



Understanding Public Interest Disclosures

Answers to frequently asked questions for organisations authorised to receive Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs)

Q. What is the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (Vic) (PID Act)*?

- A. This Act encourages reporting of wrongdoing and provides protection for people who make disclosures about improper conduct and detrimental action in the public sector.

IBAC plays an important role in managing and investigating PIDs in Victoria. This includes assessing PIDs and making decisions about what happens next. IBAC also has an important role in providing guidance and education about the PID legislation.

Q. What is the role and responsibility of an organisation authorised to receive PIDs, and PID Coordinators?

- A. Organisations authorised to receive PIDs, or “receiving entities” for short, and/or their PID Coordinators should:
- receive all disclosures, including phone calls, emails and letters from members of the public or staff
 - assess disclosures in accordance with the PID Act
 - notify all assessable disclosures to IBAC within 28 days
 - establish and manage a secure filing system and processes to ensure confidentiality
 - manage the welfare of a discloser and advise them of protections available under the PID Act
 - track the actions taken in relation to disclosures
 - collate and report statistics on disclosures.



Q. How is confidentiality maintained?

- A. The PID Act requires information about the identity of a discloser and the content of a PID to be kept confidential.

To minimise the risk of a confidentiality breach, limit the number of people who know the discloser's identity, ensure there is a secure electronic or paper filing system for disclosures, and develop a risk management plan for every PID.

Q. How is welfare in the workplace supported during a PID investigation?

- A. It takes courage to speak up and make a disclosure about improper conduct by a public official or public body. When someone discloses wrongdoing in the workplace they need to be confident they will be protected from any inappropriate response that may result from their disclosure. To do this, organisations need to respond quickly and appropriately.

They should also consider:

- developing welfare strategies that consider the welfare of disclosers, witnesses, cooperators and people who are the subject of disclosures
- developing a risk management plan to support the welfare of those involved in every public interest disclosure
- developing processes to protect disclosers from reprisal, including relocation if requested.

Q. What role does education and training play?

- A. Education and training helps create and support a culture where making a PID is valued. Organisations should consider:

- regular staff training on the reasons for having a PID procedure and how to follow it
- reassuring staff that detrimental action won't be tolerated and they will be protected in the process
- being visible, approachable and leading by example.

Organisations should also regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their PID procedures.

You can find more information and report PIDs by:



Filling out the secure online form at www.ibac.vic.gov.au



Calling 1300 735 135 for further assistance.



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