

Whistleblower support

HEALTH CHECK

The Independent Commission Against Corruption's Whistleblower Project identified ways that agencies can better support people to speak up about wrongdoing. This checklist provides agencies with a practical tool to review and strengthen their existing processes and practices. While it provides a useful starting point, it is not exhaustive and should not be relied on as a substitute for the PID Act or PID Guidelines.

Is your PID procedure compliant?

Check whether your current PID procedure complies with the PID Act and the PID Guidelines. It is important that your documents and resources accurately reflect the legislative framework.

DHS report p29.

Do you have clear information about how to make a whistleblower report and reporting obligations?

Check that you provide clear, accurate and accessible information to staff about their reporting obligations, how to make a disclosure likely to attract legislative protections, and what those protections mean for them. Flowcharts can be a useful visual aid to help staff to understand your PID procedure.

DHS report p30 & p51.

Do you have responsible officers at different levels of seniority? Are they spread across your agency?

Limiting responsible officers to senior roles or concentrating them within specific business areas (such as a central corporate office) can limit avenues for making whistleblower reports. Consider designating staff below management level as responsible officers, and in locations that make them accessible.

DHS report p43.

Do employees who receive staff complaints and grievances understand public interest disclosures?

Consider training these employees so they understand how to identify and manage potential public interest disclosures, including how to make a disclosure to an appropriate 'relevant authority'. Depending on their role, also consider making them Responsible Officers.

SAPOL report p34.

Do you have an audit program?

Consider developing an audit program to regularly review whether your systems and processes for making, assessing and recording PIDs are compliant with the PID Act and PID Guidelines.

DHS report p33.

Are whistleblower reports made to general/shared mailboxes or phone lines?

Using general repositories to receive whistleblower reports has benefits and risks. Assess your processes to ensure that disclosures made through general channels (e.g. shared mailboxes, phone lines or post boxes) are received by a 'relevant authority', such as a responsible officer, in a confidential manner.

Whistleblower Project report p73.

Do you communicate regularly with staff about PID processes? Do you provide training?

Review your agency's communications and consider increasing education and awareness initiatives (e.g. through the use of emails, meetings, training and intranet content). You may want to align communications with relevant awareness weeks/acknowledgment days, such as World Whistleblower Day (June annually).

DHS report p52.

Do managers/supervisors know they could receive a whistleblower report?

Managers and supervisors can receive PIDs about members of their team, and are considered a 'relevant authority' under the PID Act. Make sure they understand their obligations through clear agency communication, policies, procedures and training.

Whistleblower Project report p70.

Does your organisational culture encourage people to speak up?

There is a strong correlation between positive workplace culture and a willingness to speak up. Consider ways for leaders to 'set the tone from the top', and whether your training and resources communicate an organisational commitment to a speak-up culture.

Whistleblower Project report p151.

Are support pathways available to whistleblowers ?

Whistleblowing can be a stressful and isolating experience. Consider ways in which your agency can provide support to employees throughout their whistleblower journey.

DHS report p59.

Visit icac.sa.gov.au/whistleblower-project for more information and to download the reports.

Acronyms and abbreviations

DHS report	<u>Evaluation of the Department of Human Services: Part of the Whistleblower Project</u>
PID	Public Interest Disclosure (conversationally known as whistleblower reports)
PID Act	<i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018</i> (SA)
PID Guidelines	<u>Public Interest Disclosure Guidelines</u>
SAPOL report	<u>Evaluation of South Australia Police: Part of the Whistleblower Project</u>
Whistleblower Project report	<u>Doing right by those who call out the wrong: A review of South Australia's whistleblower protection regime</u>