



Kelly O'Dwyer MP
Minister for Revenue and Financial Services

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ENHANCING WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

The Turnbull Government today introduced a Bill to pave the way for stronger protections for whistleblowers who expose corporate and tax misconduct.

The Minister for Revenue and Financial Services, the Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP, said the Bill is a significant milestone because it creates a single, enhanced whistleblower protection regime to cover the corporate and financial sectors.

"The Bill also features a new whistleblower protection regime in the taxation law to protect those who expose tax misconduct," Minister O'Dwyer said.

"The reforms mean whistleblowers will be able to come forward with the confidence that they will be protected under a comprehensive and robust legal framework.

"Breaking ranks and reporting wrongdoing can be a harrowing experience, so it is important people know that they will have access to redress if they are victimised as a result of blowing the whistle."

Minister O'Dwyer said the Bill is proof that the Government is delivering on its commitments under the Open Government National Action Plan to strengthen corporate sector whistleblower protections.

"As well as the National Action Plan, the Bill reaffirms our 2016-17 Budget commitment to better protect individuals who disclose information to the ATO on tax avoidance behaviour and other tax issues," Minister O'Dwyer said.

"This Bill represents another step towards strengthening the integrity of Australia's tax system."

Feedback through public consultation and advice from the Government's Expert Advisory Panel on whistleblower protections was instrumental in shaping the Bill.

By progressing these reforms together, the Government has ensured maximum consistency across the regimes, reducing uncertainty for whistleblowers and minimising compliance costs for business.

The new protection regimes apply to whistleblower disclosures received from 1 July 2018. The disclosures can be about misconduct from before 1 July 2018. The reforms address many of the recommendations in the recent report by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services inquiry into whistleblower protections.

The Government is considering the remaining recommendations and will release its response to each of the Parliamentary Joint Committee report recommendations in due course in consultation with the expert panel.

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