

Thursday, 14 September 2017

Legal profession backs Integrity Commission and Whistleblower reports

The Law Council has thrown its support behind the Select Committee into a National Integrity Commission [report](#) and the Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services Whistleblower protections [report](#).

Several of the recommendations contained in these reports are consistent with the Law Council's positions that have been put forward to both Committees.

These recommendations include:

- The Senate should review the question of a national integrity commission following the release of a national integrity assessment;
- The Commonwealth, states and territories should harmonise whistleblowing legislation across Australia;
- Whistleblower protections should include remedies for reprisals and the ability for compensation against adverse action in the private sector; and
- A person should be required to have a reasonable belief of the disclosable conduct to receive whistleblower protections.

The Law Council also supports the recommendation to establish a Whistleblower Protection Authority to have oversight of the implementation of the whistleblower regime for both the public and private sectors.

The President of the Law Council of Australia, Fiona McLeod SC, said that the two reports include important recommendations which, if implemented, would assist in strengthening Australia's national integrity framework.

"Effective whistleblower protection is critical in promoting integrity, accountability and trust in our public and private institutions," Ms McLeod said.

"Efforts to stamp-out corruption globally, regionally and domestically are to be applauded."

"We urge the Government to closely consider these reports," Ms McLeod said.

The Law Council is also examining other recommendations made in the reports such as the possibility of incentives or rewards being paid for whistleblowers.

Further dialogue is required as to whether this will be necessary if the other elements are implemented and work properly. The Law Council will continue to engage with Parliament on this issue.

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