

# Fact Sheet: Making a public interest disclosure

April 2026

A public interest disclosure is information provided about improper conduct or detrimental action in the public sector. People who make public interest disclosures are sometimes known as 'whistleblowers'.

## What is a public interest disclosure?

Under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (Vic) (PID Act), a public interest disclosure (sometimes referred to as a 'PID'), also known as a whistleblower complaint, encourages reporting of improper conduct involving public officers or public organisations.

Disclosures are confidential and protections are available to shield disclosers from negative consequences, such as harassment or job loss.

## What can I make a disclosure about?

You may make a public interest disclosure to the Commission about:

- improper conduct by a member of parliament, minister or parliamentary secretary
- detrimental action taken against someone by a member, minister or parliamentary secretary in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure.

**Improper conduct** includes corrupt conduct, criminal offences and other conduct specified in the PID Act, such as deliberate misuse of information, a breach of public trust or a substantial risk to others or the environment. Conduct that is trivial is not improper conduct.

**Detrimental action** includes harassment, discrimination and adverse treatment in relation to a person's employment. For more information, refer to the [IBAC website](#).

## How can I make a public interest disclosure?

You can use our [secure reporting platform](#) to submit your public interest disclosure. You can communicate via encrypted messaging for updates while remaining anonymous.

If you need help completing the form or have any questions, you can [contact us](#).

## Am I protected if I share information?

Whether you make a public interest disclosure or report misconduct to the Commission, you are protected from civil, criminal, administrative or disciplinary proceedings.

This means, if you provide information in good faith that is not false or misleading:

- you are protected from liability for defamation in relation to the information you disclosed
- you have immunity from breaching any obligation requiring a person to maintain confidentiality, such as an oath
- you cannot be charged with an offence relating to the disclosure of information.

In addition, it is an offence to take, or threaten to take, detrimental action against a person for providing information to the Commission. It is also an offence to take detrimental action against a person in reprisal for them (or another person) making a public interest disclosure.

## What happens after I make a public interest disclosure?

First, the Commission will assess your disclosure. If it meets the criteria for an assessable public interest disclosure, the Commission is required to notify IBAC within 28 days. If the disclosure does not meet the threshold to be notified to IBAC, the Commission will assess the allegations as a referral under the PWSI Act. We will let you know if your disclosure is sent to IBAC or not.

IBAC will assess the disclosure and notify you of its assessment. IBAC may decide to:

- investigate the disclosure if it is corrupt conduct that is serious or systemic
- dismiss the disclosure and take no further action, or
- determine the disclosure to be a public interest complaint and refer it to another agency for investigation.

If it is a public interest complaint, IBAC may refer the matter to the Commission for investigation or investigate the matter. IBAC can also refer a matter back to us even if it is not a public interest complaint.

You will be kept informed of how your issue is being handled throughout the assessment and investigation process.

## How long will the process take?

Because a public interest disclosure needs to be assessed by both the Commission and IBAC, the process can take a little longer. In general, it can take between 70 to 120 days for your disclosure to be assessed.

If you do not think your complaint is about improper conduct or detrimental action, it may be better to avoid the extra time needed to assess it as a public interest disclosure.

## What's the difference between reporting parliamentary misconduct and making a PID?

Reporting parliamentary misconduct and making a disclosure are similar processes guided by different pieces of legislation.

Sometimes an issue can be both improper conduct and parliamentary misconduct, and could be dealt with under either legislation.

Making a referral can often be a faster process. On the other hand, making a disclosure can take longer but there can be additional confidentiality protections if the matter is investigated.

For more information about the difference between reporting parliamentary misconduct and making a public interest disclosure, refer to the [PID section in the Frequently Asked Questions page of our website](#).

## Does making a PID give more weight to my allegations?

No. A matter being considered as a public interest disclosure does not necessarily mean the allegation is substantiated, nor does it mean the matter will be dealt with faster or with any more seriousness than if you report parliamentary misconduct.

## Contact us

If you would like more information about making a public interest disclosure, you can contact us:

- Email us on [enquiries@pwsic.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@pwsic.vic.gov.au)
- Request a callback on **(03) 8486 2000**
- Ask an anonymous question via [our secure reporting platform](#).

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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