

13 January 2016

Central Queensland
Hospital and Health Service

Attention: Public Interest Disclosure Team
Office of the Queensland Ombudsman
PIDreview@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Dear Public Interest Disclosure Team

Review of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* (PID Act).

Thank you for your correspondence calling for submissions from stakeholders to inform the operation of the *Act*, as per section 62 of the *PID Act*. Including the issues paper to provide information about the operation and known issues of the *Act*, in addition to questions to prompt feedback and comments, was very useful.

As a result of consultation with staff, Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service, contributes the following to the review by the PID team.

- 6.3 Meaning of 'substantial' and 'specific'.

More examples of 'substantial', and 'specific', would be beneficial.

- 6.6 Changes to employment arrangements for public officers.

The *PID Act* should be widened to include volunteers and contractors which would then align the PID and the Hospital and Health Boards Act where a "designated person" includes volunteers and contractors.

- 6.7 Post-employment considerations for public officers.

PID should be applied post-employment for a specified timeframe e.g. 2 years. This is particularly important as some whistleblowers nearing retirement etc. may be reluctant to report even with PID protections, as they fear potential financial loss/punishment.

- 7.1 Who can receive a PID.

There is currently no single point of contact for disclosers. Disclosers may be unsure of where to report; a single point of contact to deal with all PIDs independently would simplify and improve transparency.

- Advantage – more options of who they can report a PID to.
- Disadvantage – May not be handled appropriately. No consistent approach across the state as to how these matters are handled.

- 7.2 Multiple reporting pathways for reporting.

This creates potential for inconsistent responses and confusion. Clear guidelines for agencies to follow, and a separation of duties, would improve the management, with oversight by an independent body.

- 7.3 PIDs to Journalists.

Alternative escalation or appeal process should be included e.g. Ombudsman.

- 8.3 Providing protections for 'a public officer' who is not employed by the entity.


The *PID Act* should provide protection to a discloser who is not an employee, as an external discloser may still fear and be exposed to reprisal or discrimination.

- 8.4 Obligations on public sector entities.

A more consistent state-wide approach to ensure consistency across all entities would be beneficial.

- 11 Role and powers of the oversight agency.

A formal audit and reporting mechanism to monitor and oversight compliance would be beneficial.



Yours sincerely



Executive Director Workforce