in their workplace, including acting in leadership roles and having the authority to make critical decisions. This reliance on consultants may create corruption risks.



“Use of contractors in the organisation with access to confidential information, contractors managing or leading projects where they influence or direct the use of resources from their own organisations. They may also receive commissions from their own companies for getting additional people in for a project that they generated and ultimately manage/lead.”

“Contract/consultant (private sector) employees working in [a public authority's] offices representing government and the agency with official titles, email addresses etc. making very important contractual interpretations and decisions, as well as many day to day decisions on projects up to tens of millions of dollars.”

FAVOURITISM IN PROCUREMENT AND THE AWARDING OF CONTRACTS

Since 2018, participants have increasingly perceived procurement and the awarding of contracts to be vulnerable to corruption or other improper conduct. However, there was no corresponding increase in participants' perceived suspected or observed corruption in procurement or contracting. This may reflect increased awareness of corruption risks surrounding those areas.

High risk procurements

Several participants identified types of procurements that are perceived as being especially at risk of improper conduct, including procurements for high valued and complex projects, those that attract considerable political interest, or are for highly specialised products. They also identified procurements in fields involving a high degree of staff movement between the public and private sphere or that allow contractors to engage subcontractors with limited oversight as being highly vulnerable to potential corruption.

"My workplace is responsible for large scale procurement. There is risk within procurement processes of improper conduct such as favouritism based on existing business relationships (i.e. awarding a contract to an incumbent out of ease and convenience) and undeclared benefits. I am not saying that these things have happened, just that there is a risk of them."

"I don't see this as basic as tilting a tender review process directly but more insidious in that there is a career progression incentive to build favourable relationships with consulting/partner firms (who often pay significantly more...)"

Poorly run procurements

A lack of compliance with policies and processes can leave a procurement vulnerable to improper conduct. Failure to follow procedures may occur if public officers are not aware of policies and processes, procurements are rushed, or expedience takes precedence over good governance. Poor planning may create opportunities for procurement to be corrupted.¹⁷ Some participants observed that procurements in their agency are sometimes commenced without sufficient planning.



“The decisions and the people making them do not appear to have to account for why the decision on how a project is progressed is in the interest of the state and represents good value.”

“...there has been a push to get things out to market quickly without budget, without proper planning or design, without proper resourcing, etc.”

“Some employees need more discipline in procurement and expenditure to ensure every expense is a justifiable expense of public money.”

Procurements which require specialised knowledge, such as ICT procurement, were seen to be especially vulnerable to poor planning.¹⁸



“There’s huge investment to launch projects but no budget or consideration for ongoing support and maintenance. That’s especially true for online platforms and digitisation. Business units don’t seem to verify if a solution would actually work for them and just go and implement something that’s not fit for purpose. They don’t consult with business units who could help create a positive user experience, and they launch solutions that were never tested with end users. It’s a huge waste of public funds.”

Participants’ examples of poor procurement processes included:

- ▶ obtaining a quote before the acquisition plan was approved
- ▶ failing to document procurement processes and decisions
- ▶ awarding a high value contract on the basis of an email recommendation
- ▶ misrepresenting equipment as consumables or services to circumvent procurement guidelines
- ▶ inappropriately extending contracts instead of undertaking a new procurement
- ▶ purchase orders being paid before they are raised

Several participants described having received little support when they raised concerns about poor or suspicious procurement processes in their agency. Those participants explained that senior leaders had not taken any remedial actions.

Undeclared conflicts of interests

Undeclared and unmanaged conflicts of interests were seen as the main corruption risk facing procurement. Some participants described contracts being awarded to a supplier with whom the public officer had an undeclared conflict of interests.



“I see it all the time where mates are called upon with their businesses to compete works when no tenders or expressions of interest go out to the greater public.”

“Procurement and contract process allows friends or family to be awarded over best product or service.”

Conflicts of interests may develop between procurement officers and incumbent suppliers. Several participants described a supplier being reengaged based on relationships rather than value for money.



“A lot of employees don’t understand procurement rules and have their favourite suppliers. While those suppliers do a good job there seems to be little demonstration of testing the market or nurturing new providers and developing their skills and abilities to deliver to government. Value for money does not seem to be tested.”

“...instead of going out to market, they are just choosing to extend current contracts.”

Conflicts of interests can be created if a public officer involved in awarding a contract accepts a gift, benefit or hospitality from a tenderer. A few participants described a tenderer attempting to sway a procurement decision by offering gifts. An offer of a gift of this nature should be declined, and even though declined, should be declared by the public officer to their agency.



“[Staff] receiving kick backs or ‘perks’ to create favouritism in awarding supplier contracts, and goods and services.”

“...high pressure sales tactics by suppliers, like offering free photocopier cartridges for time-limited periods, can influence junior or inexperienced staff who are not familiar with procurement arrangements, despite regular reminders about conflict of interest and gifts and benefits management arrangements.”

A few participants observed that public officers had accepted gifts, including cash, from suppliers who had a contract with their agency. It is possible that a supplier had provided the gift in an effort to influence the awarding of a future contract.



“Manager has accepted a donation of a few hundred dollars towards xmas function from a contractor.”

“Gift in excess of \$150 received with a delivery of good, recorded in gift register. Believe it should have been return to supplier.”

“During the course of the [contract] the manager was flown to Melbourne for a conference for the company. The trip was fully paid by the... company. She spoke at the conference promoting the product despite having no understanding of the product...”

“I have known of previous employees ‘using’ contractors beach houses for holidays...”

Some participants believed that procurements in their workplace had been deliberately manipulated due to undeclared conflicts of interests. This included a public officer favouring a specific tenderer by:

- ▶ leaking confidential tender information
- ▶ splitting procurements to hide suspicious expenditure
- ▶ directly procuring a supplier rather than an using competitive market approach
- ▶ falsely claiming only one supplier could provide the goods required
- ▶ pressuring junior procurement staff to change procurement evaluation scores

Contract management

Corrupt contract management may involve a supplier deliberately overcharging for goods and services, with inflated invoices being signed off by a public officer in return for a personal benefit. Suppliers may charge for incomplete or substandard work, with verification being provided by a corrupt contract manager. Unnecessary extensions or variations may be used to inflate costs. A lack of scrutiny of subcontracting arrangements may allow an unscrupulous head contractor or contract manager to direct work to companies in which they have an undisclosed interest.

Some participants observed contractors charging suspiciously high amounts for goods and services, contractors being allowed to perform poorly without any repercussions, and potential misuse of variations.



“I have also seen a high number of external contractors in teams where they are being paid double that of [internal] staff but doing less than half the work. This type of behaviour makes me want to leave and become a contractor myself.”

“Variation to existing procurement contracts to more than triple the original cost without going back out to market for a competitive price and open tender. Project costs overruns with invoices simply paid without deliverables being achieved repeatedly and no stop work orders to prevent further accumulation of costs outside the original contracted costs.”

“Some consultants/contractors get a gold pass- paid as much as they need for as long as they need. Its a game. We do all the work for them anyway.”

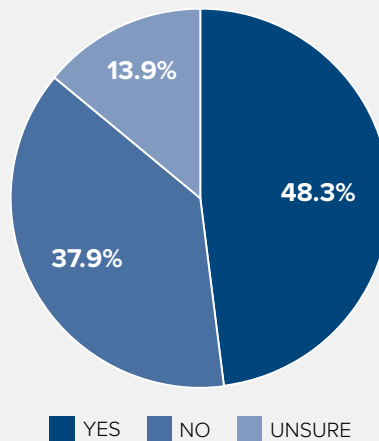
Participants generally considered that a lack of value for money was the main problem arising from such conduct. However, participants’ descriptions contained red flags that may indicate improper or even corrupt contract management.

INFLUENCING DECISION MAKING

The Public Integrity Survey provides an opportunity for the Commission to focus on a topic of specific interest. The 2024 survey asked participants questions about influences on decision making and the use of discretionary powers.

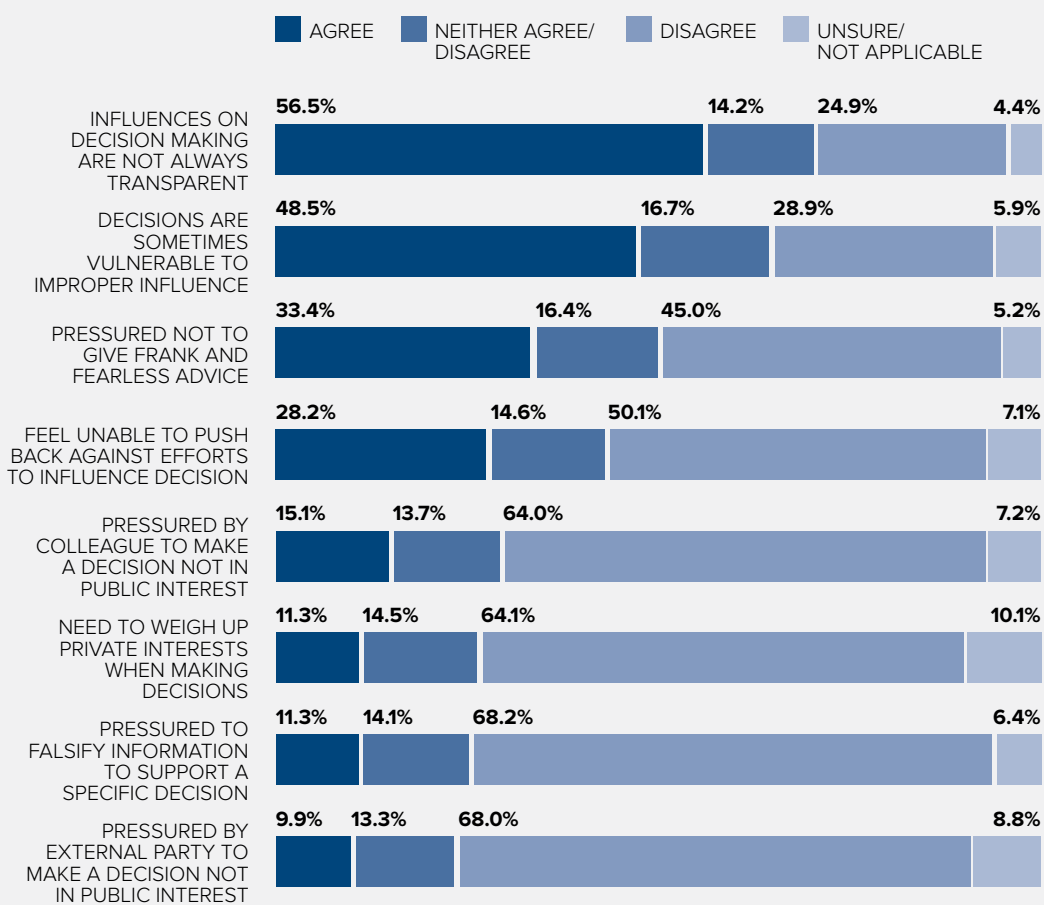
Many public officers responded that they have a decision making role (Figure 9). Those decisions need to be in the public interest. A public officer who misuses their position to make a decision that benefits personal rather than public interests has potentially acted corruptly. This may involve a public officer putting their own interests first or being influenced by someone else to make an improper decision.

FIGURE 9:
Role requires making decisions



Participants were asked questions about influences on their decision making (Figure 10). Half of the participants believed influences on decision making in their workplace were not always transparent, and almost half agreed decisions were sometimes vulnerable to improper influence. A lack of transparency and poor procedures and policies surrounding decision making may create a workplace culture where decisions are not always made in the public interest.¹⁹

FIGURE 10:
Perceived influences on decision making



Influences on decision makers

Participants' responses described a wide range of instances where they believed they had faced pressure to make a decision that was not in the public interest. Participants described efforts to influence decisions relating to grant disbursement, patient care or discharge, awarding a contract, staff appointments, child placement, handling allegations of staff misconduct, award of students' grades, voting on a board, or how to progress a legal case.

Sources of pressure were similarly diverse. Internal pressure was largely considered to be applied by senior leaders, especially CEOs and executives. External efforts to influence decisions were exerted by board members, directors of private companies, property owners, developers, special interest groups, not for profit organisations, other departments, contractors, consultants and unions. Some participants in outward facing roles described attempts to interfere with decision making from customers and clients, hospital patients, parents of students, and people who have been served an expiation notice.

Participants in the local government sector were especially likely to have described regularly facing pressure from external parties to influence their decisions.



"Rate payers constantly hounding Council trying to get their own way. We are not allowed to show favoritism to one rate payer over others and must follow a process, but some rate payers do not care and try everything they can to bully or wear down the staff."

"...the wants of loud minority (that typically go through political channels) are typically more heard and have local government bent to their will, even if it is not in the interest of public majority, especially when it comes to where to spend the money."

"...when they turn up at council meetings as observers I sometimes feel intimidated - and just pull on my armour and forge ahead. It's hard at times, though, because all I want is to make the best possible long-term decisions for my community, not to be pilloried for expressing viewpoints that contribute to the decision making process."

By attempting to appease those who persist in their efforts to influence decisions, a public officer may compromise the public interest.



"Ultimately the recommendation and presentation of mitigating factors is disregarded by the decision maker because of 'squeaky wheel' public interference and threats to go to ministers, elected members or the media."

"I work with standards and they don't align with customers expectations. I stick with the standards and they then complain to management and the squeaky wheel gets the oil so they have gotten their way due to management overruling my decisions."

"Sometimes rules are bent when processing applications... can easily be influenced by how much the applicant jumps up and down and states how important it is to their business."

Lack of transparency and consultation

Some participants believed decisions in their workplace are not always transparent. They described decisions being made with no clear reasons or reasons being given verbally but not in writing. A few participants believed their workplace is overly cautious and overuses confidentiality provisions. Lack of transparency may lead public officers to suspect decisions are made for spurious reasons.



“...sometimes it ‘feels’ like things might be going on behind the scenes that we are unaware of”

“There is no transparency with decision in my workplace, and in most circumstances the communication is deceptive and not truthful.”

“Influences on decision-making in my workplace are not always transparent... In these cases, the directive often feels arbitrary, driven by personal preference rather than established guidelines or a clear rationale.”

Poor communication and insufficient consultation were seen to contribute to the perception that decisions sometimes lack transparency, and were sometimes based on personal preferences rather than evidence.



“Changes to the workplace are done without consultation.... Director whims a change and there are no consequences...”

“There is no evidence-based decision making, decisions lack clarity and staff are not involved or informed.”

“Overall program decisions are not discussed with ground level staff with ongoing knowledge of industry and needs, but made by management to suit their agenda without explaining the how or why of their actions.”

Falsifying information

For decisions to be made in the public interest, public officers need to be able to provide accurate information. The manipulation of advice, or evidence used to inform advice, may result in decisions supporting private, rather than public, interests.

Participants described having observed manipulation of key performance indicators to hide underperformance of an agency, program or service provider. In some instances, this conduct was seen to be an outcome of under-resourcing.



“I have also seen other officers pressured by leaders to ‘just make something up’ for certain documents/processes because ‘no one will care/read it anyway’. While this may be due to unreasonable workloads and shifting deadlines, I am concerned it results in inferior outcomes that are not in the public interest.”

“The department is more interested in statistics and manipulating them and/or reduce them as we are severely understaffed.”

Participants described incidents where they believed information was misrepresented to improperly boost the career of a specific public officer, misdirect public resources to their pet project, or so that a public officer could avoid accountability for poor performance.

Some participants described being directed to amend their advice or having their advice changed. For several, this entailed falsifying information.



“I have also seen my measurement and reporting work changed by the executive team in order to falsify information on existing service levels and mislead the community and elected members.”

“I felt pressure not to report incidents because they did not want their numbers to go up, so the statistics remained low for incidents in the organisation. I raised questions about falsifying statistics prepared by others, which I knew, but management ignored them.”

“Advice in reports to be considered by the Minister where I have been asked to change my advice to be consistent with a different outcome.”

Others observed that information is sometimes ‘massaged’ rather than blatantly falsified.



“I have felt pressured to not include certain content. After drafting minutes, content has been removed and some minutes have not been distributed to the broader group for a delayed period of time or potentially at all.”

“I have seen where I have been asked to change the data or the metrics to support the view that we want to show rather than what it actually is or to omit data and not provide a complete picture for those making higher up decisions.”

“I have had experience where I have felt pressured to overturn my decision at the recommendation of a manager. This involved having to remove and save over my assessment and recommendation and save a new version of the assessment and recommendation that matched the managers decision.”

Decisions may also be distorted if public officers only provide information they believe a Minister wants to hear.



“...in the preparation of advice for decision making... there is a strong attempt to portray the decision the Minister prefers in a positive light despite it being patently against the public interest. Many proposals are approved without any kind of serious deliberation of alternative better use for those funds, and senior executives are either actively complicit or self censoring to avoid ‘making waves’.”

“Management will change/amend advice to be what the Minister will want to hear as opposed to providing evidence-based research. It is hard to see how the Minister can make good decisions when they are surrounded by a vanguard of yes-people too hesitant to provide them advice they might not want to hear.”

Consequences of ‘pushing back’

Public officers need to feel safe to push back against improper efforts to influence their decision making. However, a common theme in participants’ comments was the belief that resistance will be met with negative repercussions.



“Decisions are predetermined. By the time they get to the corporate eye, you can provide a professional recommendation that it does not provide some or any value, but the choices are already made. And those who do push back are often, quashed and socially punished.”

“The CE has meetings before the meeting to ensure that meetings and discussions are controlled and the outcome is what he wants. Staff don’t speak up at all staff meetings in fear they will be targeted.”

Several participants explained that while they are willing to push back, to do so is not easy.



“I have had to stand my ground in decisions and not be influenced - something i am proud to be able to achieve and maintain my integrity however difficult it feels at times...”

“Occasionally I am made aware of a decision that is not in the public interest. Though I have a tough shell and happy to refuse participation and escalate to my leadership even though i suspect my leadership is aware and ok with it. This of course does not make me a friend that leads to a promotion like others. But I’m ok with that.”

“It is known my integrity is not for purchase or sale, therefore I am avoided.”

Several participants explained that while they are comfortable pushing back, they believed junior colleagues are not. Participants who were new to public administration or their workplace were more likely than other participants to agree they felt pressure not to provide frank and fearless advice and to falsify information to support a specific outcome. Those participants were more likely to believe they have experienced pressure from colleagues and external parties to make a decision that was not in the public interest, and sometimes felt unable to push back against pressure on their decision making.²⁰

THE USE OF DISCRETIONARY POWERS

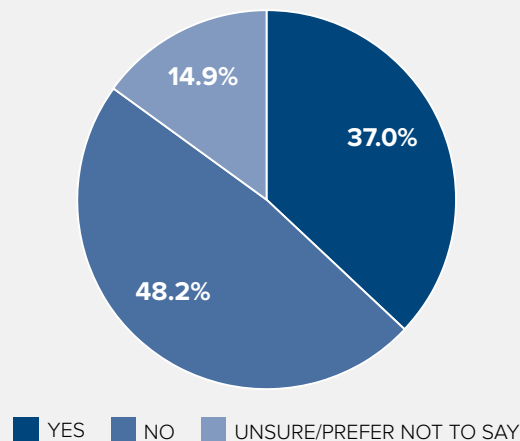
The 2024 survey asked participants about the use of discretionary power in their workplace. Discretionary decisions involve a public officer using their judgement, rather than following pre-determined criteria. The authority to make a discretionary decision comes from legislation or internal procedures, and a public officer must not exceed their authority when exercising discretionary powers.²¹

The use of discretionary powers needs to strike the right balance. Discretionary powers may assist efficient and effective public administration.²² However, decision makers with too much latitude may be able to misuse discretionary powers. Discretionary powers should be exercised in good faith, and for a proper, intended and authorised purposes.

Corrupt conduct may occur if a public officer misuses their discretionary power for personal benefit. For example, a public officer may be acting corruptly if they exercise their discretionary powers dishonestly, knowingly breach public trust, or misuse their agency's information. The exercise of discretionary powers becomes vulnerable to misuse if powers can be used with limited checks and balances, accountability and transparency.²³

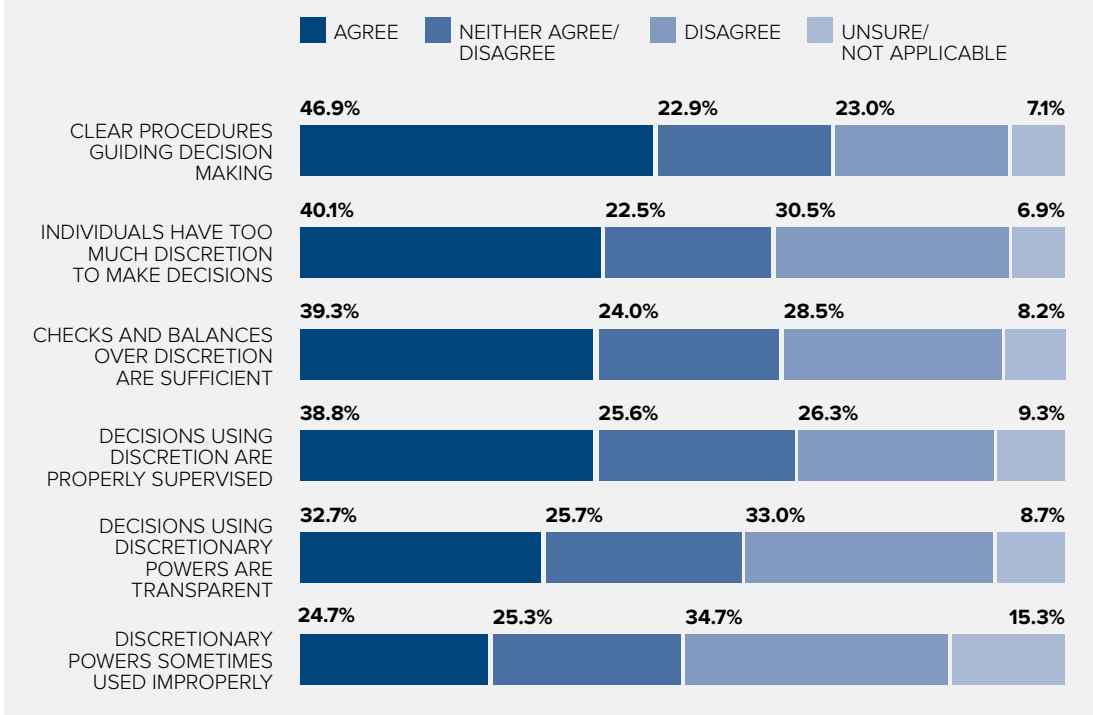
Over one third of participants believed that their role provided wide discretion to make decisions (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11:
Role allows for wide discretion to make decisions



For some participants, controls over the exercise of discretionary powers may not always be sufficient. Approximately a quarter of participants agreed that discretionary powers were sometimes used improperly in their workplace (Figure 12). In addition, a third disagree that decisions using discretionary powers are transparent.

FIGURE 12:
Use of discretionary powers



Some participants explained that senior leaders in their workplace have too much discretion, and that discretion can be exercised without accountability or transparency.



“One person makes all of the decisions and is not held accountable for them. She frequently lies about the decisions that she has made and there are no repercussions.”

“Site leader has absolute power to do as they please... Our current site leader... wants blind obedience from everyone, even when they make decisions that have a negative effect on our site.”

“Lack of transparency or communication & even blatant secrecy around decisions.”

Policies and procedures guiding the use of discretionary powers

Important corruption controls such as segregation of duties, delegations, reporting lines and auditing processes, all attest to the risks of too much decision making power residing with individual public officers. However, no area of public administration can function without some levels of discretionary decision making. For this reason, clear policies and procedures are essential to guide the proper use of decision making.

Participants' comments suggested there is no consistent guidance on the use of discretionary powers across public sector agencies. Some participants believed their workplace has robust policies and procedures in place to protect discretionary powers from misuse. Others observed that policies and procedures relating to discretionary decision making are absent or inadequate.



"My workplace has no formal procedures guiding decision making and this allows decisions to be made with inconsistency and depends on who is making them."

"My workplace definitely does not have clear procedures for decision making."

Others believed that policies and procedures are sufficient, but are not followed.



"Has clear procedures guiding decision making but they are not necessarily followed."

"Processes are in place but whether or not they are followed is another matter."

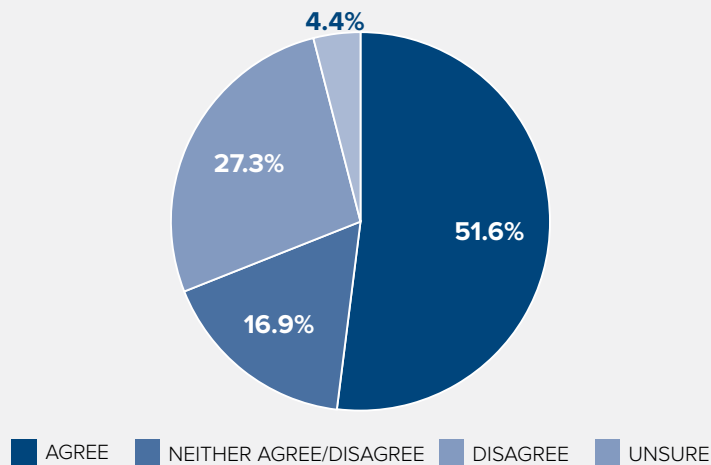
"Ironically my workplace has clear procedures guiding decision making by staff, however some seem to get away with completely ignoring those procedures."

Policies and procedures relating to decision making were also described as being hard to find, out of date, and not available for situations when they may be most needed, such as in an emergency.

INTERNAL TRAINING ON CORRUPTION RISKS

Approximately half of participants agreed their workplace had provided them with training on corruption risks specific to their role (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13:
Workplace has provided training on corruption risks



Perceptions about the internal provision of training on risks has improved since the last survey, but has declined since 2018 (Figure 14). The provision of training by public administration agencies is also uneven. In some workplaces, most participants agreed their workplace provided training on corruption risks specific to their role. In others, less than one third agreed. Female participants and casual staff were less likely than other participants to agree their organisation had provided training on corruption risks.²⁴ Senior leaders were more likely to agree that they had received training on corruption.²⁵

FIGURE 14:
Workplace has provided training on corruption risks (2018 to 2024)



Some participants explained that insufficient training was placing their workplace at risk of potential corruption, maladministration and misconduct. A few provided examples where requests for training on specific issues were refused.



“While [my workplace] has provided me with generic training on reporting obligations, there is no bespoke training to assist to identify risks specifically relating to my role.”

“...areas are vulnerable and I believe this is due to a lack of training and accountability on the part of higher level and management staff.”

“Refusal to provide training in relation to information mismanagement as not ‘important.’”

“Recruitment training was dismissed, people asked different questions during interview and influenced poorly during internal application process so that preference was easier to select.”

Several participants suggested that training for public officers involved in high risk functions or workplaces should be regular and mandatory.

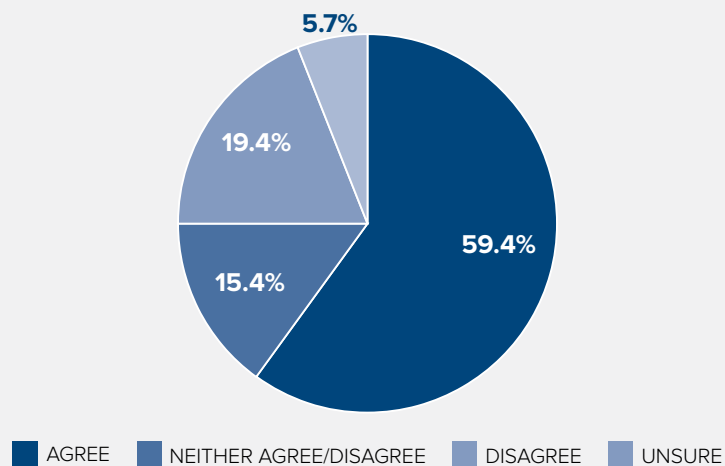


“I would recommend that agencies need to identify at risk parts of their agencies and require that employees in those areas undertake mandatory training at least every 12 months to ensure they are across all the resources and tools about identifying, preventing, and reporting corruption or serious maladministration.”

REPORTING CORRUPTION OR OTHER IMPROPRIETY INTERNALLY

More than half of participants were willing to report corruption or other impropriety to someone inside their workplace (Figure 15). Nevertheless, about one in five participants would not report internally or were unsure whether they would report.

FIGURE 15:
Willingness to report internally



The proportion of respondents willing to report suspected corruption to someone inside their workplace has decreased since 2018 (Figure 16).

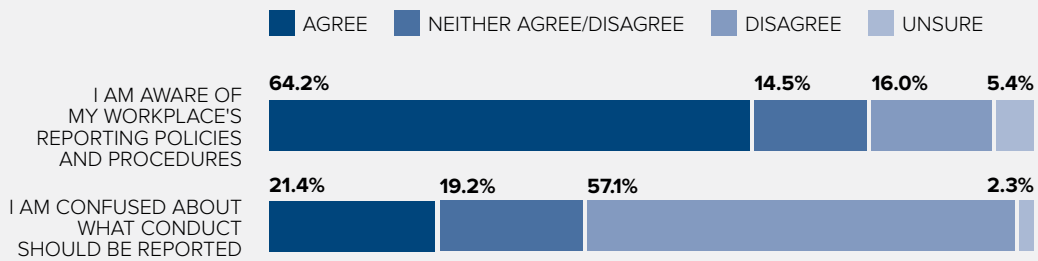
FIGURE 16:
Willing to report internally (2018 to 2024)



Awareness of internal reporting policies and procedures

Reporting internally requires public officers to know how to make a report. Nearly two thirds of participants were aware of their workplace’s policies and procedures (Figure

FIGURE 17:
Awareness of workplace’s reporting policies and procedures



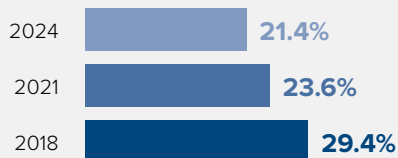
17).

FIGURE 18:
Aware of workplace’s reporting policies and procedures (2018 to 2024)



The proportion of participants who are aware of their workplace’s policies and procedures has barely changed since 2018 (Figure 18).

FIGURE 19:
I am confused about what to report (2018 to 2014)



The proportion of participants who agreed they are confused about what to report has decreased since 2018 (Figure 19).

Some participants believed their workplace could do more to clarify reporting processes. This included participants who observed that the internal training they had received about reporting was inadequate.



“My manager never completed my induction. In fact, she was never even involved in my induction. It’s hard to know what’s corrupt, how to report things, etc. when you’ve never even been inducted properly.”

“In the three years I have been here, there has been nothing on a public servant’s responsibility to report.”

“I believe that I have not been given adequate training in regards to reporting, therefore I would have to have assistance in reporting.”

Some participants commented that information about reporting was insufficient, difficult to locate or outdated.



“I have had concerns at times and sought information from my workplace website on what should be reported and how to facilitate the reporting. It is very difficult to find any information on 1. What constitutes inappropriate workplace behaviour and 2. How to report it.”

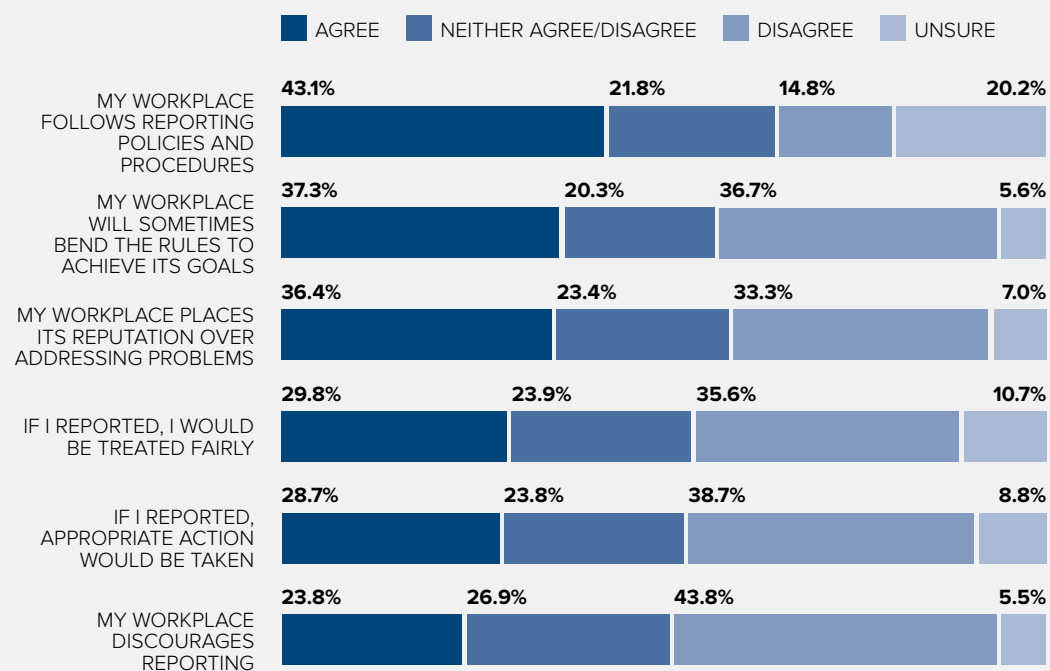
“I could not find any information on the [agency’s] intranet about this...”

“My workplace does not have mandatory policies and procedures in place, for example, I have asked numerous times to see a complaints policy and procedure as I do not believe complaints are handled appropriately and I have been told this does not exist.”

PUTTING REPORTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES INTO PRACTICE

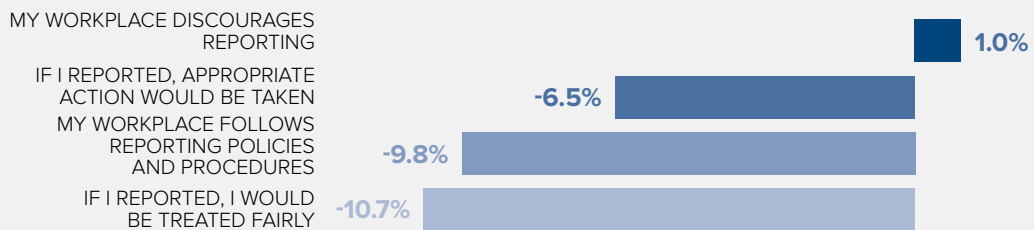
Participants were asked their views about how reporting policies and procedures are put into practice. Responses were mixed (Figure 20).

FIGURE 20:
Perceptions of reporting practices



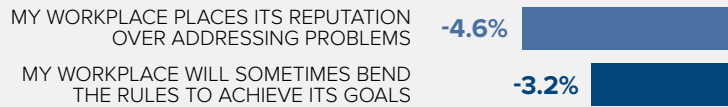
Since 2021, participants' views about the way in which their workplace handles reporting has become less favourable (Figure 21).

FIGURE 21:
Perceptions of reporting practices (2021 and 2024)



However, there has been a decrease in participants' perceptions that their workplace places its reputation over addressing problems, and their workplace will sometimes bend the rules to achieve its goals (Figure 22).

FIGURE 22:
Perceptions of workplace addressing problems (2021 and 2024)



Some participants believed little meaningful action followed from their report, even though policies were followed.



“It was a horrible experience, whilst all the allegations being found substantiated, nil action was taken to resolve or prevent further occurrences.”

“Any reporting is pointless because a blind eye is turned to this. The idea that it is not my money so it does not pinch me is a common attitude.”

Some participants believed action was more likely if a report involved someone in a relatively powerless position, whereas those in positions of power would be protected.



“When report a behaviour of higher staffers no outcome come out of it.”

“The higher you are in the organisation, the closer you are to the executive, the more you cannot be touched. I have learnt this the very hard way.”

“Managers always seem to get away with stuff that a normal worker would be on notice or sacked for.”

Failure to act on reports can have serious consequences. Integrity agencies have observed that perpetrators of corruption may become emboldened if initial reports of corrupt conduct are ignored by public authorities.²⁶ Some participants commented that failure to act allowed improper conduct to continue unabated.



“The particular staff member who we reported continued to behave belligerently and without respect to staff. No matter how many times she was reported nothing changed. I was under so much stress from this, it impacted my mental health & physical health.”

“Our Leader at the time sat on his hands, the dept did not support or protect me in any way. I have been made to feel that I was wrong in making the report. The person who was in the wrong has continued to be a bully and has undermined me ever since.”

The perception that reporting is futile may deter public officers from reporting.



“I was gaslighted and made to feel small and wrong. I know I am not taking this course of action again. It presents no results whatsoever. It takes too much time and effort and brings nothing but grief.”

“... despite the evidence provided, no misconduct was found and this person is now a supervisor despite multiple staff knowing what she did. Reporting took a lot of time which we dont have... given the workload so we wont bother reporting again.”

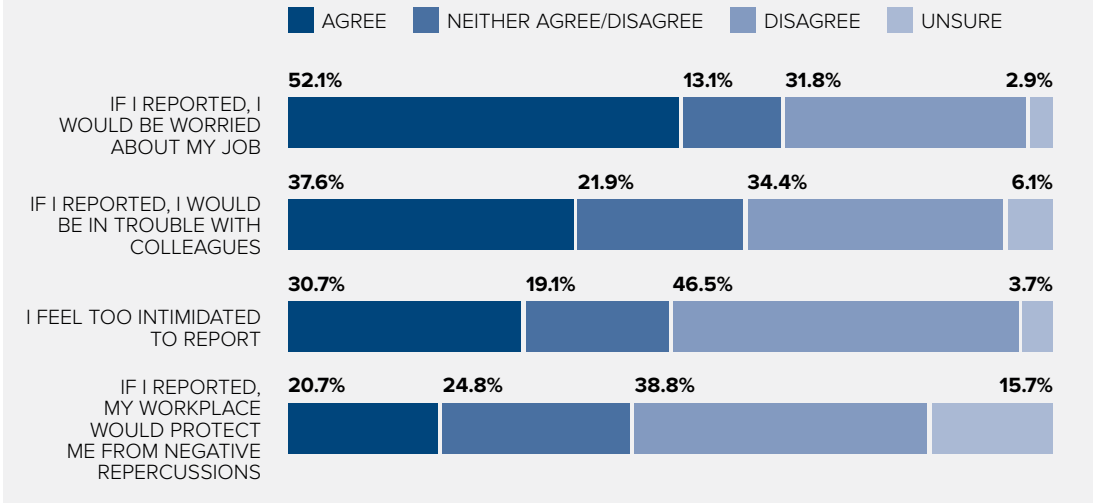
“Everyone knows what happens - no-one will make a report anything because nothing is done and people who report issues subtly get overlooked for development opportunities.”

There is a clear need for public administration to improve the manner in which reporters are treated and supported. The futility of reporting, perceived double standards and lack of accountability continue to be expressed by participants. This suggests the difficult experience of reporting wrongdoing needs to be better managed.

Fear of victimisation

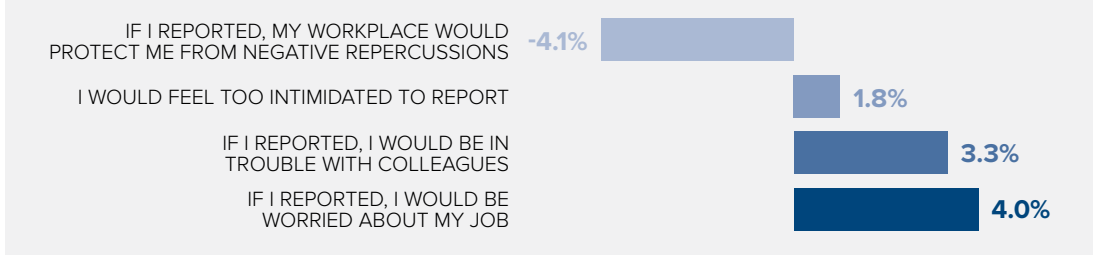
Fear of victimisation is a major barrier to public officers being willing to report corruption.²⁷ Many participants agreed they would be fearful of retaliation if they reported (Figure 23).

FIGURE 23:
Perceptions of repercussions for reporting



Participants' fear of retaliation for reporting has increased since 2021 (Figure 24).

FIGURE 24:
Perceptions of repercussions for reporting (2021 and 2024)



For some, the fear of retaliation deters reporting.



“Most staff members are too scared to report. [The public authority] has a culture of fear and blame.”

“...over all people would not report anything out of fear to lose the job.”

“..you whistle blow on anything, you start looking for another job, its the only thing that this place has taught me, just keep your mouth shut, opinions to yourself, get in, do your work, go home.”

“Everyone is too scared to report anything.”

Some participants believed they had suffered, or had witnessed, retaliation for speaking up. They described reporters losing their jobs, having their careers damaged, and ongoing mental and physical health problems.



“I’ve witnessed an innocent party lose their job and mental health/wellbeing by reporting corruption in a school. It damaged her career and wellbeing for years after.”

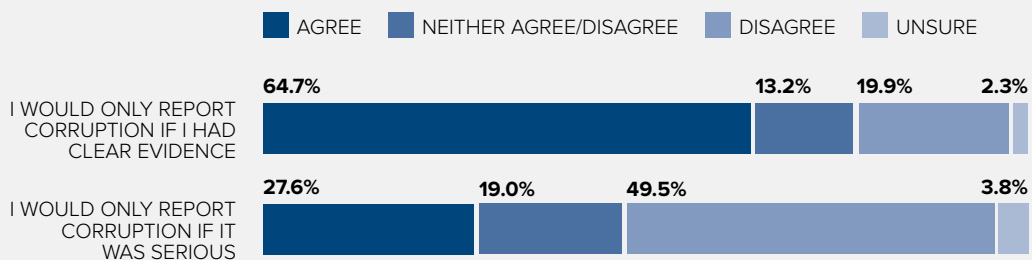
“Reported a serious misconduct. Negative repercussions came next in the form of targeting, bullying, unfair treatment, unable to have a fair chance to apply for another position and being isolated and made a scape goat of the perpetrator.”

“I resigned from this job. This still haunts me.”

“I called out corruption in a former department and it cost me my career and my health.”

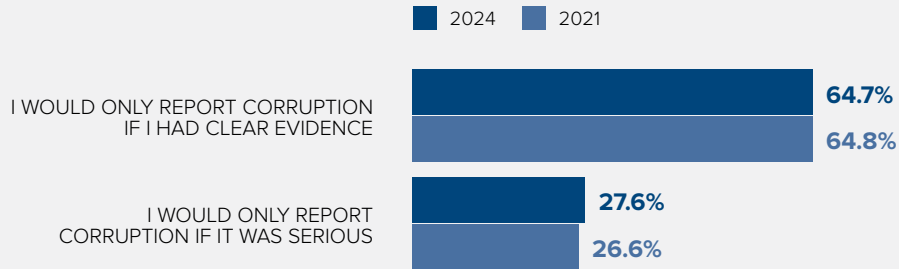
Two thirds of participants agreed they would they would only report corruption if they had clear evidence. A quarter responded that they would only report corruption if the matter was serious (Figure 25).

FIGURE 25:
Attitudes towards reporting suspected corruption



Participants’ views about what should be reported were similar in 2021 and 2024 (Figure 26) (those questions were not asked in 2018).

FIGURE 26:
Attitudes towards reporting suspected corruption (2021 and 2024)



Participants’ reluctance to report without clear evidence or unless the allegations were serious may reflect fear of retaliation. This fear was reported in several comments.



“I would not report unless it was clearly evidenced with known facts or examples AND if others were reporting as well. If it was just me - I would be very hesitant to raise anything as I would likely lose my job, if not immediately, but probably eventually.”

“The main issues would be around what should be reportable, at what stage (when suspected, when evidence collected, etc.) and what the repercussions to the reporter are (realistically, not what a policy says should happen).”

“It is a very intimidating space. I would want to report, but be anxious about being incorrect and causing un-due stress and/or becoming a target of a party undertaking corruption.”

Protections for reports and reporters

Being able to report anonymously was important to public officers, and has remained strong since the previous survey (Figure 27).

FIGURE 27:
Prefer to be treated anonymously (2021 and 2024)

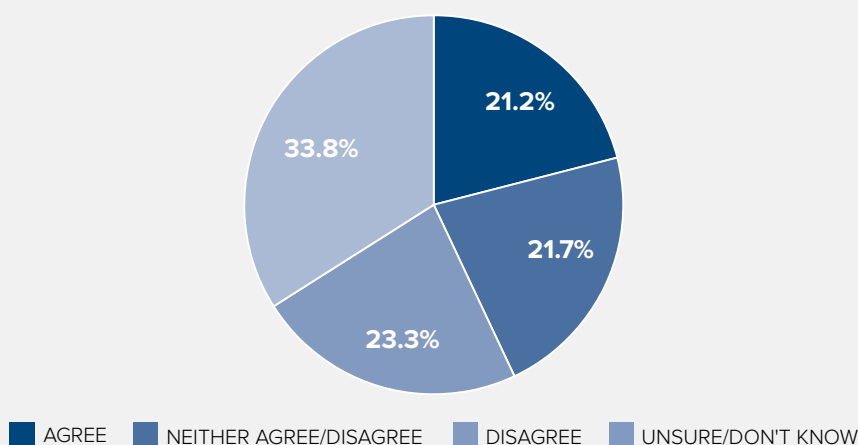


The *Public Disclosure Act 2018* (PID Act) replaced the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 1993*, removing any reference to whistleblowers. Instead, it provides for proper procedures for making and dealing with disclosures of certain information that is in the public interest, and provides protections to persons making such disclosures.²⁸

However, the term 'whistleblower' continues to be used by many public officers. For instance, concern about the lack of whistleblower protections was a common theme in participants' qualitative responses to the 2021 survey. For that reason, the 2024 survey asked participants if they believed their workplace protects whistleblowers.

The intent of the PID Act was to remove the emphasis from the person conveying the necessary information to the disclosure itself, as it is the information rather than the person that is key. However, public officers continue to feel targeted, with some participants disagreeing that their workplace protects whistleblowers (Figure 28).

FIGURE 28:
Workplace protects whistleblowers



Some participants expressed reluctance to report as they were worried their identity would be disclosed, leaving them vulnerable to victimisation.



“I have considered speaking with HR or with senior executive, however I do not trust that my concerns would be kept confidential and there wouldn’t be repercussions.”

“When incidents are discussed with a manager other staff then seem to find out. This also goes the other way of when incidents are discussed with staff then managers seem to find out. It makes it difficult to raise concerns.”

“If I made a report, the person receiving it would go straight to the person its about and tell them. There would then be negative repercussions for me.”

Maintaining anonymity can be especially difficult in small teams, as acknowledged by some participants.



“... specialties are often so small that complainants would be easily identified.”

“I work in a small... team so I would be very concerned about being easily identified.”

“In a small, close knit workplace there is limited to no real anonymity.”

Some participants explained that their workplace does not allow reports to be made anonymously. Not allowing anonymous reporting will discourage public officers from speaking up, resulting in corruption or other impropriety not being identified or addressed.



“We are not allowed to report anonymously otherwise they say it’s not formal. We have to put our names to the issue and we get dragged through the process...”

“There is no method in my workplace to anonymously report corruption. Reporting anything makes you a target and you are the one that will end up punished.”

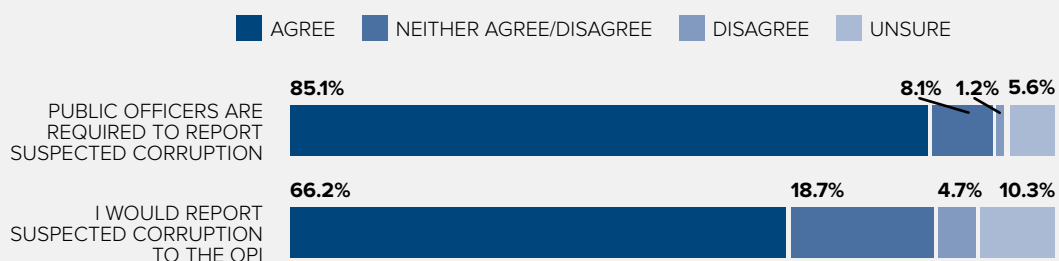
“Current workplace guidelines mean that any report made to HR is not anonymous and no protection is afforded to the reporter.”

“Reporting corruption cannot be done anonymously and as it is an expectation that you will report any matters, it’s expected you’ll provide a statement and testify as a witness. You will become a target also and your actions will be under the microscope. This is a whole lot of stress that most employees would rather not have to deal with.”

REPORTING TO THE OFFICE FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY

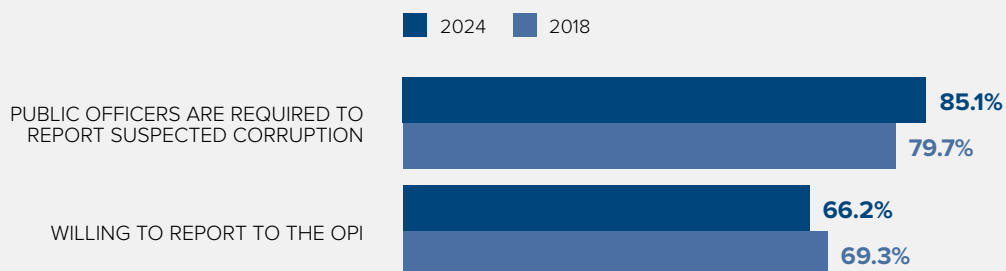
Under the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012*, public officers are obliged to report any reasonable suspicions of corruption to the Office for Public Integrity. While most participants were aware of public officers' reporting obligations, fewer would be willing to report suspected corruption to the Office for Public Integrity (Figure 29).

FIGURE 29:
Attitudes towards reporting obligations



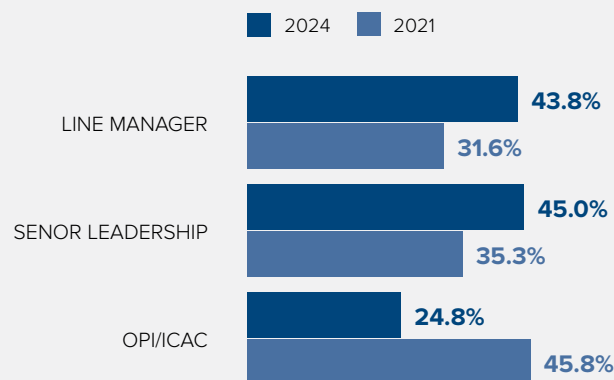
Questions about reporting to the Office for Public Integrity were asked in 2018 but not 2021. Compared to 2018, participants are more aware of reporting obligations to the Office for Public Integrity. Willingness to report suspicions of corruption has decreased slightly (Figure 30).

FIGURE 30:
Attitudes towards reporting obligations (2018 and 2024)



Of those participants who responded that they had made a report about suspected corruption or other improper conduct in their workplace in the last three years, there has been a decrease from 2021 in the proportion of participants who reported to the Office for Public Integrity (Figure 31). There has been an increase in reports being made to line managers or senior leadership about suspected corruption or other improper conduct.

FIGURE 31:
Who received reports of suspected corruption or other impropriety (2021 and 2024)



This does not necessarily mean that less suspicions are being reported. The Commission continues to be referred serious allegations of potential corruption for investigation. There are other possible reasons for this change. Notably, most participants described allegations raised in their previous report as involving potential misconduct rather than corruption. Since October 2021, it is no longer mandatory to report suspected misconduct or maladministration to the Office for Public Integrity, and in addition, the Ombudsman can also receive such reports. This may account for the difference in results. However, public officers are still strongly encouraged to report misconduct and maladministration to either the Office for Public Integrity or the Ombudsman.

It is also possible that workplaces do not encourage reporting to the Office for Public Integrity. Most participants explained that their choice of reporting channel was guided by their workplace policy. Some explained they had reported to the Office for Public Integrity as they believed that this was the best pathway for ensuring their identity was protected and they would be less likely to face victimisation if they reported externally. Others reported to the Office for Public Integrity as they believed their internal report had not been treated seriously. Only a few explained they reported to the Office for Public Integrity as their workplace policy required them to do so. Importantly, reporting suspected corruption is mandatory and should not be guided by internal policies and procedures.

What to report, and where?

Unsurprisingly, some participants were unsure about what conduct they should report, and where they should report it to. The terms corruption, misconduct and maladministration have technical legal definitions. However, a simple explanation for each term is as follows:

- ▶ **Corruption:** involves certain criminal offences, including bribery or corruption of public officers; threats or reprisals against public officers; abuse of public office; offences relating to appointment of public office; offences against the Public Sector (Honesty and Accountability Act) 1995, the Public Corporations Act 1993 and the Lobbyist Act 2025
- ▶ **Misconduct:** is an intentional and serious contravention of a code of conduct by a public office that constitutes a ground for disciplinary action
- ▶ **Maladministration:** is the conduct of a public officer, or a practice, policy or procedure of a public authority, that results in an irregular and unauthorised use of public money or substantial mismanagement of public resources²⁹

The Commission's message about this is that public officers not do need a fine-grained understanding of the distinctions between the types of conduct to be reported. Instead, public officers should be guided by the message "if you think something isn't right, report it."

It is possible that some public officers are not sure how to report and report to several agencies or individuals. Since 2021, the proportion of participants who reported to just one individual or agency decreased from 2021 to 2024 (Figure 32).

FIGURE 32:
Reported to just one individual or agency (2021 and 2024)



In 2021, the mean number of agencies or individuals who received a report was 1.56. This increased to 1.77 in 2024 (Figure 33). This finding indicates that the number of individuals or agencies that received a report has increased since 2021.

FIGURE 33:
Mean of number of individuals or agencies reported to (2021 and 2024)



Public officers are obliged to report to the Office for Public Integrity any matter that is reasonably suspected of involving corruption in public administration. The Office for Public Integrity will assess such a report, and if a potential issue of corruption in public administration, which could be a subject of a prosecution is identified, the matter will be referred to the Commission.

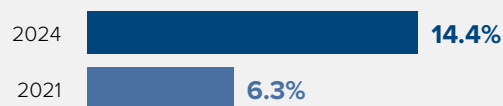
Under section 12D of the *Ombudsman Act 1972*, public officers may report to the Ombudsman any reasonable suspicion of misconduct or maladministration. While there is no mandatory obligation for a public officer to make a report of misconduct or maladministration, there is an expectation that such a matter should be reported. Such matters can also be reported to the Office for Public Integrity.

My key message to public officers who are unsure about whether their report should be made to the Office for Public Integrity or the Ombudsman is simply “there is no wrong door.” Public officers should be reassured that if they make a report to the incorrect agency, that agency will refer the report to the appropriate place. A diagram that illustrates reporting pathways is given in Appendix two.

EXPERIENCES OF REPORTING OF CORRUPTION OR OTHER IMPROPRIETY

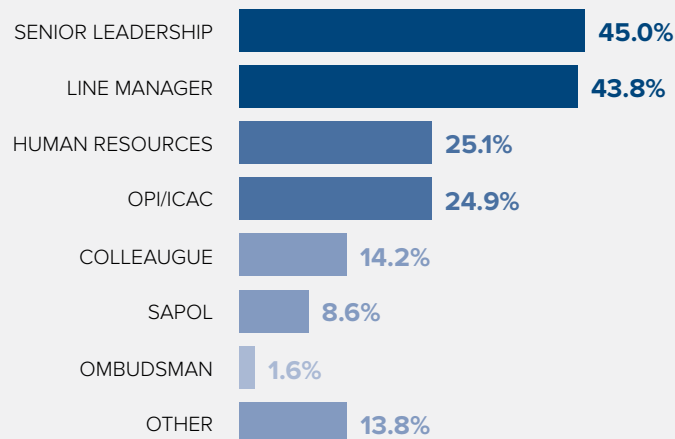
Participants were asked if they had made a previous report, whether internally or externally, of corruption or other improper conduct in their workplace in the last three years. Since 2021, the proportion of participants who claimed to have previously reported has more than doubled (Figure 34). The 2018 responses are not comparable as the question was asked differently. This increase has occurred, despite a decrease in participants stating that they would be willing report, either internally or externally, since 2021.

FIGURE 34:
Participants who have reported suspected corruption or other impropriety in the last three years (2021 and 2024)



Most reports were made to a senior leader or line manager (Figure 35).³⁰

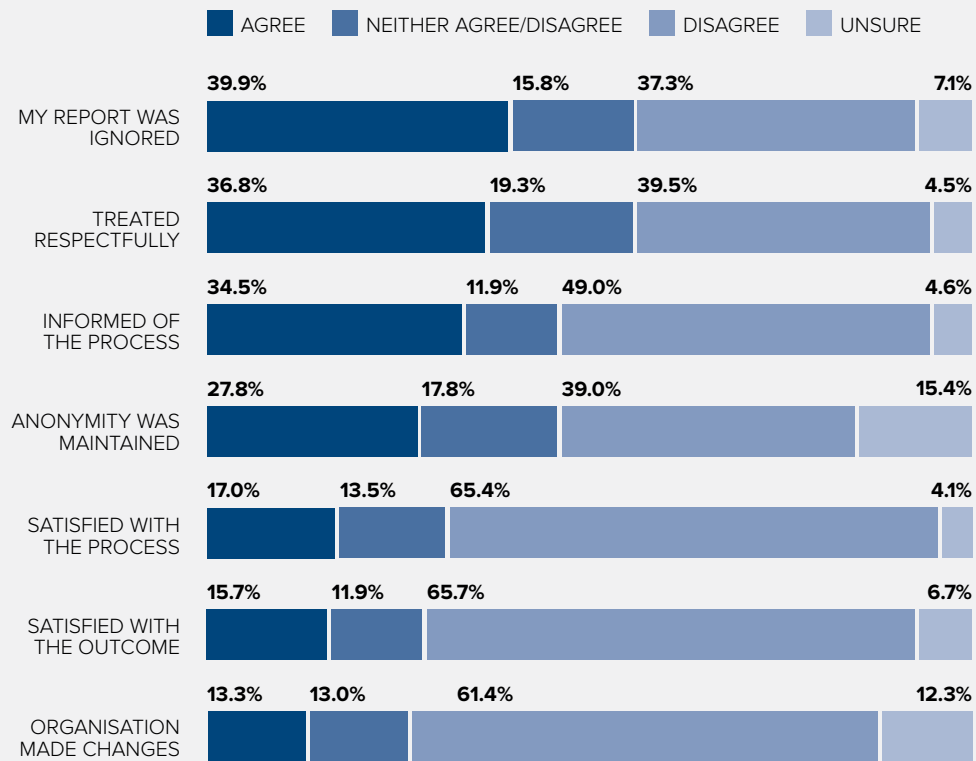
FIGURE 35:
Who received reports of suspected corruption or other impropriety



Handling of reports

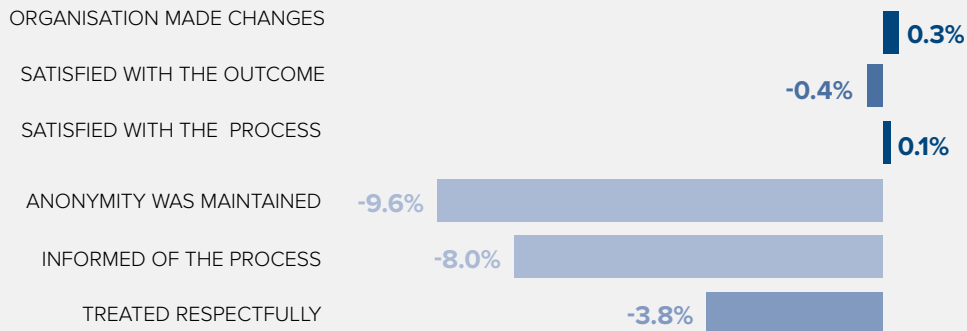
Participants were asked their views of how their report, whether made internally or externally, was handled. Overall, two thirds of participants were dissatisfied with the handling of their report (Figure 36). Over one third believed their report was ignored or they were not treated respectfully. Approximately two thirds disagree they were satisfied with the process or outcome. Only one third believed they were informed of the process.

FIGURE 36:
Perceptions of how reports were handled



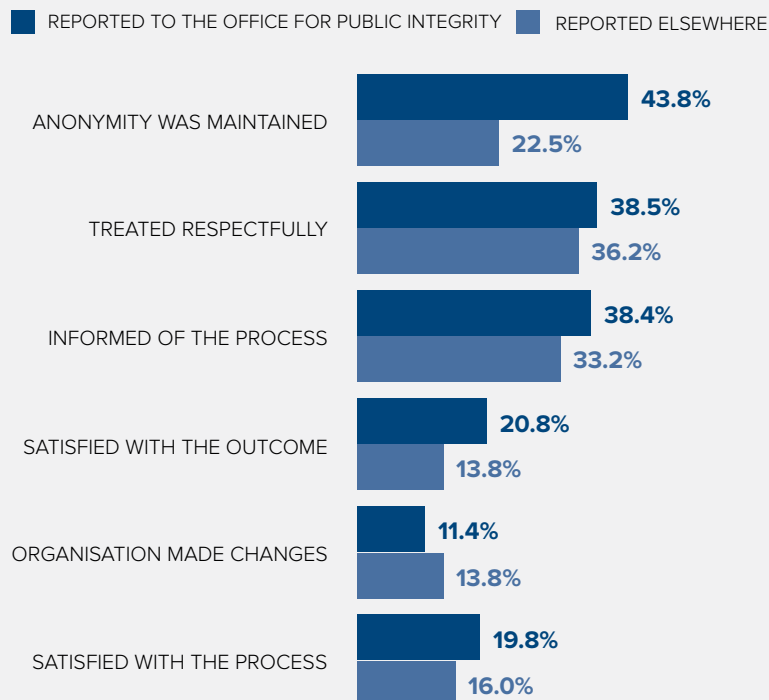
Since 2021, participants' satisfaction with the handling of previous reports has decreased (Figure 37). In particular, participants in 2024 who reported internally were less likely to agree their anonymity was maintained and they were informed of the process.

FIGURE 37:
Changes in perceptions of how reports were handled (2021 and 2024)³¹



Participants who reported to the Office for Public Integrity were more satisfied with the handling of their report than those who reported elsewhere, except on the issue of the organisation making changes as a result of the report (Figure 38). In particular, the Office for Public Integrity was seen to be more likely to have maintained anonymity. This demonstrates that there are potential benefits to reporting any kind of improper conduct to the Office for Public Integrity.

FIGURE 38:
Reports made to the Office for Public Integrity and reports made elsewhere



PERCEPTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

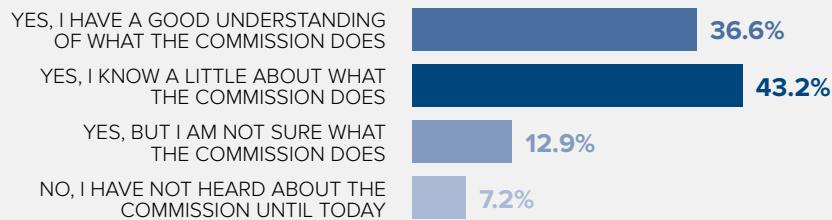
Most participants had heard of the Commission prior to receiving the survey (Figure 39). This proportion is approximately the same as 2021, and an increase since 2018.

FIGURE 39:
Have heard of the Commission (2018 to 2024)



One third of participants believed they had a good understanding of the Commission (Figure 40). Senior leaders were more likely to believe they have a good understanding of the Commission.³² Participants who are female, younger, were new to their current organisation or to public administration, or on casual contracts were less likely to state they have a good understanding of the Commission.³³

FIGURE 40:
Awareness of the Commission



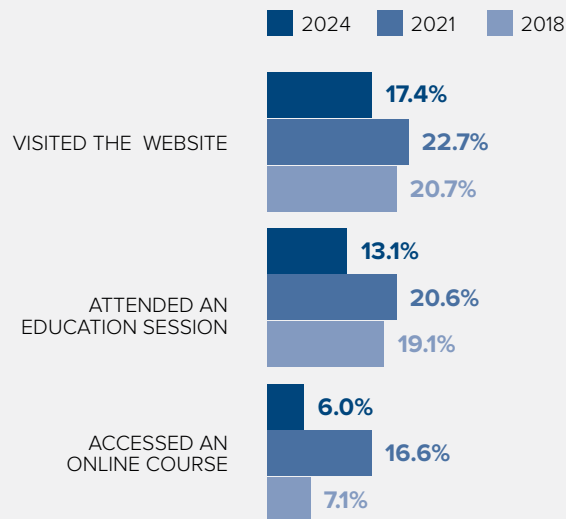
Approximately one third of participants have had contact with the Commission, representing a decrease from 2021 (Figure 41). Senior leaders were more likely to have had contact with the Commission.³⁴ Participants who were least likely to have had contact with the Commission were those on casual contracts,³⁵ and those who were new to public administration.³⁶

FIGURE 41:
Overall contact with the Commission (2018 to 2024)



Most contact with the Commission consisted of visiting the website. Every type of contact with the Commission has decreased since 2018 and 2021 (Figure 42). This suggests that there is an opportunity for the Commission to reinvigorate its education functions. This will be a focus for the Commission across the next Financial Year.

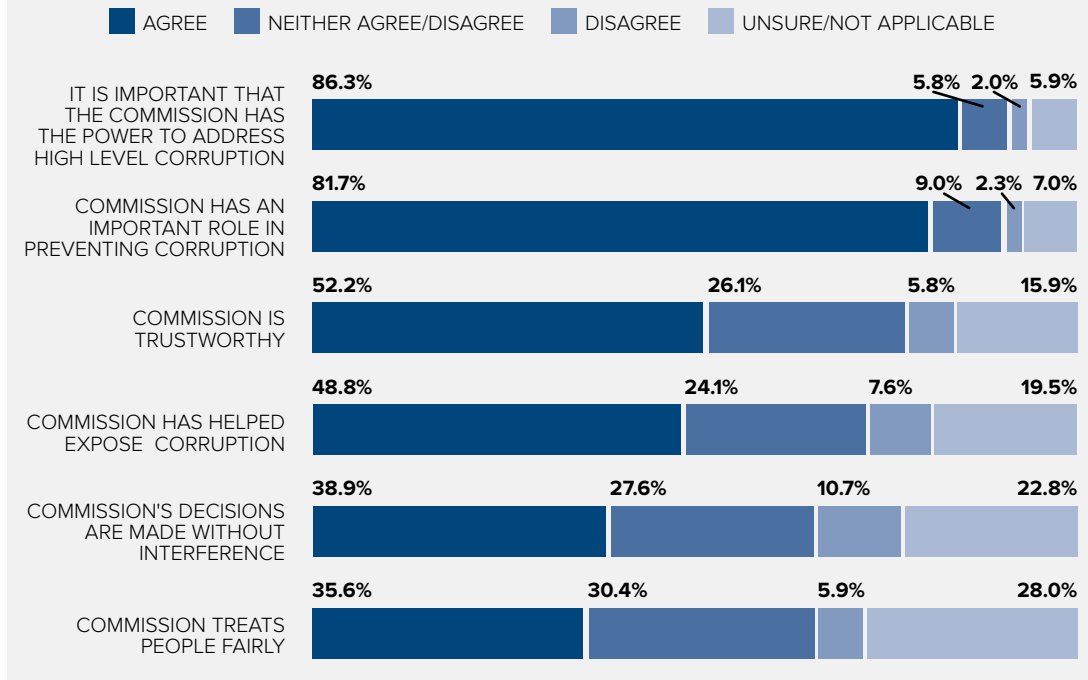
FIGURE 42:
Contact with the Commission (2018 to 2024)



Perceptions of the Commission

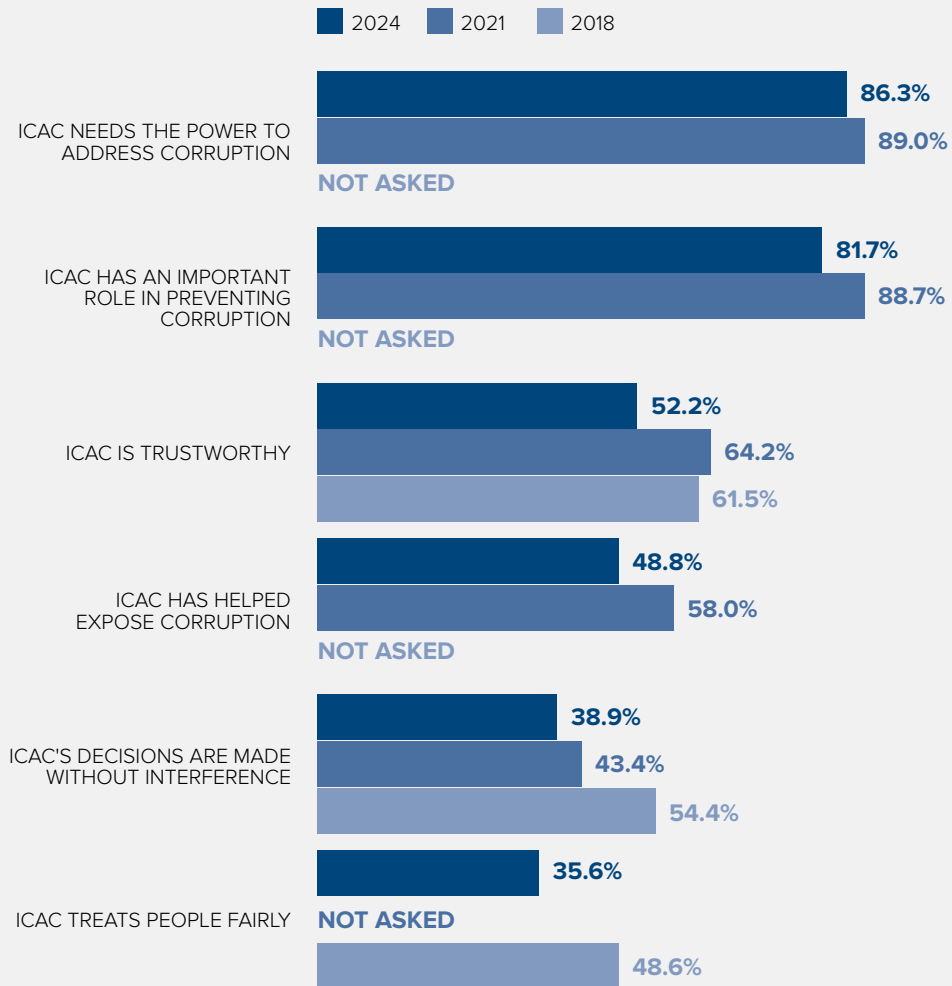
Most participants believed it is important that the Commission has the power to address high level corruption, and that the Commission has an important role in preventing corruption (Figure 43).

FIGURE 43:
Perceptions of the Commission



Perceptions of the Commission have become less favourable since 2018 (Figure 44).

FIGURE 44:
Perceptions of the Commission (2018 to 2024)



Approximately one third of participants agreed that the Commission treats people fairly or that the Commission’s decisions are made without interference. This does not necessarily mean participants believed the Commission acts unfairly or its decision making is being unduly influenced. Approximately half of participants responded that they ‘neither agreed or disagree’ or were ‘unsure’ if the Commission treats people fairly or decisions are made without interference.

CONCLUSIONS

This is the third Public Integrity Survey undertaken by the Commission. Some results are consistent with previous iterations. Favouritism in recruitment and other career opportunities continues to be seen as the greatest corruption risk facing the public sector. Only a concerted effort is likely to address such perceptions, including greater transparency and accountability for employment decisions.

Misuse of authority was identified as the second most prevalent corruption risk, and was largely related to participants' perceptions of poor leadership. Leaders who were seen to mistreat staff, lack accountability, and place personal ambition above the public interest were described as misusing authority. Public sector leaders need to act with integrity. Leaders who take inappropriate advantage of their position undermine workplace standards and may create a workplace environment where corruption can take root.

The 2024 survey focused on the integrity of decision making in public administration. Participants highlighted the many potential influences that may be brought to bear on public officers when making decisions. To protect against improper influences, public officers need to ensure decision making is transparent, accountable, unbiased and based on frank and fearless advice.

The use of discretionary powers when making decisions may also be vulnerable to potential corruption. Some agencies are perceived to have robust controls over the use of discretionary powers, whereas others are more lax.

The results identified other areas for improvement. The provision of internal training on corruption risks is uneven. Awareness of corruption risks in procurement and contract management may have increased, and some public officers in roles and agencies with specific vulnerabilities were aware of corruption risks. However, since the previous survey, participants overall are less likely to have received internal training on corruption risks specific to their role. This is despite some participants explaining they have tried to raise the need for further training in their workplace.

For many public officers, reporting is difficult. However, it is also essential. Corruption and other improper conduct cannot be detected and addressed if it is not reported. Senior leaders must support their staff to feel safe from retaliation if they report. No public officer should be worried they may lose their job should they raise a suspicion of corruption in their workplace.

Reports of suspected corruption must be reported to the Office for Public Integrity, and there is a strong expectation that suspected misconduct and maladministration is reported to either the Office for Public Integrity or the Ombudsman. For public officers who may be uncertain what to report, and where, I offer these two simple messages: "if something doesn't feel right, report it" and "there is no wrong door."

APPENDICES

Appendix one: The survey

SECTION A: GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
What is your gender?	Female Male I identify my gender as (please specify) I prefer not to say
What is your age?	20 years and under 21 years to 34 years 35 to 44 years 45 to 54 years 55 years and above I prefer not to say
Where do you work? (Remember, you cannot be identified)	Adelaide Venue Management Corporation Attorney-General's Department Courts Administration Authority Department for Child Protection Department for Correctional Services Department for Education (excluding TAFE SA) Department of Environment and Water Department for Health and Wellbeing (SA Health) Department of Human Services Department for Infrastructure and Transport Department of the Premier and Cabinet Department of Primary Industries and Regions Department for State Development Department of Treasury and Finance Local Health Network SA Ambulance Service SA Housing Authority SA Water South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service/Country Fire Service South Australian Police TAFE SA State Government – Other Local Government I prefer not to say
Which Local Health Network do you work for?	CALHN NALHN SALHN WCHN Other I prefer not to say

Where is your council based?	Metropolitan Regional Rural or remote I prefer not to say
Are you an elected member?	Yes No I prefer not to say
How would you describe your current employment?	Permanent/ongoing contract Long-term contract (more than one year) Short-term contract (less than one year) Casual I prefer not to say Other (please specify)
Are you in an Executive or Senior Manager role?	Yes No I prefer not to say Don't know/unsure
How long have you worked in your current organisation?	Less than 1 year 1 to 5 years 6 to 10 years 11 to 20 years More than 20 years I prefer not to say
How long have you worked in the public sector or local government?	1 to 5 years 6 to 10 years 11 to 20 years More than 20 years I prefer not to say

SECTION B: VULNERABILITY TO CORRUPTION AND OTHER IMPROPER CONDUCT	
Overall, how vulnerable do you believe your workplace is to corruption or other improper conduct?	<p>Not at all vulnerable</p> <p>Somewhat vulnerable</p> <p>Moderately vulnerable</p> <p>Highly vulnerable</p> <p>Extremely vulnerable</p> <p>Unsure/not applicable</p>
<p>Please rate how vulnerable do you think your workplace is to the following types of corruption and other improper conduct</p> <p>Favouritism in procurement/awarding of contracts</p> <p>Financial misconduct, theft, fraud</p> <p>Political interference</p> <p>Inappropriate access and/or misuse of confidential information</p> <p>Mismanagement of public resources</p> <p>Falsifying information</p> <p>Not declaring or managing conflicts of interests</p> <p>Perverting the course of justice</p> <p>Bribery/improper acceptance of gifts</p> <p>Nepotism/favouritism in recruitment</p> <p>Misuse of authority</p> <p>Failure to perform official duties</p>	<p>Not at all vulnerable</p> <p>Somewhat vulnerable</p> <p>Moderately vulnerable</p> <p>Highly vulnerable</p> <p>Extremely vulnerable</p> <p>Unsure/not applicable</p>
If applicable, please provide details about any major areas of vulnerability to corruption or other improper conduct in your workplace.	<p>Not applicable</p> <p>Open ended text</p>

SECTION C: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF POTENTIAL CORRUPTION AND OTHER IMPROPER CONDUCT	
Have you personally encountered potential corruption or other improper conduct in your workplace in the last three years?	Yes No Unsure/don't know I prefer not to say
Please rate how vulnerable do you think your workplace is to the following types of corruption and other improper conduct Favouritism in procurement/awarding of contracts Financial misconduct, theft, fraud Political interference Inappropriate access and/or misuse of confidential information Mismanagement of public resources Falsifying information Not declaring or managing conflicts of interests Perverting the course of justice Bribery/improper acceptance of gifts Nepotism/favouritism in recruitment Misuse of authority Failure to perform official duties	Personally observed Suspected Neither suspected nor observed Unsure/don't know
If applicable, please provide details about the nature of any potential corruption or other improper conduct you have encountered or suspected in your workplace in the last three years.	Not applicable Open ended text

SECTION D: INFLUENCING DECISION MAKING	
Does your role require making decisions that may have consequences for the public interest?	Yes No Unsure/don't know I prefer not to say
Please rate how strong you agree or disagree with the following statements I believe that decisions in my workplace are sometimes vulnerable to improper influence Influences on decision making in my workplace are not always transparent I have felt pressure to not provide frank and fearless advice I have felt pressure to falsify information to support a specific decision or outcome I have felt pressured by a work colleague to make a decision that is not in the public interest I have felt pressured by an external party to make a decision that is not in the public interest I sometimes need to weigh up private interests when making decisions I sometimes feel unable to push back against efforts to influence my decisions	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Unsure/not applicable
If applicable, please describe any circumstances where you have felt pressure to make a decision that was not in the public interest.	Not applicable Open ended text

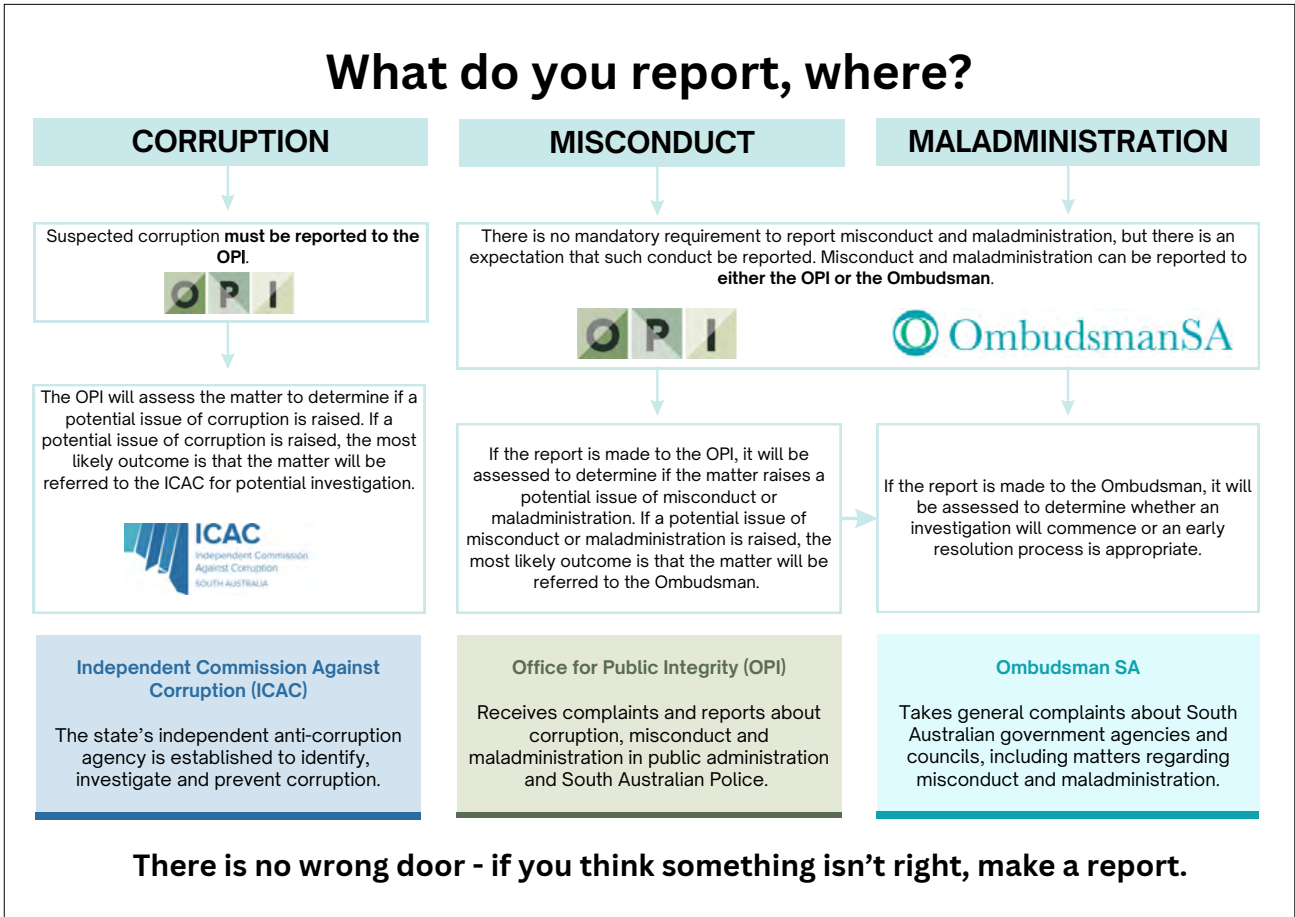
SECTION E: DISCRETION IN DECISION MAKING	
Does your role give you wide discretion to make decisions	Yes No Unsure/don't know I prefer not to say
<p>Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements</p> <p>Some individuals in my workplace have too much discretion to make decisions</p> <p>I believe that discretionary decisions in my workplace are well justified</p> <p>Decisions made using discretion in my workplace are properly supervised</p> <p>I believe that decisions made using discretion in my workplace are not appropriately documented</p> <p>Discretionary powers are used in my workplace only to serve an authorised purpose</p> <p>Decisions made using discretionary powers in my workplace are transparent</p> <p>I feel that there are sufficient checks and balances over the use of discretion in my workplace</p> <p>Discretionary powers have sometimes been used in my workplace for improper reasons</p> <p>My workplace does not have clear procedures guiding decision making by staff</p> <p>Leadership in my workplace ensures discretionary powers are exercised appropriately</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>Disagree</p> <p>Strongly disagree</p> <p>Unsure/not applicable</p>
If applicable, please describe any circumstances where the discretion to make decisions may have been misused in your workplace.	Not applicable Open ended text

SECTION F: INTERNAL REPORTING OF POTENTIAL CORRUPTION OR OTHER IMPROPER CONDUCT	
<p>Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements</p> <p>I am confused about what conduct should be reported</p> <p>I would only report suspected corruption if I had clear evidence</p> <p>I would only report suspected corruption if it was serious</p> <p>I think I would report suspected corruption to someone inside my workplace</p> <p>If I reported, I would probably be in trouble with my colleagues</p> <p>If I reported, I would be worried about my job</p> <p>I would feel too intimidated to report</p>	<p>Strongly agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>Disagree</p> <p>Strongly disagree</p> <p>Unsure/don't know</p>
<p>Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements</p> <p>I feel that my workplace discourages reporting</p> <p>If I reported, my workplace would protect me from negative repercussions</p> <p>My workplace has provided me with training on corruption risks that relate to my role</p> <p>I feel that my workplace will sometimes bend the rules to achieve its goals</p> <p>I am aware of my workplace's policies and procedures for reporting</p> <p>If I reported, I believe that I would be treated fairly</p> <p>If I reported, I am confident that appropriate action would be taken</p> <p>If I reported, I would prefer to remain anonymous</p> <p>My workplace follows policies and procedures when dealing with a report</p> <p>My workplace places its reputation over addressing problems</p> <p>My workplace provides whistleblower protections for staff who report internally</p>	<p>Strongly agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>Disagree</p> <p>Strongly disagree</p> <p>Unsure/don't know</p>
<p>Do you have any further comments about reporting in your workplace?</p>	<p>Not applicable</p> <p>Open ended text</p>

SECTION G: PREVIOUS REPORTING	
Have you previously made a report of suspected corruption or other improper conduct in your workplace in the last three years?	Yes No I prefer not to say Unsure/don't know
For the most recent occasion where you reported suspected corruption or other improper conduct in your workplace, who did you report this to?	My line manager Senior leadership Human resources A colleague in my workplace The Office for Public Integrity/ Independent Commission Against Corruption South Australian Police Other Unsure/ can't remember
Please explain why you chose to report to that particular person or agency.	I prefer not to say Open ended text
What were the nature of the allegations?	I prefer not to say Open ended text
In relation to your most recent report, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements I was informed of the process that would occur My anonymity was maintained My report was ignored I feel that I was treated respectfully My organisation made changes as a result of my report I feel satisfied with the outcome of my report	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Unsure/ not applicable
Do you have any further comments about how your report was handled?	Not applicable Open ended text

SECTION H: SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION	
Have you heard of South Australia's Independent Commissioner Against Corruption before receiving this survey?	Yes, I have a good understanding of what the Commission does Yes, I know a little about what the Commission does Yes, but I am not sure what the Commission does No, I have not heard of the Commission until today
What do you understand as the role of the Independent Commission Against Corruption?	Open ended text
Have you had previous contact with the Commission?	No Yes, visited the website Yes, accessed resources Yes, accessed an ICAC online course Yes, attended an education/ training session Yes, other type of contact (please specify)
Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements The ICAC has an important role in preventing corruption in South Australia I feel that the ICAC is trustworthy The ICAC has helped to expose corruption in South Australia It is important that the ICAC has the power to effectively address high level corruption I believe that the ICAC's decisions are made without interference The ICAC treats people fairly	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Unsure/ don't know
Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements I think all South Australian public officers are required to report suspected corruption to the Office for Public Integrity If I encountered or suspected corruption I would report it to the Office for Public Integrity	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Unsure/ don't know
Do you have any further comments you would like to make regarding the points raised in this survey?	

Appendix two: Office for Public Integrity’s Integrity Flowchart



Appendix three: Statistical results and references

- 1 The total number of South Australian public sector employees is taken from Office for the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Workforce Information Report 2023-24 (September 2024) 6. The total number of South Australian local government employees is available from Bureau of Statistics, Public Sector Employment and Earnings, Employees: Public Sector Employees, Level of Government, States and Territories (June 2023).
- 2 As compared to the public administration sector demographics reported in Office for the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Workforce Information Report 2023-24 (September 2024).
- 3 The Office for the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (OCPSE) categories for length of service at an employee's current agency include 5 to <10 years and 10 to <20 years which do not exactly match those used in the survey. Nevertheless, a broad comparison can be made.
- 4 The Office for the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (OCPSE) categories for length of time in the South Australian public sector include 5 to <10 years and 10 to <20 years which do not exactly match those used in the survey. Nevertheless, a broad comparison can be made.
- 5 Claudio W. Abramo, 'How Much Do Perceptions of Corruption Really Tell Us?' (2008) 86(4) International Review of Administrative Sciences 673.
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- 7 Independent Commission Against Corruption, South Australia, ICAC Public Integrity Survey 2021: Local Government Integrity Insights (June 2021); Independent Commission Against Corruption, South Australia, Local Government Integrity Insights: A Third Report from the ICAC Public Integrity Survey 2018 (12 September 2018).
- 8 Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission, Corruption and Misconduct Risks for Local Government (25 September 2023), Crime and Corruption Commission, Queensland. Perceptions of Corruption and Integrity in Local Government: Findings from a Survey of Local Government Employees (2020) p 2.
- 9 Independent Commission Against Corruption, South Australia, Robust Corruption (August 2023).
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- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Public Sector Act 2009 (SA) s 46(2); Local Government Act 1999 (SA) s 107(2)(a); Public Sector Regulations 2010 (SA) r 17; Directions of the South Australian Premier, Recruitment (September 2018); Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment: Recruitment (June 2020).
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- 17 Independent Commission Against Corruption, South Australia, Buying Trust: Corruption Risks in Public Sector Procurement (June 2024) 48-49.
- 18 Ibid 58.
- 19 Crime and Corruption Commission, Queensland, Discretionary Decision-Making Powers: Identifying Potential Corruption Risks. Prevention in Focus (March 2020).
- 20 There was a negative correlation between number of years in public administration and level of agreement that participants were pressured to not provide frank and fearless advice (Spearman's $r = -.073$, $p < .001$, $n = 6104$) and falsify information (Spearman's $r = -.063$, $n = 6094$, $p < .001$), to believe they had experienced pressure by a work colleague (Spearman's $r = -.055$, $p < .001$, $n = 6101$) or external party (Spearman's $r = -.059$, $p < .001$, $n = 6089$) to make a decision that was not in the public interest, and they sometimes feel unable to push back against efforts to influence decisions (Spearman's $r = -.061$, $p < .001$, $n = 6094$). There was a negative correlation between number of years between number of years in current organisation and level of agreement that participants were pressured to not provide frank and fearless advice (Spearman's $r = -.106$, $p < .001$, $n = 6116$), falsify and information (Spearman's $r = -.094$, $p < .001$, $n = 6106$), to believe they had experienced pressured by a work colleague (Spearman's $r = -.090$, $p < .001$, $n = 6113$) or external party (Spearman's $r = -.085$, $p < .001$, $n = 6100$) to make a decision that was not

- in the public interest, and they sometimes feel unable to push back against efforts to influence decisions (Spearman's $r=-.085$, $p<.001$, $n=6105$).
- 21 Hon Justice Melissa Perry, 'The Future of Administrative Discretions', Federal Court of Australia, Sydney (24 February 2023); Ombudsman Western Australia, Guidelines: Exercise of Discretion in Administrative Decision Making (April 2019).
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 - 24 Female participants ($\chi^2(5, n=5494)=54.400$, $p<.001$, $v=.100$) and casual staff ($\chi^2(5, n=5514)=65.974$, $p<.001$, $v=.063$) were less likely than other participants to agree their workplace has provided training on corruption risks.
 - 25 $\chi^2(5, n=5423)=88.775$, $p<.001$, $v=.128$.
 - 26 For example, Independent Commission Against Corruption, New South Wales, Investigation into the Awarding of Roads and Traffic Authority and Roads and Maritime Services Contracts (Operation Paragon) (March 2023); Independent Commission Against Corruption, New South Wales, Investigation into the Sourcing of Software Systems for the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE (October 2021).
 - 27 Gjalte de Graaf, 'A Report on Reporting: Why Peers Report Integrity and Law Violations in Public Organizations' (2010) 70(5) Public Administration Review 767; John P Keenan, 'Whistleblowing and the First-Level Manager: Determinants of Feeling Obligated to Blow the Whistle' (1995) 10 Journal of Social Behavior and Personality 571.
 - 28 Independent Commission Against Corruption South Australia, Public Interest Disclosures: A New Act in Town, Public Interest Disclosures: A new Act in town | Independent Commission Against Corruption SA, accessed April 2025.
 - 29 Office for Public Integrity, Directions and Guidelines: For Public Officers (7 August 2023); Office for Public Integrity; Office for Public Integrity, About Public Administration, About Public Administration | Office for Public Integrity accessed April 2025.
 - 30 Others included SA Police's Internal Investigation Section, union, Safe Work SA, Minister, Office for the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Fair Work Ombudsman, regulator, independent investigator or lawyer and Return to Work SA.
 - 31 The question relating to 'My report was ignored' was not asked in the same way in 2021, and the data is not comparable.
 - 32 $\chi^2(3, n=5372)=230.023$, $p<.001$, $v=.207$.
 - 33 Participants who are female ($\chi^2(3, n=5448)=93.440$, $p<.001$, $v=.131$), younger (Spearman's $r=-.124$, $n=7021$, $p<.001$), new to their current organisation (Spearman's $r=-.071$, $n=7032$, $p<.001$) or to public administration (Spearman's $r=-.193$, $n=7021$, $p<.001$), or on casual contracts ($\chi^2(9, n=5466)=129.245$, $p<.001$, $v=.089$) were less likely than other participants to state they have a good understanding of the Commission.
 - 34 $\chi^2(1, n=5403)=191.755$, $p<.001$, $v=.188$.
 - 35 $\chi^2(3, n=5499)=48.297$, $p<.001$, $v=.094$.
 - 36 Spearman's $r=-.124$, $p<.001$, $n=5668$.



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