

16 November 2022

**Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Public Interest Disclosure Amendment (Review) Bill 2022**

On my reading of the Explanatory Memorandum it would appear that the draft legislation still falls far short of the standards that were spelt out by the Human Rights Law Centre, the Centre for Governance and Public Policy at Griffith University and Transparency International Australia in their “Federal Roadmap” late last year.

As one of the co-authors of that Roadmap said “Complex laws, full of loopholes and lacking practical support, are not fulfilling their purpose of protecting those who speak up.” It seems to me that the proposed amendments in their extraordinary complexity will add to, not diminish, that assessment. The draft amendments have endless references to “prescribed authority” but does not even come close to having a decent independent whistleblower protection authority.

If my reading is correct and the Bill as proposed is legislated one can expect serious public disappointment with our new Government.

The existing PID Act has proven to be next to useless and should be an embarrassment to its originators. Rather than trying to patch it up with 74 pages of complex amendments it might be better to have new legislation that replaces the old Act and which is written in language and structure that is effective and capable of being reasonably easily understood.

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