

ICAC recommends establishing a new whistleblower support authority and legislative change

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The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has today released the final report from its major Whistleblower Project, making 61 recommendations to enhance, simplify and strengthen the current regime.

The report follows a 10-month review of current whistleblower protections, including public consultation, agency evaluations and a public forum.

“I see the huge impact that whistleblowers make every day in exposing corruption, misconduct and maladministration,” ICAC Commissioner Emma Townsend said.

“While the current regime provides important protections, this review shows there is scope to strengthen support for those who speak up.”

A key recommendation is the establishment of an independent whistleblower support authority to provide information, guidance and support to whistleblowers. The report also recommends pilot programs to provide legal assistance and counselling services.

“Being a whistleblower can be an intimidating and isolating experience,” Commissioner Townsend said.

“We heard overwhelmingly that whistleblowers need easier access to advice, information and support throughout the reporting process, and a dedicated service can achieve this.”

The report also recommends legislative reforms, including to:

- **expand protections** to a broader range of individuals likely to be privy to information about wrongdoing, including former public officers
- **remove pitfalls** and legal technicalities that may prevent legitimate whistleblowers from being protected
- **better protect the identity** of informants
- **improve access to justice** for whistleblowers who experience retaliation
- **simplify public sector whistleblower laws** so they are easier to understand and navigate.

Commissioner Townsend said that agencies should not wait for legislative reform before taking action.

“Strong whistleblower protections are important, but laws alone are not enough,” she said

“A ‘speak-up’ reporting culture, accessible advice and agency safeguards are essential to an effective whistleblower framework.”

Individual evaluations of South Australia Police and the Department of Human Services are nearing completion as part of the overall Whistleblower Project.

[‘Doing right by those who call out the wrong: A review of South Australia’s whistleblower protection regime’ is available on the ICAC website.](#)

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