



# Whistleblowers Australia

7 -A Campbell Street, Balmain, 2041

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**“All it needs for evil to flourish is for people of good will to do nothing”- Edmund Burke**

The Hon Jerold Cripps. Commissioner  
Independent Commission against Corruption  
Level 21, 133 Castlereagh Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Cripps.

I have just discovered, with some dismay, the publicity release for the Griffith University report on whistleblowing on the ICAC website.

This report is a draft, and seeks comments. Whistleblowers Australia has already expressed its concerns to Dr AJ Brown and is currently preparing its comments. I have myself documented several concerns with the analysis and sent them to him. These concerns are outlined in the coming issue of our newsletter, The Whistle.

There are several valid reasons why this very questionable figure of "only 22% of whistleblowers ...were treated badly," could be incorrect. The largest one is the study's classification of whistleblowers. The study used a highly contentious definition of whistleblowers which included people who are complaining about their personal difficulties in their organisations. Its method of separating out public-interest whistleblowers from this group is very dubious, and unlikely to provide accurate figures on the actual percentage who are true public-interest whistleblowers. Further research, including interviewing of the different types of whistleblowers, is needed. The Griffith surveys also did not cover all types of public-sector institutions, specifically excluding hospitals and universities which, as the ICAC well knows, have been at the forefront of whistleblowers' complaints in recent years. Most importantly, other surveys in the study found up to 90% of whistleblowers face difficulty, a figure that directly contradicts the 22%. Finally, the Griffith figure is at odds with much other research.

Whistleblowers Australia has conveyed its concerns to the Griffith University research team. It has urged that the team undertake the additional research that is necessary, and until that research is completed it refrain from broadcasting these very arguable figures. ICAC's publicising of dubious figures like the 22% will take the urgency off it and all other agencies to help whistleblowers. Any loss of support for whistleblowing will be a sad day for public-sector honesty in NSW.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Bowden  
NSW President  
Whistleblowers Australia