

Public Interest Disclosures e-News



February 2012 : Issue 14

Hello Colleague

Please pass on this e-Newsletter to executive management and people interested in public interest disclosures in your organisation.

PID Workshops and Training

PID Reporting

Workshops

One of the responsibilities of this office is to provide training on public interest disclosures.

Initially our training was primarily delivered in-house to individual agencies, however, we have been approached by a number of agencies to provide regional workshops. To fill this need, we are providing open PID workshops at the following locations:

- 11 May—Tamworth
- 7 June—Dubbo
- 13 June—Penrith
- 15 June—Sydney CBD
- 21 June—Wagga Wagga

In-house training for 2012

We will also continue to provide in-house PID training where possible at a location of your choice.

Registration

Registration for training workshops and for in-house training **is essential**.

To register, complete the [registration form](#) on our website or contact our Community Education and Training Unit on 9286 0900 or by email training@ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Cost

PID workshops and PID training are a **free service** provided by the NSW Ombudsman.

PID reporting requirements

A reminder that public authorities need to start collecting information about public interest disclosures from **1 January 2012**.

The [Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011](#) outlines the information that public authorities are required to provide on a six monthly basis.

PID e-learning Version 2 available soon!

We are revising our *PID Awareness* e-learning module. This module is a quick, focussed training option suitable for current staff and the orientation of new staff.

To place your name on our distribution list and receive a copy when available, please email pid@ombo.nsw.gov.au

What's happening overseas

Guidelines

In the US the Ethics Resource Centre (ERC) has released the **2011 National Business Ethics Survey, Workplace Ethics in Transition**. The ERC is America's oldest non-profit organisation devoted to independent research and the advancement of high ethical standards and practices in public and private institutions.

Out now!

The NSW Ombudsman released the following PID guidelines in December:

Data revealed historically low levels of current misconduct in the American workplace and record high levels of employee reporting.

However, the report suggests **ominous warning signs of a potentially significant ethics decline ahead**. The negative indicators are:

- Retaliation against employee whistleblowers,
- The percentage of employees who perceived pressure to compromise standards in order to do their jobs, and
- The rise in the number of companies with weak ethics cultures.

The report states that two pervasive external factors played a role in the extreme nature of their findings: the economy and technology, specifically **social networking**. These two factors are not only changing behaviour outside the workplace, they seem to be influencing behaviour at work.

The report states that **active social networkers** report far more negative experiences in their workplaces compared with their colleagues who are less involved in social networking. As a group, social networkers are much more likely to experience pressure to compromise ethics standards and to experience reprisal for reporting wrongdoing than co-workers who are less involved with social networking.

Active social networkers, the report states, also show a higher tolerance for certain activities that could be considered questionable, such as keeping copies of confidential work documents in case they need them in their next job.

What does this mean to your organisation?

The strength of your organisation's ethical culture can and should be evaluated regularly. Longstanding, consistent improvement in conduct only occurs when organisations build sound programs and strong ethics cultures.

Some things to consider:

- Do you have a social networking policy?
- Be aware of social networking trends in your organisation.
- Detrimental action may occur through social networking.
- Detrimental action through social networking should be included in your reprisal action policy.

To view the report, go to <http://www.ethics.org/nbes/>.

C4 *Assessing risk of reprisals and conflicts*

C5 *Investigating disclosures*

D2 *Information, advice and feedback to internal reporters*

D4 *Preventing and containing reprisals and conflicts*

E1 *Organisational model for internal reporter support.*

Go to the Ombudsman's website to access the [guidelines](#).

Coming soon

Our next guidelines will provide advice on the following topics:

A3 *Awareness and training*

B5 *Reporting to Members of Parliament and journalists*

B6 *Anonymous reporting*

C1 *People subject to reports*

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