



Australian Multicultural Action Network Inc

32 Quandong Street, O'CONNOR ACT 2602

ABN: 40 172 914 431

Assn No: A06217

Mr Ravi Krishnamurthy JP

PRESIDENT

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Whistleblower Protection Authority Bill 2025 (No. 2)

Submitted by:

Ravi Krishnamurthy

President, Australian Multicultural Action Network Inc. (AMAN)

Date: 26/05/2025

1. Introduction

I thank the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for the opportunity to provide this submission on behalf of the Australian Multicultural Action Network Inc. (AMAN), an organisation committed to promoting fairness, transparency, and equitable treatment for all Australians - particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

AMAN strongly supports the establishment of a Whistleblower Protection Authority (WPA) as proposed in the Bill. We welcome this as a crucial step toward building a more accountable, transparent, and inclusive democracy. For many in multicultural communities, current processes for reporting wrongdoing are often perceived as complex, intimidating, or unsafe. The WPA has the potential to address these systemic barriers and offer culturally safe, independent, and trusted support.

2. Support for the Bill

We commend the intent and scope of the Bill, which proposes to:

- Establish an independent statutory body with defined functions to protect whistleblowers;
- Investigate mistreatment and reprisals against whistleblowers;
- Provide advisory and educational services to promote ethical conduct across government institutions;
- Monitor and review the treatment of whistleblowers across Commonwealth entities.



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These functions are vital not only for safeguarding public interest but also for ensuring that vulnerable or marginalised voices are heard and protected when exposing misconduct.

3. Recommendations and Considerations

3.1. Culturally Appropriate and Trauma-Informed Support

Whistleblowers from CALD backgrounds may face distinct vulnerabilities, including language barriers, fear of retaliation, unfamiliarity with legal frameworks, and lack of access to support services. We recommend that the WPA be required to:

- Recruit and train staff in cultural competency and trauma-informed practices;
- Provide multilingual resources and accessible communication materials;
- Engage in proactive trust-building with diverse communities through outreach and education.

3.2. Stronger Protection Against Reprisals

The Bill should more explicitly outline enforceable protections and accessible remedies for whistleblowers experiencing retaliation - especially those who may be temporary visa holders, economically disadvantaged, or reliant on employer sponsorship.

Robust legal safeguards should include:

- Protection from immigration-related consequences;
- Access to legal and advocacy support;
- Provision of mental health support and relocation assistance where necessary.

3.3. Clarity on Oversight and Independence

To preserve the WPA's credibility, its leadership structure must demonstrate independence in both form and function. Appointments of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners should be made through a transparent and consultative process that ensures bipartisan integrity.

Further, limiting the number of Deputy Commissioners to one, while enabling supporting roles within the agency, would help streamline operations and maintain clarity in leadership accountability.

3.4. Local Council Inclusion and Jurisdictional Clarity



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It is currently ambiguous whether local councils fall within the definition of a "government agency" under Clause 8(1). Given that local government is a common area where misconduct may occur, we recommend the Bill:

- Explicitly include local councils in its jurisdiction; or
- Include explanatory guidance confirming the intent to apply protections across all levels of public administration.

This will ensure a consistent national standard for whistleblower protection, regardless of where misconduct occurs.

3.5. Awareness and Education Campaigns

The success of the WPA will depend not only on its statutory powers but on its visibility and accessibility to the public. We urge the inclusion of provisions for:

- Nationwide awareness campaigns tailored for multicultural audiences and led in partnership with community organisations.
- Integration of whistleblower education into leadership training, civic education programs, and public service onboarding.

4. A Community-Centric Approach to Transparency

Whistleblowers are not always senior insiders; they are often frontline workers, carers, students, and community members acting in good faith. Their willingness to speak out should be met with accessible support and assurance - not bureaucratic hurdles.

Legislative reform must centre on the lived experiences of those most at risk, ensuring that transparency measures are inclusive, community-oriented, and empowering.

We recommend that the legislation include mandatory operational reviews within the first two years to evaluate its effectiveness and responsiveness to diverse community needs.

5. Human Rights and Social Justice Alignment

This Bill aligns with Australia's international human rights obligations, including:

- Article 19 of the ICCPR (freedom of expression);



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- Article 17 of the ICCPR (protection from arbitrary interference and retaliation);
- Articles 6 and 7 of the ICESCR (rights to safe and fair working conditions).

While the Bill makes a positive step forward, access to justice must be practical and inclusive for all - regardless of background, economic status, or legal literacy.

6. Conclusion

The Whistleblower Protection Authority Bill 2025 (No. 2) is a timely and necessary reform. If implemented with the inclusive enhancements outlined above, it can transform the national integrity landscape and build meaningful trust - particularly within multicultural communities who too often find themselves excluded or unprotected in institutional processes.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute and welcome further engagement with the Committee to discuss our recommendations in greater detail.

Ravi Krishnamurthy
President
Australian Multicultural Action Network Inc. (AMAN)