



# Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994

Reprinted as in force on 1 July 2010

Reprint No. 5E

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See 2010 Act No. 38 s 72

# Information about this reprint

This Act is reprinted as at 1 July 2010. The reprint shows the law as amended by all amendments that commenced on or before that day (Reprints Act 1992 s 5(c)).

The reprint includes a reference to the law by which each amendment was made—see list of legislation and list of annotations in endnotes. Also see list of legislation for any uncommenced amendments.

This page is specific to this reprint. See previous reprints for information about earlier changes made under the Reprints Act 1992. A table of reprints is included in the endnotes.

**Also see endnotes for information about—**

- **when provisions commenced**
- **editorial changes made in earlier reprints.**

## Spelling

The spelling of certain words or phrases may be inconsistent in this reprint or with other reprints because of changes made in various editions of the Macquarie Dictionary (for example, in the dictionary, ‘lodgement’ has replaced ‘lodgment’). Variations of spelling will be updated in the next authorised reprint.

## Dates shown on reprints

**Reprints dated at last amendment** All reprints produced on or after 1 July 2002, authorised (that is, hard copy) and unauthorised (that is, electronic), are dated as at the last date of amendment. Previously reprints were dated as at the date of publication. If an authorised reprint is dated earlier than an unauthorised version published before 1 July 2002, it means the legislation was not further amended and the reprint date is the commencement of the last amendment.

If the date of an authorised reprint is the same as the date shown for an unauthorised version previously published, it merely means that the unauthorised version was published before the authorised version. Also, any revised edition of the previously published unauthorised version will have the same date as that version.

**Replacement reprint date** If the date of an authorised reprint is the same as the date shown on another authorised reprint it means that one is the replacement of the other.



Queensland

# Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994

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# Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994

[as amended by all amendments that commenced on or before 1 July 2010]

## An Act to protect whistleblowers and for other purposes

### Part 1 Preliminary

#### Division 1 Title and commencement

##### 1 Short title

This Act may be cited as the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994*.

##### 2 Commencement

This Act commences on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

#### Division 2 Object of Act

##### 3 Principal object of Act

This Act's principal object is to promote the public interest by protecting persons who disclose—

- unlawful, negligent or improper conduct affecting the public sector
- danger to public health or safety
- danger to the environment.

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## **Division 3                    Definitions**

### **4                    Definitions and dictionary**

- (1) The dictionary in schedule 6 defines particular words used in this Act.
- (2) Schedule 5 contains certain definitions in separate sections.
- (3) Schedule 5 definitions and definitions found elsewhere in this Act are signposted in the dictionary.

## **Division 4                    Operation of Act**

### **5                    Act generally binding**

This Act binds all persons, including the State.

### **6                    Other protection saved**

This Act does not limit the protection given by another law to a person who makes disclosures of any type or affect another remedy available to the person.

## **Part 2                            General explanation of Act**

### **7                    What is the general nature of the Act's scheme?**

- (1) This Act provides a scheme that, in the public interest, gives special protection to disclosures about unlawful, negligent or improper public sector conduct or danger to public health or safety or the environment.
- (2) Because the protection is very broad, the scheme has a number of balancing mechanisms intended to—
  - (a) focus the protection where it is needed; and



- 
- (b) make it easier to decide whether the special protection applies to a disclosure; and
  - (c) ensure appropriate consideration is also given to the interests of persons against whom disclosures are made; and
  - (d) encourage the making of disclosures in a way that helps to remedy the matter disclosed; and
  - (e) prevent the scheme adversely affecting the independence of the judiciary and the commercial operations of corporatised corporations.
- (3) The scheme gives protection only to a ***public interest disclosure***, which is a particular type of disclosure defined by reference to the person who makes the disclosure, the type of information disclosed and the entity to which the disclosure is made (the ***appropriate entity***).

*Editor's note—*

Each expression in this part that is in bold type and italics is defined either in the dictionary or in a section signposted by the dictionary.

- (4) Certain types of public interest disclosures may be disclosed under the scheme by a ***public officer***, which includes any officer of a ***public sector entity***.
- (5) The expression ***public sector entity*** is widely defined and a list can be found in schedule 5, section 2.
- (6) Other types of public interest disclosures may be made under the scheme by anybody.

## 8 Public disclosures made by public officers (pt 3)

- (1) Under section 15, a public officer may disclose ***official misconduct***, an expression defined in the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*.
- (2) Under section 16, a public officer may disclose ***maladministration*** that specifically, substantially and adversely affects someone's interests.

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- (3) Maladministration is widely defined to cover illegal, arbitrary, oppressive or improper public sector ***administrative action***.
- (4) Under section 17, a public officer may disclose negligent or improper management involving a substantial waste of ***public funds***.
- (5) The disclosure may concern the conduct of any public officer or public sector entity or anyone contracting to supply goods or services (other than as an employee) to a public sector entity.
- (6) Under section 18, a public officer may disclose a substantial and specific danger to ***public health or safety*** or the ***environment***.
- (7) Public health or safety is widely defined in this Act and the wide definition of environment in the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* is introduced by cross-reference.

## **9 Public interest disclosures made by anybody**

- (1) Under section 19, anybody may disclose a substantial and specific danger to the health or safety of a person with a ***disability***.
- (2) The wide definition of disability in the *Disability Services Act 2006* is introduced by cross-reference.
- (3) Under section 19, anybody may disclose a substantial and specific danger to the environment from contraventions of, or of conditions under, provisions of Acts listed in schedule 2.
- (4) Under section 20, anybody may disclose a ***reprisal*** taken against anybody for making a public interest disclosure.

## **10 How must a public interest disclosure be made (pt 4)?**

- (1) Under part 4, division 2, a public interest disclosure must be made to an appropriate entity, which is a ***public sector entity*** identified under the division or to a member of the Legislative Assembly who may refer it to a ***public sector entity*** identified under the division.

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- (2) This requirement ensures that—
    - (a) public interest disclosures are made or referred to public sector entities that have responsibility or power to take appropriate action about the information disclosed or to provide an appropriate remedy; and
    - (b) unfair damage is not caused to the reputations of persons against whom disclosures are made by inappropriate publication of unsubstantiated disclosures.
  - (3) Under the division, a public interest disclosure may be made to an appropriate entity—
    - (a) in any way, unless certain exceptions apply including, for example, another law requiring a particular procedure or the appropriate entity having established reasonable procedures; and
    - (b) despite any exception otherwise applying, always to specified persons within the appropriate entity, if it is a public sector entity, including the appropriate entity's *chief executive officer*.
  - (4) Under part 4, division 3—
    - (a) public sector entities receiving public interest disclosures are required to keep proper records about them, because of the special protection given for public interest disclosures; and
    - (b) certain information about public interest disclosures is required to be provided annually to the Legislative Assembly; and
    - (c) reasonable information about action taken on a public interest disclosure made or referred to an appropriate entity, and the results, is required to be given to the discloser or referrer.
  - (5) Part 4, division 4 provides for the application of the Act to courts, tribunals and judicial officers in a way intended to prevent the Act's administration adversely affecting judicial work or independence.

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- (6) Part 4, division 6 provides for the application of the Act to corporatised corporations in a way intended to prevent the Act's administration adversely affecting corporatised corporation's commercial operations.

## 11 What is the special protection given for public interest disclosures (pt 5)?

- (1) Under part 5, division 2, a person is declared not to be liable, civilly, criminally or under an administrative process, for making a public interest disclosure.
- (2) Under part 5, divisions 3 to 5, causing or attempting or conspiring to cause *detriment* to any person because of a public interest disclosure is declared to be a *reprisal* and unlawful, both under the civil law of tort and the criminal law.
- (3) Under part 5, division 6—
  - (a) public sector entities must establish reasonable procedures to protect their officers from reprisals; and
  - (b) public officers with existing rights to appeal against, or to apply for a review of, disciplinary action, appointments, transfers or unfair treatment are permitted to use these rights against reprisals; and
  - (c) public service employees are given an additional right to appeal to the chief executive of the Public Service Commission to be relocated to remove the danger of reprisals.
- (4) Under part 5, division 7, the industrial commission, or, if the industrial commission does not have jurisdiction, the Supreme Court, may grant injunctions against reprisals.

## 12 General sections (pt 6)

- (1) Part 6 provides for certain offences and the criminal proceedings about the offences.
- (2) The part makes it an offence—

- 
- (a) for a public officer to record or disclose certain confidential information gained through involvement in this Act's administration other than under certain circumstances including, for example, the investigation under an Act of information disclosed under a public interest disclosure; and
  - (b) for a person intentionally to give false or misleading information as a public interest disclosure or in subsequent inquiries into the person's disclosure.
- (3) The part also declares that a public officer who commits one of these offences or the offence of reprisal is guilty of misconduct under any Act under which the officer may be dismissed or disciplined for misconduct.

## **Part 3                      Disclosures that may be made**

### **13        Purpose of part**

The purpose of this part is to describe the type of disclosures that may be made as public interest disclosures under this Act and who may make them.

### **14        What type of information can be disclosed?**

- (1) The types of information that may be disclosed by a public interest disclosure, and who may make the disclosure, are specified in sections 15 to 20.
- (2) A person has information about conduct or danger specified in sections 15 to 20 if the person honestly believes on reasonable grounds that the person has information that tends to show the conduct or danger.
- (3) If information is about an event, it may be about something that has or may have happened, is or may be happening, or will or may happen.

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- (4) If the information is about someone else's conduct, the information may be about conduct in which the other person has or may have engaged, is or may be engaging, or is or may be intending to engage.
- (5) The information need not be in a form that would make it admissible evidence in a court proceeding.

*Example—*

The information may take the form of hearsay.

## **15 Public officer may disclose official misconduct**

A public officer may make a public interest disclosure about someone else's conduct if—

- (a) the officer has information about the conduct; and
- (b) the conduct is official misconduct.

*Editor's note—*

This and other sections allowing a person to make public interest disclosures as a public officer do not generally contain rules limiting the disclosures to disclosures about the public sector unit of which the person is an officer.

## **16 Public officer may disclose maladministration**

A public officer may make a public interest disclosure about someone else's conduct if—

- (a) the officer has information about the conduct; and
- (b) the conduct is maladministration that adversely affects anybody's interests in a substantial and specific way.

## **17 Public officer may disclose negligent or improper management affecting public funds**

- (1) A public officer may make a public interest disclosure about the conduct of another public officer, a public sector entity or a public sector contractor if—
  - (a) the officer has information about the conduct; and

- 
- (b) the conduct is negligent or improper management directly or indirectly resulting, or likely to result, in a substantial waste of public funds.
  - (2) The disclosure can not be based on a mere disagreement over policy that may properly be adopted about amounts, purposes and priorities of expenditure.

**18 Public officer may disclose danger to public health or safety or environment**

- (1) This section applies if a public officer has information about a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety or to the environment.
- (2) The public officer may make a public interest disclosure of the information.

**19 Anybody may disclose danger to person with disability or to environment from particular contraventions**

- (1) This section applies if anybody has information about—
  - (a) a substantial and specific danger to the health or safety of a person with a disability; or
  - (b) the commission of an offence against a provision mentioned in schedule 2, if commission of the offence is or would be a substantial and specific danger to the environment; or
  - (c) a contravention of a condition imposed under a provision mentioned in schedule 2, if the contravention is or would be a substantial and specific danger to the environment.
- (2) The person may make a public interest disclosure of the information.

**20 Anybody may disclose reprisal**

Anybody may make a public interest disclosure about someone else's conduct if—

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- (a) the person has information about the conduct; and
- (b) the conduct is a reprisal.

## **21 Conduct of unknown person**

A person may make a public interest disclosure whether or not the person is able to identify a particular person to which the information disclosed relates.

## **22 Involuntary disclosures**

A disclosure may be a public interest disclosure even though it is made under a legal requirement.

## **23 Disclosure of events that happened before commencement**

A public interest disclosure may be made under this Act about events that happened or may have happened before the commencement of this Act.

# **Part 4 Disclosure process**

## **Division 1 Purpose of part**

### **24 Purpose of part**

The purpose of this part is to describe the ways in which a person may make a public interest disclosure and provide for related processes.



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## **Division 2                      Disclosure must be to appropriate entity**

### **25            Disclosure must be made to an appropriate entity**

- (1) Section 26 specifies appropriate entities to which public interest disclosures may be made.

*Editor's note—*

See division 4 for overriding limitations about courts, tribunals and judicial officers.

- (2) Section 27 provides more detail on how and to whom the public interest disclosure may be made within the appropriate entities.
- (3) To be treated as a public interest disclosure, a disclosure under sections 15 to 20 must be made to an appropriate entity.
- (4) The fact that a public interest disclosure may be made under a particular provision to a particular appropriate entity does not exclude it from being made under another provision to the same or another appropriate entity.

### **26            When public sector entity or member of Legislative Assembly is an appropriate entity**

- (1) Any public sector entity is an appropriate entity to receive a public interest disclosure—
  - (a) about its own conduct or the conduct of any of its officers; or
  - (b) made to it about anything it has a power to investigate or remedy; or
  - (c) made to it by anybody who is entitled to make the public interest disclosure and honestly believes it is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure under paragraph (a) or (b); or
  - (d) referred to it by another public sector entity under section 28.

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- (1A) A member of the Legislative Assembly is an appropriate entity to receive any public interest disclosure.
- (2) However, subsection (1)(c) or (1A) does not permit a public sector entity or member of the Legislative Assembly to receive a public interest disclosure if, apart from this section, the public sector entity or member would not be able to receive the disclosure because of division 4 or 6.
- (3) If a person makes a public interest disclosure to an appropriate entity, the person may also make a public interest disclosure to the entity about a reprisal taken against the person for making the disclosure.

*Examples—*

Schedule 3 has examples of the operation of subsection (1)(a) and (b).

## **27 How to disclose to appropriate entity**

- (1) A public interest disclosure may be made to an appropriate entity in any way, including anonymously.
- (2) However, if an appropriate entity establishes a reasonable procedure for making a public interest disclosure to the entity, the procedure must be used by a person making a public interest disclosure to the entity.
- (3) Despite subsection (2), a public interest disclosure made to an appropriate entity that is a public sector entity may always be made to—

- (a) its chief executive officer; or

*Editor's note—*

See schedule 5, section 1 for the definition of *chief executive officer*.

- (b) if the appropriate entity that is a public sector entity has a governing body—a member of its governing body; or
- (c) if an officer of the entity is making the disclosure—a person who, directly or indirectly, supervises or manages the officer; or

- 
- (d) an officer of the entity who has the task of receiving or taking action on the type of information being disclosed.
  - (4) This Act does not affect a procedure required under another Act for disclosing the type of information being disclosed.
  - (5) If a public interest disclosure is properly made to an appropriate entity, the entity is taken to have received the disclosure for the purpose of this Act.
  - (6) However, subsection (5) is subject to divisions 4 and 6.

*Examples of subsection (3)(d)—*

- 1 the entity's internal auditor, if the public interest disclosure is made under section 17
- 2 a health officer or environmental officer of the department having a statutory or administrative responsibility to investigate something mentioned in a disclosure under section 18(1) or 19(1)
- 3 the officer of the entity in charge of its human resource management if the public interest disclosure is made under section 20 and is about detriment to the career of an employee of the entity

## **28 Disclosure received by public sector entity may be referred**

- (1A) This section applies if a public interest disclosure is received by an appropriate entity that is a public sector entity or is referred to the entity under section 28A.
  - (1) If the public interest disclosure is about—
    - (a) the conduct of another public sector entity or the actions of an officer of another public sector entity; or
    - (b) the conduct of anybody, including itself, or anything that another public sector entity has a power to investigate or remedy;the entity may refer the public interest disclosure to the other public sector entity.
  - (2) If the entity refers the disclosure to another public sector entity, its power to investigate or remedy is unaffected by the reference.

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- (3) An appropriate entity must not refer a public interest disclosure to another public sector entity unless it first considers whether there is an unacceptable risk that a reprisal would be taken against any person because of the reference.
- (4) In considering whether there would be an unacceptable risk, an appropriate entity must, if practicable, consult with the person who made the public interest disclosure.
- (5) An appropriate entity must not refer a public interest disclosure to another public sector entity if it considers there is an unacceptable risk.
- (6) This section does not affect another law under which the entity must refer a report, complaint, information or evidence to another entity.

#### **28A Disclosure received by member of Legislative Assembly may be referred**

- (1) If a member of the Legislative Assembly receives a disclosure, the member may refer the disclosure to another appropriate entity that is a public sector entity which the member considers has power to investigate or remedy the conduct the subject of the disclosure.
- (2) For the purposes of this Act, the member has no role in investigating the disclosure.
- (3) In this section—

*disclosure* means a public interest disclosure or purported public interest disclosure.

#### **28B Legislative Assembly may still deal with disclosure**

- (1) This Act does not limit the powers, rights and immunities of the Legislative Assembly and its members and committees in relation to a disclosure received by a member.
- (2) In this section—

*committee* means a committee of the Legislative Assembly, whether or not a statutory committee.

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*disclosure* means a public interest disclosure or purported public interest disclosure.

*member* means a member of the Legislative Assembly.

*rights* includes privileges.

## **Division 3                      Records and reports about disclosures**

### **29            Records must be kept of disclosures**

- (1) The objectives of this section are to—
  - (a) ensure that disclosures are sufficiently identifiable to allow part 5 to be easily applied; and
  - (b) assist in the preparation of accurate reports to the Legislative Assembly under sections 30 and 31.
- (2) The chief executive officer of a public sector entity must ensure that a proper record is kept about disclosures received by the public sector entity, including—
  - (a) the name of the person making the disclosure, if known; and
  - (b) the information disclosed; and
  - (c) any action taken on the disclosures.
- (3) The chief executive officer of a public sector entity must also ensure that a proper record is kept about each disclosure referred to the public sector entity under section 28A, including—
  - (a) the name of the person making the disclosure, if known; and
  - (b) the information disclosed; and
  - (c) the name of the member of the Legislative Assembly who referred the disclosure; and
  - (d) any action taken on the disclosure.

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(4) In this section—

*disclosure* means a public interest disclosure or purported public interest disclosure.

*public sector entity* does not include—

- (a) the Executive Council; or
- (b) a court or tribunal.

### **30 Units must report to Legislative Assembly on disclosures**

(1) A public sector entity or an officer of a public sector entity required under an Act to prepare an annual report of the entity's activities during a report period for tabling in the Legislative Assembly must include statistical information about—

- (a) the number of disclosures received by it, or referred to it under section 28A, over the report period, for each type of information disclosed; and
- (b) the number of disclosures substantially verified over the report period, even if received, or referred under section 28A, before the period, for each type of information verified.

(2) In this section—

*disclosure* means a public interest disclosure or a purported public interest disclosure.

*public sector entity* does not include—

- (a) the Executive Council; or
- (b) a court or tribunal; or
- (c) a GOC; or
- (d) a corporatised corporation.

*report period* of an annual report means the period covered by the report.

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*substantially verified* disclosure includes a disclosure for which an offence prosecution or disciplinary action has been taken or recommended.

**31 Minister must report to Legislative Assembly on Act's administration**

- (1) The Minister must prepare for each financial year an annual report to the Legislative Assembly on the administration of this Act.
- (2) If asked by the chief executive of the department in which this Act is administered, a public sector entity must provide reasonable assistance to the chief executive to enable the department to compile information and statistics for inclusion in the annual report.
- (3) The report may be included in the department's annual report.
- (4) In this section—

*public sector entity* does not include—

- (a) the Executive Council; or
- (b) a court or tribunal; or
- (c) a GOC; or
- (d) a corporatised corporation.

**32 Reasonable information about result of disclosure must be given to discloser or referring entity**

- (1) If asked by a person who makes a public interest disclosure to it or by an entity that has referred a public interest disclosure to it under section 28 or 28A, an appropriate entity must give the person or the referring entity reasonable information about action taken on the disclosure and the results.
- (2) If the request is for written information, the information must be written.
- (3) Information need not be given under subsection (1) to a person who makes a public interest disclosure, if—

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- (a) giving the information would be impractical in the circumstances; or
  - (b) the information requested has already been given to the person; or
  - (c) the request is vexatious.
- (4) Information must not be given under subsection (1), if giving the information would be likely to adversely affect—
- (a) anybody's safety; or
  - (b) the investigation of an offence or possible offence; or
  - (c) necessary confidentiality about an informant's existence or identity.
- (5) If the public interest disclosure is made to the Crime and Misconduct Commission in a complaint of misconduct or official misconduct, this section does not impose on the commission any duty that the commission does not already have under that Act.

## **Division 4                    Limitation on disclosure process for courts, tribunals and judicial officers**

### **33            Object of division**

- (1) This division deals with some issues about the treatment of courts and tribunals as public sector entities and judicial officers as public officers under this Act.
- (2) The purpose of the division is to clarify the application of this Act and to ensure this Act's administration does not detrimentally affect judicial work or independence.
- (3) Section 34 deals with public interest disclosures made administratively about judicial officers.
- (4) Section 35 deals with public interest disclosures made in proceedings before courts or tribunals.



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**34 Disclosures made administratively to or about a judicial officer**

- (1) This section applies to public interest disclosures made administratively about judicial officers.
- (2) A person may make a public interest disclosure about the conduct of a judicial officer only under this section, despite any other provision of this Act.
- (3) A public interest disclosure under section 15 about the conduct of a judicial officer may be made only—
  - (a) to the chief judicial officer of the relevant court or tribunal; or
  - (b) to the Crime and Misconduct Commission.
- (4) A public interest disclosure under section 16, 17, 18 or 19 about the conduct of a judicial officer may be made only to the chief judicial officer of the relevant court or tribunal.
- (5) If a reprisal that is conduct of a judicial officer is taken against a person for making a public interest disclosure under this section, the person may make a public interest disclosure about the reprisal only to—
  - (a) the chief judicial officer of the relevant court or tribunal; or
  - (b) if the reprisal is official misconduct—the chief judicial officer of the relevant court or tribunal or the Crime and Misconduct Commission.
- (6) A chief judicial officer may receive a public interest disclosure only if the disclosure is about the conduct of another judicial officer.
- (7) Under section 28, the chief judicial officer may refer a public interest disclosure made to the chief judicial officer about the conduct of another judicial officer to an appropriate entity that is a public sector entity.

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### **35 Disclosures in court or tribunal proceedings**

- (1) The purpose of this section is to declare how this Act applies to disclosures made to a court or tribunal in a proceeding.
- (2) This section applies if a person—
  - (a) has information that the person may disclose as a public interest disclosure to an appropriate entity; and
  - (b) discloses the information to a court or tribunal in a proceeding in which the information is relevant and admissible.
- (3) The disclosure is a public interest disclosure made to the court or tribunal as an appropriate entity under section 26(1)(b).
- (4) The court or tribunal may refer the disclosure to another appropriate entity under section 28.
- (5) The fact that a court or tribunal is treated as a public sector entity under this Act, and therefore can be an appropriate entity under section 26(1)(b) to receive a public interest disclosure, does not give a person a right to take a proceeding before the court or tribunal that the person does not have apart from this Act.

## **Division 6                      Limitation on disclosure process for corporatised corporations**

### **37A Object of division**

- (1) This division deals with some issues about the treatment of corporatised corporations as public sector entities and their officers as public officers under this Act.
- (2) The purpose of the division is to clarify the application of this Act and to ensure this Act's administration does not detrimentally affect the commercial operation of corporatised corporations.

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**37B Application of Act to corporatised corporations**

- (1) An officer of a corporatised corporation may, under section 15, 16 or 18, make a public interest disclosure to the corporatised corporation about its conduct or the conduct of another officer of the corporatised corporation.
- (2) An officer of a corporatised corporation may, under section 15, make a public interest disclosure to the Crime and Misconduct Commission about the conduct of the corporatised corporation or the conduct of another officer of the corporatised corporation.
- (3) An officer of a corporatised corporation may, under section 17, make a public interest disclosure to the corporatised corporation about its conduct, the conduct of another officer of the corporatised corporation or the conduct of a public sector contractor contracting with the corporatised corporation.
- (4) An officer of a corporatised corporation may also make a public interest disclosure about a reprisal taken against the officer for making the public interest disclosure under subsection (1) or (3)—
  - (a) under section 26(3), to the corporatised corporation; or
  - (b) if the reprisal is official misconduct—to the Crime and Misconduct Commission.
- (5) For public interest disclosures under subsections (1) to (4) and of applying any law about the disclosures—
  - (a) the corporatised corporation is a public sector entity; and
  - (b) the officer making the public interest disclosure is a public officer; and
  - (c) if the public interest disclosure is made under section 17 about the conduct of another officer of the corporatised corporation—the other officer is a public officer.
- (6) Other than as provided by subsection (5)—

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- (a) a corporatised corporation is not a public sector entity under this Act; and
  - (b) an officer of a corporatised corporation is not a public officer under this Act; and
  - (c) an officer of a corporatised corporation can not, as a public officer, make a public interest disclosure.
- (7) This section does not affect the making of a public interest disclosure by anybody under section 19 or 20.
- (8) This section does not affect the reference under section 28—
- (a) from a corporatised corporation to another public sector entity of a public interest disclosure made to the corporatised corporation under this section; or
  - (b) from a public sector entity to a corporatised corporation of a public interest disclosure made to the public sector entity.

## **Part 5                      Privilege, protection and compensation**

### **Division 1                Purpose of part**

#### **38            Purpose of part**

The purpose of this part is to describe the legal privilege, protection and rights of compensation given to a person who makes a public interest disclosure.

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## **Division 2                    Limitation of action**

### **39            General limitation**

- (1) A person is not liable, civilly, criminally or under an administrative process, for making a public interest disclosure.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1)—
  - (a) in a proceeding for defamation the person has a defence of absolute privilege for publishing the disclosed information; and
  - (b) if the person would otherwise be required to maintain confidentiality about the disclosed information under an Act, oath, rule of law or practice—the person—
    - (i) does not contravene the Act, oath, rule of law or practice for making the disclosure; and
    - (ii) is not liable to disciplinary action for making the disclosure.

### **40            Liability of discloser unaffected**

A person's liability for the person's own conduct is not affected only because the person discloses it in a public interest disclosure.

## **Division 3                    Reprisal unlawful**

### **41            Reprisal and grounds for reprisal**

- (1) A person must not cause, or attempt or conspire to cause, detriment to another person because, or in the belief that, anybody has made, or may make, a public interest disclosure.
- (2) An attempt to cause detriment includes an attempt to induce a person to cause detriment.

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- (3) A contravention of subsection (1) is a reprisal or the taking of a reprisal.
- (4) A ground mentioned in subsection (1) as the ground for a reprisal is the unlawful ground for the reprisal.
- (5) For the contravention to happen, it is sufficient if the unlawful ground is a substantial ground for the act or omission that is the reprisal, even if there is another ground for the act or omission.

## **Division 4                      Criminal prosecution about reprisal**

### **42                      Reprisal is an indictable offence**

- (1) A public officer who takes a reprisal commits an offence.  
Maximum penalty—167 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment.
- (2) The offence is an indictable offence.
- (3) If a public officer commits the offence, the Criminal Code, sections 7 and 8 apply even though a person other than a public officer may also be taken to have committed the offence because of the application.

## **Division 5                      Civil claims about reprisal**

### **43                      Damages entitlement for reprisal**

- (1) A reprisal is a tort and a person who takes a reprisal is liable in damages to anyone who suffers detriment as a result.
- (2) Any appropriate remedy that may be granted by a court for a tort may be granted by a court for the taking of a reprisal.
- (3) If the claim for the damages goes to trial in the Supreme Court or the District Court, it must be decided by a judge sitting without a jury.

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## **Division 6                      Administrative action about reprisal**

### **44            Public sector entity must protect its officers against reprisals**

A public sector entity must establish reasonable procedures to protect its officers from reprisals that are, or may be, taken against them by the entity or other officers of the entity.

### **45            Appeal against action affected by reprisal**

- (1) This section applies to a public officer who, under an Act, may appeal against, or apply for a review of, any of the following actions—
  - (a) disciplinary action taken against the officer;
  - (b) the appointment or transfer of the officer or another public officer to a position as a public officer;
  - (c) unfair treatment of the officer.
- (2) Whether or not the Act specifies grounds for the appeal or application, the officer may also appeal or apply to have the action set aside because it was the taking of a reprisal against the officer.
- (3) Subsection (2) applies even if the decision on the hearing of the appeal or application is in the form of a recommendation.

### **46            Relocation of public service employees**

- (1) This section—
  - (a) must be read with the *Public Service Act 2008*; and
  - (b) gives a right to appeal for the relocation of a public service employee.
- (2) The appeal must be made on the ground that—
  - (a) it is likely a reprisal will be taken against the public service employee if the employee continues in the employee's existing work location; and

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- (b) the only practical way to remove or substantially remove the danger is to relocate the employee.
- (3) The appeal may be made to the chief executive of the Public Service Commission (the *commission chief executive*) by the public service employee or for the employee by the chief executive of the employee's department.
- (4) If the commission chief executive considers the ground is established, the commissioner may direct that the employee be relocated within the employee's department or another department.
- (5) The commission chief executive can not direct that the employee be relocated without the agreement of—
  - (a) the public service employee; and
  - (b) if the relocation is to another department—the other department's chief executive.
- (6) For subsection (5), the commission chief executive has power to do, or authorise the doing of anything necessary or convenient to relocate the public service employee.

## **Division 7                      Injunctions about reprisal**

### **47            Right to apply for industrial commission injunction**

- (1) An application for an injunction about a reprisal may be made to the industrial commission if the reprisal—
  - (a) has caused or may cause detriment to an employee within the meaning of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*; and
  - (b) involves or may involve a breach of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* or an industrial instrument under that Act.
- (2) The application may be made by—
  - (a) the employee; or



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- (b) an industrial organisation—
    - (i) whose rules entitle it to represent the industrial interests of the employee; and
    - (ii) acting in the employee's interests with the employee's consent; or
  - (c) the Crime and Misconduct Commission acting in the employee's interests with the employee's consent if—
    - (i) the employee is a public officer; and
    - (ii) the reprisal involves or may involve an act or omission that the Crime and Misconduct Commission may investigate.
- (3) The *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, section 277 applies to the application, but this division prevails if it is inconsistent with that section.
  - (4) If the industrial commission has jurisdiction to grant an injunction on an application under subsection (1), the jurisdiction is exclusive of the jurisdiction of any other court or tribunal other than the Industrial Court.
  - (5) Without limiting this section, the application is an industrial cause within the meaning of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*.

#### **48 Right to apply for Supreme Court injunction**

- (1) This section applies only to a person who can not apply to the industrial commission for an injunction about a reprisal under section 47.
- (2) An application for an injunction about a reprisal may be made to the Supreme Court by—
  - (a) a person claiming that the person is suffering or may suffer detriment from a reprisal; or
  - (b) the Crime and Misconduct Commission acting in the person's interests with the person's consent if—
    - (i) the employee is a public officer; and

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- (ii) the reprisal involves or may involve an act or omission that the Crime and Misconduct Commission may investigate.

#### **49 Grounds for injunction**

The industrial commission or Supreme Court may grant an injunction, in terms it considers appropriate, if it is satisfied that a person has engaged, is engaging or is proposing to engage, in conduct (the *reprisal conduct*) amounting to—

- (a) the taking of a reprisal; or
- (b) aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring a person to take a reprisal; or
- (c) inducing or attempting to induce, whether by threats, promises or otherwise, a person to take a reprisal; or
- (d) being in any way, directly or indirectly, knowingly concerned in, or party to, the taking of a reprisal.

#### **50 Order may require specified action**

If the industrial commission or Supreme Court is satisfied that a person has engaged or is engaging in reprisal conduct, it may grant an injunction requiring the person to take specified action to remedy any detriment caused by the conduct.

#### **51 Evidence**

- (1) The industrial commission or Supreme Court may grant an injunction restraining a person from engaging in reprisal conduct—
  - (a) whether or not it considers that the person intends to engage again, or to continue to engage, in the conduct; or
  - (b) whether or not the person has previously engaged in the conduct; or

- (c) whether or not there is an imminent danger of substantial damage to anyone if the person engages in the conduct.
- (2) The industrial commission or Supreme Court may grant an injunction requiring a person to do something—
  - (a) whether or not it considers that the person intends to fail again, or to continue to fail, to do the thing; or
  - (b) whether or not the person has previously failed to do the thing; or
  - (c) whether or not there is an imminent danger of substantial damage to anybody if the person fails to do the thing.

## **52 Interim injunction**

An interim injunction may be granted pending the final decision on the application.

## **53 Confidentiality of applications**

- (1) For an application before it, the industrial commission or Supreme Court may direct that—
  - (a) a report of the whole or part of the proceeding for the application must not be published; or
  - (b) evidence given, or anything filed, tendered or exhibited in the application must be withheld from release or search, or released or searched only on a specified condition.
- (2) The direction may be given if the industrial commission or Supreme Court considers that—
  - (a) disclosure of the report, evidence or thing would not be in the public interest; or
  - (b) persons other than parties to the application do not have a sufficient legitimate interest in being informed of the report, evidence or thing.

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- (3) An application for an injunction may be heard in chambers.
- (4) An application for an injunction may be heard *ex parte* if the industrial commission or Supreme Court considers an *ex parte* hearing is necessary in the circumstances.
- (5) This section does not limit the power of the industrial commission or Supreme Court.

#### **54 Undertakings as to damages and costs**

If the Crime and Misconduct Commission applies for an injunction, no undertaking about damages or costs is to be required.

## **Part 6 General**

#### **55 Preservation of confidentiality**

- (1) If a person gains confidential information because of the person's involvement as a public officer in this Act's administration, the person must not make a record of the information, or intentionally or recklessly disclose the information to anyone, other than under subsection (3).

Maximum penalty—84 penalty units.

- (2) A public officer gains information through involvement in the administration of this Act if the officer gains the information because of being involved, or an opportunity given by being involved, in the administration.

*Example—*

If a public officer gains information because the public officer receives a public interest disclosure for an appropriate entity, the public officer gains the information through involvement in the administration of this Act.

- (3) A person may make a record of confidential information, or disclose it to someone else—

- (a) for this Act; or
  - (b) to discharge a function under another Act including, for example, to investigate something disclosed by a public interest disclosure; or
  - (c) for a proceeding in a court or tribunal; or
  - (d) if authorised under a regulation or another Act.
- (4) This section does not affect an obligation a person may have under the law about natural justice to disclose information to a person whose rights would otherwise be detrimentally affected.
- (5) Subsection (4) applies to information disclosing, or likely to disclose, the identity of a person who makes a public interest disclosure only if it is—
- (a) essential to do so under the law about natural justice; and
  - (b) unlikely a reprisal will be taken against the person because of the disclosure.
- (6) To remove doubt, if there is an inconsistency between this section and section 6, this section prevails.
- (7) In this section—
- confidential information*** includes—
- (a) information about the identity, occupation, residential or work address or whereabouts of a person—
    - (i) who makes a public interest disclosure; or
    - (ii) against whom a public interest disclosure has been made; and
  - (b) information disclosed by a public interest disclosure; and
  - (c) information about an individual’s personal affairs; and
  - (d) information that, if disclosed, may cause detriment to a person;

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but does not include information publicly disclosed in a public interest disclosure made to a court, tribunal or other entity that may receive evidence under oath, unless further disclosure of the information is prohibited by law.

*law* for a public interest disclosure made to a committee of the Legislative Assembly, includes a standing rule, order or motion of the Legislative Assembly.

*public officer* includes a former member of the former misconduct tribunal established under the repealed *Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997*, section 11.

## 56 False or misleading information

- (1) A person commits an offence if the person—
  - (a) makes a statement to an appropriate entity intending that it be acted on as a public interest disclosure; and
  - (b) in the statement, or in the course of inquiries into the statement, intentionally gives information that is false or misleading in a material particular.

Maximum penalty—167 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment.

- (2) The offence is an indictable offence.

## 57 Misconduct by breach of Act

- (1) A public officer is guilty of misconduct under an Act under which the officer may be dismissed from office or disciplined for misconduct, if the officer contravenes the following—
  - section 42 (Reprisal is an indictable offence)
  - section 55 (Preservation of confidentiality)
  - section 56 (False or misleading information).
- (2) To remove doubt, it is declared that under the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*, the Crime and Misconduct Commission may investigate the contravention, or the alleged or suspected contravention, if—

- (a) the public officer is a member of the police service; or
- (b) the contravention is official misconduct by a person holding an appointment in a unit of public administration within the meaning of the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*.

## **58 Proceedings for offences generally**

An offence against this Act other than an offence declared to be an indictable offence is a summary offence.

## **59 Proceedings for indictable offences**

- (1) A proceeding on a charge for an indictable offence under this Act may be taken, at the election of the prosecution—
  - (a) by summary proceeding under the *Justices Act 1886*; or
  - (b) on indictment.
- (2) A Magistrates Court must not hear the charge summarily if—
  - (a) the defendant asks the court at the start of the hearing to treat the proceeding as a committal proceeding; or
  - (b) the court considers that the charge should be prosecuted on indictment.
- (3) A Magistrates Court may start to hear and decide the charge summarily even if more than 1 year has passed since the offence was committed.

## **60 Change to a committal proceeding during summary proceeding**

- (1) This section applies if, during a proceeding before a Magistrates Court to hear and decide a charge for an indictable offence summarily, the court decides the charge is not one that should be decided summarily.
- (2) The court must stop treating the proceeding as a proceeding to hear and decide the charge summarily and start treating it as a committal proceeding.

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- (3) The defendant's plea at the start of the hearing must be disregarded.
- (4) The evidence already heard by the court must be taken to be evidence in the committal proceeding.
- (5) To remove doubt, it is declared that the *Justices Act 1886*, section 104 must be complied with for the committal proceeding.

## **61 Regulation-making power**

- (1) The Governor in Council may make regulations under this Act.
- (2) A regulation may provide that, for all or particular public interest disclosures—
  - (a) a public sector entity is to be treated as a part of another public sector entity; or
  - (b) a part of a public sector entity is to be treated as part of another public sector entity or a separate public sector entity; or
  - (c) public sector entities or parts of public sector entities are to be treated as a single public sector entity.
- (3) A regulation under subsection (2) may not—
  - (a) apply to a public sector entity specified in schedule 5, section 2(1)(a), (b) or (g); or
  - (b) provide for a court or tribunal to be treated as part of a public sector entity not consisting of courts or tribunals of like jurisdiction or their administrative offices; or
  - (c) be inconsistent with a requirement under an Act that a public sector entity act independently.



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## Schedule 1      Chief executive officers

schedule 5, section 1 of the Act

<b>Public sector entities</b>	<b>Chief executive officers</b>
Legislative Assembly committee	Speaker or chairperson
parliamentary service	Speaker or clerk of the Parliament
court or tribunal presided over by Supreme Court judge	Chief Justice
court or tribunal presided over by a District Court judge	Chief Judge of District Courts
court or tribunal presided over by a magistrate or justice of the peace	Chief Stipendiary Magistrate
administrative office of a court or tribunal	proper officer of the court or tribunal or chief executive of the relevant department
Executive Council	senior officer appointed as clerk of Executive Council
department	department's chief executive or Minister
local government	mayor or chief executive officer, including, for Brisbane City Council, the town clerk
Office of the Ombudsman	Ombudsman

## **Schedule 2      Offences endangering the environment**

section 19(1)(b) and (c) of the Act

### **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003**

- section 24(1) (Unlawful harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage)
- section 25(1) (Prohibited excavation, relocation and taking away)
- section 26(1) (Unlawful possession of Aboriginal cultural heritage)

### **Environmental Protection Act 1994**

- all provisions for which a contravention is an offence

### **Fisheries Act 1994**

- section 89 (Noxious fisheries resources not to be possessed, released etc.)
- section 90 (Nonindigenous fisheries resources not to be possessed, released etc.)
- section 91 (Aquaculture fisheries resources not to be released)
- section 92 (Duty of person who takes or possesses noxious or nonindigenous fisheries resources)
- section 123 (Protection of marine plants)

### **Forestry Act 1959**

- section 53(1)(b) (Interference with forest products on Crown holdings and mining leases)

- section 54 (Interfering with forest products on Crown lands etc.)

### **Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009**

- All provisions for which a contravention is an offence

### **Land Act 1994**

- section 255 (Tree clearing permit needed)
- section 404 (No trespassing)

### **Mineral Resources Act 1989**

- section 194 (Conditions of mineral development licence)
- section 209 (Contravention by holder of mineral development licence)
- section 276 (Conditions of mining lease)

### **Nature Conservation Act 1992**

- section 88(1) (Restriction on taking etc. protected animals)
- section 89(1) (Restriction on taking etc. protected plants)
- section 91 (Prohibition on release etc. of international and prohibited wildlife)
- section 92 (Prohibition on breeding etc. hybrids of protected animals)
- section 93 (Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' rights to take etc. protected wildlife)

*Editor's note—*

This provision had not commenced on or before the reprint date.

- section 94 (Conservation officers prohibited in dealing with protected wildlife)

- section 97(2) (Restriction on taking etc. of native wildlife in areas of major interest and critical habitats)
- section 109 (Compliance with order)

### **Petroleum Act 1923**

- All provisions for which a contravention is an offence

### **Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004**

- All provisions for which a contravention is an offence

### **Queensland Heritage Act 1992**

- section 104 (Offence to destroy protected area)
- section 155 (Contravention of stop order)
- section 169(2) (Restoration orders)

### **Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003**

- section 24(1) (Unlawful harm to Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage)
- section 25(1) (Prohibited excavation, relocation and taking away)
- section 26(1) (Unlawful possession of Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage)

### **Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995**

- all provisions for which a contravention is an offence

### **Water Act 2000**

- section 272 (Immediate suspension of permit in exceptional circumstances)
- section 273 (Notice to owner of land to remove vegetation etc.)

- section 814 (Offence to destroy vegetation, excavate or place fill without permit)

## **Schedule 3      Examples of appropriate entities in particular circumstances**

section 26 of the Act

*Examples, under section 26(1)(a) of the Act, of public interest disclosures made to appropriate entities because the disclosure is about the conduct of the entities or of their officers—*

- 1 W, an employee of a department, has information that officers of a disability service run by the department have been committing serious abuses against clients. The conduct is of a type mentioned in section 19(1)(a) of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the department. The department is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it is about the conduct of its staff.
- 2 W, an employee of a local government, has information about the local government's conduct in using negligent management practices resulting in substantial loss of public funds. The conduct is of a type mentioned in section 17 of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the local government. The local government is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it is about its own conduct.
- 3 W, a corrective services officer employed by the chief executive (corrective services), has information that another corrective services officer has committed a criminal assault on a prisoner. The conduct is of a type mentioned in section 18(1) of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the chief executive (corrective services). The chief executive (corrective services) is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it is about the conduct of the entity's staff.
- 4 W, a police officer, has information that certain other police officers are not investigating certain offences in return for corrupt payments. The conduct is official misconduct mentioned in section 15 of the Act. W discloses the conduct to

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the Queensland Police Service. The Queensland Police Service is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it is about the conduct of one of its officers.

- 5 W, an employee of a State instrumentality, has information that a senior officer of the instrumentality has misappropriated funds from the instrumentality. The conduct is official misconduct mentioned in section 15 of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the instrumentality. The instrumentality is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it is about the conduct of one of its officers.

*Examples, under section 26(1)(b) of the Act, of disclosures made to appropriate entities because the disclosures are about something the entities have a power to investigate or remedy—*

- 1 W, an employee of a department, has information that officers of a disability service run by the department have been committing serious abuses against clients. The conduct is official misconduct mentioned in section 15 of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the Crime and Misconduct Commission. The Crime and Misconduct Commission is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it involves conduct it may investigate.
- 2 W, an employee of a department, has information about the department's conduct in using negligent accounting practices resulting in substantial loss of public funds. The conduct is of a type mentioned in section 17(1) of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the Queensland Audit Office. The Queensland Audit Office is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it involves conduct it may investigate.
- 3 W, an employee of a department, gives evidence at a hearing of the Public Accounts and Public Works Committee of the Legislative Assembly inquiring into the department's management practices. At the hearing W discloses information about the department's conduct in using negligent management practices resulting in substantial loss of public funds. The conduct is of a type mentioned in section 17(1) of

the Act. The committee is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure as it involves conduct it may investigate.

- 4 W, a corrective services officer employed by the chief executive (corrective services), has information that another corrective services officer has committed a criminal assault on a prisoner. The conduct is of a type mentioned in section 18(1) of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the Queensland Police Service. The Queensland Police Service is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it involves conduct it may investigate.
- 5 W, an employee of a private sector company, has information that the company has committed an offence against the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* that is a substantial and specific danger to the environment. The conduct is of a type mentioned in section 19(1)(b) of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the department in which the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* is administered. The department is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it involves conduct it may investigate.
- 6 W, an employee of a shipping company, has information that a ship owned by the company has discharged oil into coastal waters of Queensland. The conduct is an offence under the *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995* and is a substantial and specific danger to the environment. The conduct is of a type mentioned in section 19(1)(b) of the Act. W discloses the conduct to the department in which the *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995* is administered. The department is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it is about conduct it may investigate.
- 7 W, an employee of a State instrumentality, has information that a senior officer of the instrumentality has misappropriated funds of the instrumentality. The conduct is official misconduct mentioned in section 15 of the Act, involving the commission of an offence. W discloses the conduct to the Queensland Police Service. The Queensland Police Service is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it is about conduct it may investigate.



- 8 W, a police officer, has information that certain other police officers are not investigating certain offences in return for corrupt payments. The conduct is official misconduct mentioned in section 15 of the Act, involving official misconduct within the meaning of the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*. The Crime and Misconduct Commission is an appropriate entity to receive the disclosure because it is about conduct it may investigate.

## Schedule 5 Sectional definitions

section 4(2) of the Act

### 1 Meaning of *chief executive officer*

- (1) The *chief executive officer* of an appropriate entity that is a public sector entity includes, if the entity is listed in schedule 1 of the Act, a person specified in the schedule as chief executive officer of the entity.
- (2) A regulation may specify a person who is to be treated as a chief executive officer of a particular public sector entity for all or particular public interest disclosures.
- (3) The object of a specification under schedule 1 of the Act or a regulation is—
  - (a) to make it easier to identify who is to be treated as the chief executive officer, particularly of entities for which this might otherwise be difficult to decide; or
  - (b) to provide for a person other than a chief executive officer to be also treated as a chief executive officer because the function given to chief executive officers under this Act may also be appropriately given to the person.
- (4) A regulation under subsection (2) may not specify a chief executive officer for a public sector entity specified in schedule 1 of the Act, other than a part of a department.

### 2 Meaning of *public sector entity*

- (1) A *public sector entity* is any of the following—
  - (a) a committee of the Legislative Assembly;
  - (b) the parliamentary service;
  - (c) a court or tribunal;
  - (d) the administrative office of a court or tribunal;
  - (e) the Executive Council;

- (f) a department;
  - (g) a local government;
  - (h) a university, university college, TAFE institute, statutory TAFE institute or agricultural college;
  - (i) a commission, authority, office, corporation or instrumentality established under an Act or under State or local government authorisation for a public, State or local government purpose;
  - (j) an entity, prescribed by regulation, that is assisted by public funds;
  - (k) a corporatised corporation, but only to the extent indicated under part 4, division 6 of the Act.
- (2) However, the following are not public sector entities—
- (a) a GOC;
  - (aa) a corporatised corporation, other than to the extent indicated under part 4, division 6 of the Act;
  - (b) the following entities within the meaning of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*—
    - (i) a parents and citizens association;
    - (ii) a non-State school;
    - (iii) an advisory committee;
    - (iv) an international educational institution;
  - (c) an entity prescribed by regulation.
- (3) For this Act—
- (a) a State educational institution or school council is part of the department in which the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is administered; and
  - (b) a member of a school council is a public officer of that department.

## Schedule 6 Dictionary

section 4(1) of the Act

***administrative action*** is an act or omission of an administrative character done or made by, in or for a public sector entity, and includes, for example—

- (a) a decision or failure to decide; and
- (b) a formulation of a proposal or intention.

***agricultural college*** means the agricultural college under the *Agricultural College Act 2005*.

***annual report*** of a department means the annual report of the department required to be prepared and tabled in the Legislative Assembly under the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

***appropriate entity*** means—

- (a) a public sector entity to which a public interest disclosure may be made under section 26 or referred under section 28 or 28A; or
- (b) a member of the Legislative Assembly.

***chief executive officer*** see schedule 5, section 1 of the Act.

***chief judicial officer*** means a judicial officer who is treated under this Act as a chief executive officer of a court or tribunal.

***commission of inquiry*** means a commission of inquiry under the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950* and includes an inquiry under a commission mentioned in section 4(2) of that Act.

***corporatised corporation*** means a corporate entity under the *Local Government Act 2009*.

***detriment*** includes—

- (a) personal injury or prejudice to safety; and
- (b) property damage or loss; and

- 
- (c) intimidation or harassment; and
  - (d) adverse discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment about career, profession, employment, trade or business; and
  - (e) threats of detriment; and
  - (f) financial loss from detriment.

**disability** of a person has the same meaning as in the *Disability Services Act 2006*.

**environment** has the same meaning as in the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

**investigate** includes take evidence.

**judicial officer** includes a registrar or deputy registrar of a court or tribunal performing delegated judicial tasks.

**maladministration** is administrative action that is unlawful, arbitrary, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory or taken for an improper purpose.

**officer** of a public sector entity includes—

- (a) a constituent member of the public sector entity, whether holding office by election or selection; and
- (b) an employee of the public sector entity, whether employed on a permanent or temporary basis; and
- (c) without limiting paragraph (b), an individual engaged by the public sector entity under a contract of service; and
- (d) if the public sector entity is a department—the Minister responsible for its administration.

**official misconduct** has the same meaning as in the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*.

**proper officer** of a court or tribunal means—

- (a) for the Supreme Court, the District Court or the Childrens Court constituted by a judge—the registrar of the court; or

- (b) for a Magistrates Court or the Childrens Court constituted other than by a judge—the clerk of the court; or
- (c) for another court or tribunal—the administrative officer in charge of the administrative office attached to the court or tribunal.

**public funds** are funds available to, or under the control of, a public sector entity and includes, for example, public moneys within the meaning of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

**public health or safety** includes the health or safety of persons—

- (a) under lawful care or control; or
- (b) using community facilities or services provided by the public or private sector; or
- (c) in employment workplaces.

*Examples of paragraph (a)—*

- 1 student under the care or control of a teacher
- 2 patient under the care or control of a doctor, nurse or other health professional
- 3 prisoner under the care and control of a corrective services officer

**public interest disclosure** means a disclosure of information specified in sections 15 to 20 of the Act made to an appropriate entity and includes all information and help given by the discloser to an appropriate entity.

**public officer** is a person who is an officer of a public sector entity, and includes—

- (a) a public sector entity that is a corporation; and
- (b) a member of the Legislative Assembly, but only—
  - (i) to allow a member of the Legislative Assembly to make a public interest disclosure; or
  - (ii) for the purposes of sections 55 and 57.

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**public sector contractor** is a person who contracts with a public sector entity to supply goods to the entity or services to the entity other than as an employee.

**public sector entity** see schedule 5, section 2 of the Act.

**relevant court or tribunal** of a judicial officer is the court or tribunal of which the judicial officer is a member or is attached.

**relevant department**, for an administrative office attached to a court or tribunal, means the department in which is administered the Act under which the court or tribunal is established.

**reprisal** see section 41 of the Act.

**school council** means a school council established for a State school under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, section 79.

**State educational institution** has the same meaning as in the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*.

**statutory TAFE institute** means a statutory TAFE institute established under the *Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000*, chapter 6A.

**TAFE institute** see the *Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000*, section 191.

**tribunal** means—

- (a) QCAT or another tribunal that is constituted by a person acting judicially; or
- (b) a body or person performing a function under an Act to hear appeals by employees about dismissal from employment, disciplinary action or other unfair treatment; or
- (c) a commission of inquiry.

## Endnotes

### 1 Index to endnotes

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### 2 Date to which amendments incorporated

This is the reprint date mentioned in the Reprints Act 1992, section 5(c). Accordingly, this reprint includes all amendments that commenced operation on or before 1 July 2010. Future amendments of the Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994 may be made in accordance with this reprint under the Reprints Act 1992, section 49.



### 3 Key

#### Key to abbreviations in list of legislation and annotations

Key	Explanation	Key	Explanation
AIA	= Acts Interpretation Act 1954	(prev)	= previously
amd	= amended	proc	= proclamation
amdt	= amendment	prov	= provision
ch	= chapter	pt	= part
def	= definition	pubd	= published
div	= division	R[X]	= Reprint No. [X]
exp	= expires/expired	RA	= Reprints Act 1992
gaz	= gazette	reloc	= relocated
hdg	= heading	renum	= renumbered
ins	= inserted	rep	= repealed
lap	= lapsed	(retro)	= retrospectively
notfd	= notified	rv	= revised edition
num	= numbered	s	= section
o in c	= order in council	sch	= schedule
om	= omitted	sdiv	= subdivision
orig	= original	SIA	= Statutory Instruments Act 1992
p	= page	SIR	= Statutory Instruments Regulation 2002
para	= paragraph	SL	= subordinate legislation
prec	= preceding	sub	= substituted
pres	= present	unnum	= unnumbered
prev	= previous		

### 4 Table of reprints

Reprints are issued for both future and past effective dates. For the most up-to-date table of reprints, see the reprint with the latest effective date.

If a reprint number includes a letter of the alphabet, the reprint was released in unauthorised, electronic form only.

Reprint No.	Amendments to	Effective	Reprint date
1	none	16 December 1994	2 March 1995
1A	1995 Act No. 38	15 September 1995	28 June 1996
1B	1996 Act No. 37	1 December 1996	12 December 1996
1C	1996 Act No. 61	20 December 1996	23 January 1997
1D	1997 Act No. 23	22 May 1997	6 June 1997
1E	1997 Act No. 83	8 December 1997	17 December 1997
2	1997 Act No. 83	1 January 1998	1 April 1999
2A	1999 Act No. 33	1 July 1999	28 July 1999
3	2000 Act No. 23	1 July 1999	1 September 2000
3A	2000 Act No. 34	28 September 2000	29 September 2000
3B	2001 Act No. 73	3 December 2001	14 December 2001
3C	2001 Act No. 73	1 January 2002	15 January 2002
3D	2001 Act No. 73	19 April 2002	3 May 2002

## Endnotes

Reprint No.	Amendments included	Effective	Notes
3E	2003 Act No. 19	9 May 2003	
3F	2003 Act No. 63	1 January 2004	
3G	2003 Act No. 79	16 April 2004	
3H	2005 Act No. 20	1 July 2005	
3I	2006 Act No. 12	1 July 2006	
3J	2006 Act No. 41	11 August 2006	
3K	2006 Act No. 39	30 October 2006	
3L	2007 Act No. 12	1 May 2007	R3L withdrawn, see R4
4	—	1 May 2007	
4A	2007 Act No. 53	9 November 2007	
4B	2007 Act No. 50	31 March 2008	
4C	1992 Act No. 9 (amd 2007 Act No. 50)	1 April 2008	
4D	2008 Act No. 38	1 July 2008	
4E	2007 Act No. 10	1 October 2008	R4E withdrawn, see R5
5	—	1 October 2008	
5A	2009 Act No. 3	23 February 2009	
5B	2009 Act No. 7	28 May 2009	
5C	2009 Act No. 9	1 July 2009	
5D	2009 Act No. 24	1 December 2009	
5E	2009 Act No. 17	1 July 2010	

## 5 Tables in earlier reprints

Name of table	Reprint No.
Corrected minor errors	1

## 6 List of legislation

### Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994 No. 68

date of assent 1 December 1994

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 16 December 1994 (1994 SL No. 441)

amending legislation—

### Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 No. 38 ss 1–2, 35 sch 1

date of assent 15 September 1995

commenced on date of assent

### Public Service Act 1996 No. 37 ss 1–2, 147 sch 2

date of assent 22 October 1996

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 December 1996 (1996 SL No. 361)

**Health Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 1996 No. 61 ss 1–2, 15 sch**

date of assent 9 December 1996

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 20 December 1996 (1996 SL No. 402)

**Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 1997 No. 23 pts 1, 4**

date of assent 22 May 1997

commenced on date of assent

**Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997 No. 59 ss 1–2, 48 sch 1**

date of assent 5 November 1997

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 8 December 1997 (1997 SL No. 417)

**Education and Other Legislation Amendment Act 1997 No. 83 pts 1, 12**

date of assent 5 December 1997

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 January 1998 (1997 SL No. 464)

**Corrective Services Legislation Amendment Act 1999 No. 9 pt 1 sch**

date of assent 30 March 1999

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 May 1999 (1999 SL No. 72)

**Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999 No. 19 ss 1–3 sch**

date of assent 30 April 1999

commenced on date of assent

**Industrial Relations Act 1999 No. 33 ss 1, 2(2), 747 sch 3**

date of assent 18 June 1999

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 July 1999 (1999 SL No. 159)

**Training and Employment Act 2000 No. 23 ss 1, 2(3), 293 sch 2**

date of assent 27 June 2000

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 28 September 2000 (2000 SL No. 248)

**Water Act 2000 No. 34 ss 1–2, 1145 sch 3**

date of assent 13 September 2000

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 19 April 2002 (2002 SL No. 69)

**Corrective Services Act 2000 No. 63 ss 1, 2(2), 276 sch 2**

date of assent 24 November 2000

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 July 2001 (2001 SL No. 88)

**Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 No. 69 ss 1–2, 378 sch 1**

date of assent 8 November 2001

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 January 2002 (2001 SL No. 221)

**Ombudsman Act 2001 No. 73 ss 1–2, 96 sch 1**

date of assent 13 November 2001

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 3 December 2001 (2001 SL No. 224)

**Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2003 No. 19 ss 1, 3 sch**

date of assent 9 May 2003

commenced on date of assent

**Training Reform Act 2003 No. 63 ss 1, 2(2), 60 sch**

date of assent 13 October 2003

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 January 2004 (2003 SL No. 293)

**Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 No. 79 ss 1–2, 170 sch 1**

date of assent 6 November 2003

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 16 April 2004 (2004 SL No. 36)

**Agricultural College Act 2005 No. 20 ss 1–2, 60 sch 1**

date of assent 19 May 2005

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 July 2005 (2005 SL No. 116)

**Disability Services Act 2006 No. 12 ss 1–2, 241 sch 1**

date of assent 4 April 2006

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 July 2006 (2006 SL No. 160)

**Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 No. 39 ss 1, 2(3), 512(1) sch 1**

date of assent 11 August 2006

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 30 October 2006 (2006 SL No. 247)

**Crime and Misconduct and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2006 No. 41 pts 1, 5**

date of assent 11 August 2006

commenced on date of assent (see s 2)

**Government Owned Corporations Amendment Act 2007 No. 10 ss 1–2, 62 sch**

date of assent 20 March 2007

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 October 2008 (2008 SL No. 316)

**Whistleblowers (Disclosure to Member of Parliament) Amendment Act 2007 No. 12**

date of assent 20 March 2007

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 May 2007 (2007 SL No. 62)

**Queensland Heritage Act 1992 No. 9 s 177(4)(c) (prev s 104B(4)(c)) (this Act is amended, see amending legislation below)**

amending legislation—

**Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007 No. 50 ss 1–2, 43 (amends 1992 No. 9 above)**

date of assent 25 October 2007

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provision commenced 1 April 2008 (2008 SL No. 75)

**Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007 No. 50 ss 1–2, 55 sch**

date of assent 25 October 2007

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 31 March 2008 (2008 SL No. 75)

**Vocational Education, Training and Employment and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007 No. 53 ss 1, 30 sch**

date of assent 9 November 2007

commenced on date of assent

**Public Service Act 2008 No. 38 ss 1–2, 252 sch 3**

date of assent 11 June 2008

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 July 2008 (2008 SL No. 208)

**Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009 No. 3 s 1, ch 9 pt 28**

date of assent 23 February 2009

commenced on date of assent

**Parliament of Queensland Amendment Act 2009 No. 7 ss 1, 16 sch**

date of assent 28 May 2009

commenced on date of assent

**Financial Accountability Act 2009 No. 9 ss 1, 2(2), 136 sch 1**

date of assent 28 May 2009

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 July 2009 (2009 SL No. 80)

**Local Government Act 2009 No. 17 ss 1, 2(4), 331 sch 1**

date of assent 12 June 2009

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 July 2010 (2010 SL No. 122)

**Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Jurisdiction Provisions) Amendment Act 2009 No. 24 ss 1–2, ch 11 pt 4**

date of assent 26 June 2009

ss 1–2 commenced on date of assent

remaining provisions commenced 1 December 2009 (2009 SL No. 252)

## 7 List of annotations

### What is the general nature of the Act's scheme?

s 7 amd 1997 No. 23 s 56; 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch

**Public disclosures made by public officers (pt 3)**

s 8 amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1

**Public interest disclosures made by anybody**

s 9 amd 2006 No. 12 s 241 sch 1

**How must a public interest disclosure be made (pt 4)?**

s 10 amd 1997 No. 23 s 57; 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch; 2007 No. 12 s 4

**What is the special protection given for public interest disclosures (pt 5)?**

s 11 amd 1996 No. 37 s 147 sch 2; 2008 No. 38 s 252 sch 3

**Disclosure must be made to an appropriate entity**

s 25 amd 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch

**When public sector entity or member of Legislative Assembly is an appropriate entity**

prov hdg sub 2007 No. 12 s 5(1)

s 26 amd 1997 No. 23 s 58; 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch; 2007 No. 12 s 5(2)

**How to disclose to appropriate entity**

s 27 amd 1997 No. 23 s 59; 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1; 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch; 2007 No. 12 s 6

**Disclosure received by public sector entity may be referred**

prov hdg sub 2007 No. 12 s 7(1)

s 28 amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1; 2007 No. 12 s 7(2)–(3)

**Disclosure received by member of Legislative Assembly may be referred**

s 28A ins 2007 No. 12 s 8

**Legislative Assembly may still deal with disclosure**

s 28B ins 2007 No. 12 s 8

**Records must be kept of disclosures**

s 29 amd 2007 No. 12 s 9

**Units must report to Legislative Assembly on disclosures**

s 30 amd 1997 No. 23 s 60; 2007 No. 12 s 10

**Minister must report to Legislative Assembly on Act's administration**

s 31 amd 1997 No. 23 s 61; 2007 No. 12 s 11

**Reasonable information about result of disclosure must be given to discloser or referring entity**

prov hdg amd 2007 No. 12 s 12(1)

s 32 amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1; 2007 No. 12 s 12(2)

**Disclosures made administratively to or about a judicial officer**

s 34 amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1; 2007 No. 12 s 13

**Division 5—Limitation on disclosure process for GOCs**

div hdg om 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch

**Object of division**

s 36 om 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch

**Application of Act to GOCs**

s 37 amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1  
om 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch

**Division 6—Limitation on disclosure process for corporatised corporations**

div hdg ins 1997 No. 23 s 62

**Object of division**

s 37A ins 1997 No. 23 s 62

**Application of Act to corporatised corporations**

s 37B ins 1997 No. 23 s 62  
amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1

**Damages entitlement for reprisal**

s 43 amd 1999 No. 19 s 3 sch

**Relocation of public service employees**

s 46 sub 1996 No. 37 s 147 sch 2  
amd 2008 No. 38 s 252 sch 3

**Right to apply for industrial commission injunction**

s 47 amd 1999 No. 33 s 747 sch 3; 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1; 2006 No. 41 s 52

**Right to apply for Supreme Court injunction**

s 48 amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1

**Undertakings as to damages and costs**

s 54 amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1

**Preservation of confidentiality**

s 55 amd 2009 No. 24 s 1637

**Misconduct by breach of Act**

s 57 amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1

**Amendment of other Acts**

s 62 om R1 (see RA s 40)

**SCHEDULE 1—CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

amd 1995 No. 38 s 35 sch 1; 1996 No. 61 s 15 sch; 2001 No. 73 s 96 sch 1;  
2007 No. 10 s 62 sch

**SCHEDULE 2—OFFENCES ENDANGERING THE ENVIRONMENT**

amd 2000 No. 34 s 1145 sch 3; 2003 No. 19 s 3 sch; 2003 No. 79 s 170 sch 1;  
2007 No. 50 s 55 sch; 1992 No. 9 s 177(4)(c) (amd 2007 No. 50 s 43); 2009  
No. 3 s 608

**SCHEDULE 3—EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES**

amd 2000 No. 63 s 276 sch 2; 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1; 2009 No. 7 s 16 sch

**SCHEDULE 4—AMENDMENTS**

om R1 (see RA s 40)

**SCHEDULE 5—SECTIONAL DEFINITIONS**

**Meaning of “chief executive officer”**

s 1 amd 2003 No. 19 s 3 sch; 2007 No. 12 s 14

**Meaning of “public sector entity”**

s 2 amd 1995 No. 38 s 35 sch 1; 1997 No. 23 s 63; 1997 No. 83 s 61; 2000 No. 23 s 293 sch 2; 2006 No. 39 s 512(1) sch 1; 2007 No. 10 s 62 sch; 2007 No. 53 s 30 sch

**SCHEDULE 6—DICTIONARY**

def “**agricultural college**” sub 2005 No. 20 s 60 sch 1

def “**annual report**” amd 2009 No. 9 s 136 sch 1

def “**appropriate entity**” sub 2007 No. 12 s 15(1)

def “**corporatised corporation**” ins 1997 No. 23 s 64  
sub 2009 No. 17 s 331 sch 1

def “**disability**” amd 2006 No. 12 s 241 sch 1

def “**officer**” amd 2007 No. 12 s 15(2)–(3)

def “**official misconduct**” amd 2001 No. 69 s 378 sch 1

def “**proper officer**” amd 1999 No. 19 s 3 sch

def “**public funds**” amd 2009 No. 9 s 136 sch 1

def “**public health or safety**” amd 2000 No. 63 s 276 sch 2

def “**public officer**” amd 2007 No. 12 s 15(4)

def “**Regional Health Authority**” om 1996 No. 61 s 15 sch

def “**relevant department**” sub 1996 No. 61 s 15 sch

def “**school council**” ins 1997 No. 83 s 62

sub 2006 No. 39 s 512(1) sch 1

def “**State college**” om 2000 No. 23 s 293 sch 2

def “**State educational institution**” amd 2006 No. 39 s 512(1) sch 1

def “**statutory TAFE institute**” ins 2007 No. 53 s 30 sch

def “**TAFE institute**” ins 2000 No. 23 s 293 sch 2

amd 2003 No. 63 s 60 sch

def “**tribunal**” amd 1997 No. 59 s 48 sch 1; 2009 No. 24 s 1638