

Whistleblower Public Forum

Thursday, 12 March 2026

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) will host a public forum on **Wednesday 29 April** to further explore the adequacy of protections afforded to those who report wrongdoing in South Australian public administration.

Part of the Commission's major Whistleblower Project, the forum follows months of engagement with stakeholders, including detailed responses to the [Whistleblower Discussion Paper](#) and the ongoing [evaluations](#) of reporting practices in South Australia Police and the Department of Human Services.

Expert panellists, listed below, will discuss issues identified throughout ICAC's research, with a focus on the effectiveness of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* (SA) and any further measures that should be implemented to strengthen this vital protective framework.

- **Dr Gabrielle Appleby**, Professor at the Faculty of Law and Justice at University of New South Wales, Head of Research at the Centre for Public Integrity
- **Vanessa Burrows**, Director of the Office for Public Integrity SA
- **Anneliese Cooper**, Lawyer with Human Rights Law Centre's Whistleblower Project
- **Tom Millett**, Deputy Ombudsman (NSW) responsible for Public Interest Disclosures and Complaints-handling Systems Oversight
- **Frank O'Toole**, former whistleblower, member of Transparency International Australia's National Whistleblowing Advisory Group.

The forum will be accessible to invited in-person guests and the broader public, via livestream. There will be opportunity for attendees to ask questions of the panel.

It will commence with an address from Commissioner Emma Townsend, to introduce how whistleblower protections are fundamental to maintaining integrity in public administration.

"Our ability to identify and investigate corruption relies on public officers making a report when they suspect improper conduct," Commissioner Townsend said.

“Reporting is a legal requirement of public officers under the ICAC Act, but we’ve heard how fear of reprisal from an employer or peers can act as a strong deterrent, even to those who wish to do the right thing.

“I look forward to the conversation to be sparked at the public forum and know this momentum will continue as ICAC collates the findings of this important project and presents our recommendations to Parliament later this year.”

Panellist Frank O’Toole has decades of experience in global forensic practice, including misconduct investigations. He also brings lived experience as a ‘whistleblower’, having reported potentially corrupt conduct of a colleague while with the Australian Federal Police.

“I have seen the good, the bad and the ugly in terms of whistleblower experiences and my personal experience gave me important insight to the key elements of support for those doing the right thing,” Mr O’Toole said.

“Giving good people the confidence to come forward when something isn't right should be a foundation of our democracy.

“Exploring ways to enhance our approach across government, corporate and public sectors through forums such as this is vital to raising awareness and learning from those with real life experience.”

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