

Media Release

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Tuesday, 20 August 2019

'In Their Own Words' is the second report to be published from the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption's Public Integrity Survey 2018.

In his foreword, the Hon. Bruce Lander QC said the report "examines what public officers had to say, in their own words, about the culture and practices of the agencies within which they are employed".

"The survey has produced numerous stories of fear and anxiety around reporting inappropriate conduct and practices," Commissioner Lander.

"Survey participants from every agency spoke of perceived incidents of bullying and harassment, and nepotism and favoritism. Some responses strongly emphasised the toll those behaviours have had on the wellbeing of staff.

The Commissioner also emphasised to public authorities that when receiving reports of inappropriate conduct, their aim at the outset should not be "to minimise the seriousness of the conduct, diminish responsibility for inappropriate conduct or camouflage poor systems or procedures for the purpose of ensuring the best 'look' for an organisation".

"If public officers were confident that their report would be appropriately considered and they did not fear losing their job or becoming a potential target for retaliation, they would be more likely to share their concerns and feedback which would be to the benefit of public administration in general.

"I hope that those engaged in public administration read the words and stories of public officers in this report to understand the impact that perceived integrity issues are having on public officers. These words and stories should act as a catalyst to examine the integrity culture within public administration and implement change as necessary."

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The report also highlighted public officers' perceptions of poor leadership and management, encouraging agencies to "review their policies and procedures to ensure there are no 'loopholes' and that their policies and procedures are providing effective integrity controls".

The report, *In Their Own Words: A Second Report from the ICAC Public Integrity Survey 2018* is available at icac.sa.gov.au/report/in-their-own-words.

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