



Protecting whistleblowers in the federal government public sector

Public hearing in Canberra on 28 August

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) will outline the need for a robust legislative framework to protect whistleblowers at a public hearing in Canberra on Thursday 28 August 2008. The hearing is part of an inquiry being conducted by the House of Representatives Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee into whistleblowing protections within the federal government public sector.

In Australia now, there are no uniform laws to protect whistleblowers. Some protections exist at both the federal and at the State and Territory level. At the federal level, the Public Service Act 1999 provides protection for Australian Public Service (APS) employees making disclosures in certain circumstances, and a Commonwealth Government employee who 'blows the whistle' is currently only protected in a narrow range of circumstances.

The CPSU has indicated that it supports appropriate sanctions to protect public servants who put their careers and reputation at risk by delivering frank and fearless advice, or who blow the whistle on corruption or maladministration. The National Secretary of the CPSU, Mr Stephen Jones, will appear before the Committee to discuss the CPSU's position on some of the issues, challenges and best practices, surrounding whistleblowing protections within the federal government public sector.

The Committee Chair, Mark Dreyfus QC, said, "Whistleblowing protections are designed to protect disclosures made in the public interest that would otherwise breach the law. They should also provide legal redress for whistleblowers subjected to victimisation, or discrimination." He added, "More effective and comprehensive protection for whistleblowers can increase the likelihood of public interest disclosures being made".

The inquiry was referred by the Hon. Robert McClelland MP, on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary, Senator the Hon. John Faulkner. The Committee is to inquire into and report on a preferred model for legislation to protect public interest disclosures (whistleblowing) within the Australian Government public sector, addressing:

- the categories of people who could make protected disclosures
- the types of disclosures that should be protected
- the conditions that should apply to a person making a disclosure
- the scope of statutory protection that should be available
- procedures in relation to protected disclosures, and
- the relationship between the Committee's preferred model and existing Commonwealth laws.

PUBLIC HEARING PROGRAM: Thursday 28 August 2008

9:30 am to 10:20 am: CPSU Submission No.8

Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra

The hearing will be webcast (audio only) on <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>**For interview:**

Contact the Committee Chair, Mr Mark Dreyfus QC, MP on (02) 6277 4305 (Canberra) or in his electorate on (03) 9769 1955.

Or Mr Dreyfus' media adviser, Tim Lisle-Williams on 0431 178 280.

For background information, including the full terms of reference, please visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/laca or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 2358.