



Public hearing to discuss Rewards for Whistleblowers Canberra - 18 September

At a hearing in Canberra tomorrow, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs will hear details of a US reward scheme that encourages public servants to report improper practices of government agencies.

Associate Professor Thomas Faunce will be the main witness before the Committee at its hearing into whistle blower protections. Professor Faunce is an advocate of the US model of 'Qui Tam' legislation that financially rewards whistleblowers who expose major government or corporate fraud with a proportion of the public funds recovered.

The Committee Chair, Mark Dreyfus QC, said, "The Committee is interested in exploring a range of options to encourage and better support public servants who speak out about wrongdoing in the workplace. Evidence before the Committee indicates that the current protections available for whistleblowers are inadequate".

"The Committee has an important role to play in developing protections for employees who speak out about any illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices in the public sector" Mr Dreyfus said. "The inquiry also presents a valuable opportunity to assist public agencies to be more responsive to the concerns of their employees".

"Better support for people who speak out would help entrench a culture of trust in the public service and further build transparency, accountability and public confidence in government administration – essential principles of a strong democratic society".

This will be the sixth in a series of public hearings into developing a model for whistleblower protection legislation. The Committee plans to report its findings to parliament by 28 February 2009.

Details of the hearing:

Date: Thursday 18 September 2008
Time: 9:30 – 10:20am
Location: Committee Room 1R3, 1st floor, Parliament House, Canberra
Witness: Associate Professor Thomas Faunce (Submission no. 4.)
College of Law and College of Medicine and Health Sciences
Australian National University

Members of the public are welcome to attend the hearing or to listen to the discussions which will be broadcast on **FM 98.3** in Parliament House, and via webcast on the APH website:

<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.