

Media Release

11 December 2024

Oversight of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 Annual Report 2023–24, tabled in Parliament today

The NSW Ombudsman has tabled the *Oversight of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 Annual Report 2023–24*, in Parliament today.

The report provides a snapshot of voluntary public interest disclosures made between 1 October 2023, when the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022* (PID Act) commenced, and 30 June 2024.

The PID Act is the public sector whistleblower protection legislation in NSW, providing a framework for public officials to speak up and report serious wrongdoing. These are called voluntary public interest disclosures, or PIDs. The Act provides certain protections when someone reports a PID, and it requires agencies to take some form of action when they receive a report.

PIDs in NSW

1,242 agencies (which includes departments and other public sector agencies, statutory bodies, local councils, and universities) submitted returns for the 9-month period.

Serious wrongdoing was found in 81 matters. Where serious wrongdoing was found to have occurred:

- in 23% of the cases, agencies took corrective action associated with the public official's employment (pursuant to section 69(4) of the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*), and
- in 37% of the cases, the agency responded with some form of training and education, and/or improvements to procedure and/or policy.

PID awareness

The report also talks about our office's work under the PID Act.

Since the Act commenced, the NSW Ombudsman has focused on raising awareness to support agencies with understanding and implementing their obligations under the Act. We have provided guidelines, fact sheets, eLearning modules, and different forms of video content. Staff from our office have also provided advice in person, over the phone and by email on a range of issues, and have conducted awareness sessions with senior leaders and those responsible for implementing the Act.

Of those agencies who submitted returns:

- 95% reported they had done something to raise awareness of the Act among their staff
- 85% reported that their head of agency, all disclosure officers, and/or all managers had received training on the agency's PID policy and on their responsibilities under the Act
- 85% reported actively promoting a 'speak up' culture.

The agencies that have not reported doing so, tend to be the smaller and more specialised agencies with few staff and limited resources. The NSW Ombudsman continues efforts to support those agencies, including by providing guidance and training material.

The report is available on our website at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

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