



## Key findings

# Perceptions of corruption: Victorian state government employees

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### About this research

In late 2016, IBAC conducted research on perceptions of corruption. An online questionnaire was sent to heads of state government agencies with more than 500 employees for distribution to their employees.

Responses were received from 4542 state government employees, mostly in the health, education and emergency services sectors.

The full report is available on the IBAC website.

### Integrity and awareness

- Victorian state government employees overwhelmingly agreed that *behaving with honesty and integrity is important* (98 per cent of respondents agreed with this statement).
- 79 per cent agreed they know what constitutes corrupt behaviour.
- Corruption was more likely to be seen as something that occurs outside people's workplaces, that is, as something that *happens in Victoria* (59 per cent) rather than as a *problem in my workplace* (15 per cent).

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'Well, the most prominent driver as a public servant is the VPS code of conduct – integrity, professionalism, respect, professional responsibility – we have signed up for that. It's a professional commitment we have made. For me personally, it's a moral conviction.'

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### Risk of corruption

- Four behaviours – *conflict of interest, misuse of information or material, hiring of friends and family* and *abuse of discretion* – were identified as the areas of highest corruption risk by state government employees.
- 62 per cent felt there was an opportunity for *conflict of interest* to occur in their department or agency. Only 34 per cent suspected it had occurred and even fewer had observed it (21 per cent).
- State government respondents were generally more likely to agree there were opportunities for potential corrupt behaviours to occur, than to agree they had ever suspected or witnessed such behaviours in their workplace.
- 45 per cent had not observed any of the examples provided of corrupt behaviours in their workplace, and 11 per cent did not believe there was an opportunity for any of the behaviours to occur in their workplace.

## Key findings

### Reporting corruption

- Social and moral beliefs are strong drivers to reporting. 82 per cent of state government employees agreed that *reporting corruption is the right thing to do* and 77 per cent agreed that they would report corruption because it *impacts the Victorian community*.

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'Reporting is within my own value set. I have to show a role of leadership, have to model it.'

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- Barriers to reporting, caused by lack of awareness of the process or concern about potential career and personal costs, have a direct impact on the willingness to report corruption.
- 33 per cent of state government employees agreed they confidently know *how to report corruption*.
- However, confidence in the levels of protection provided to people who report corruption was low:
  - 35 per cent felt that they would experience personal repercussions
  - 25 per cent thought they could lose their job

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'Making a report [of corruption] would affect my career, my job and my health.'

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- 53 per cent of state government employees said they would report corruption only if they knew their report would be anonymous.
- Only 21 per cent felt they would be protected from victimisation if they reported corruption.
- Less than one-third (29 per cent) felt their organisation would take meaningful action if they reported corruption.

### Organisational support

- Support for corruption prevention activities run by state government agencies was strong (71 per cent).
- But only 4 per cent of state government respondents agreed their *organisation has strong corruption prevention policies in place*.
- 34 per cent of respondents agreed their *organisation encourages people to act with honesty and integrity*.
- Most respondents agreed their *direct supervisor would be supportive if they chose to report corruption* (62 per cent).
- Only 37 per cent of state government employees agreed that their agency *regularly communicates about reporting corruption*.

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IBAC is Victoria's anti-corruption agency responsible for preventing and exposing public sector corruption and police misconduct. We do this by:

- investigating serious corruption and police misconduct
- informing the public sector, police and the community about the risks and impacts of corruption and police misconduct, and ways in which it can be prevented.

To find out how to report corruption, visit [www.ibac.vic.gov.au](http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au) or call **1300 735 135**.

If you need help with translation, call Translating and Interpreting Service on **13 14 50** or visit [www.ibac.vic.gov.au/general/accessibility/tr](http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/general/accessibility/tr)