Making a public interest disclosure (PID), or providing information about wrongdoing in the public sector, is commonly known as ‘blowing the whistle’. In Queensland, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (the PID Act) provides protection for those who speak out by making a PID.

Who is a whistleblower?
A whistleblower, or ‘discloser’, is a person who provides information to an appropriate organisation about certain types of wrongdoing in the public sector and receives unique protection for doing so.

The PID Act outlines:
• who can make a PID
• what they can disclose
• who they can disclose to
• protections to disclosers.

What can be disclosed as a PID?
Anybody, whether a public sector employee or not, can make a PID about:
• a danger to the health or safety of a person with a disability, or to the environment
• reprisal (or detrimental action) against a person because a PID has been made.

Only public sector employees can disclose:
• official misconduct
• maladministration
• a substantial waste of public funds
• a danger to public health or safety.

The discloser must honestly and reasonably believe that they have information about one or more of the above.

Why are PIDs important?
Reporting suspected wrongdoing is vital to the integrity of the Queensland public sector.

Employees who are prepared to speak up about wrongdoing are recognised as one of the most important and accurate sources of information about problems in the public sector that disadvantage or endanger others.

What if a report of wrongdoing is not a PID?
Some reports about wrongdoing in the public sector will not satisfy the definition of whistleblowing under the PID Act. However, employees should still be supported and protected from repercussions for raising the issue.

Organisations will need to assess, and where necessary, deal with or investigate the allegations using appropriate mechanisms (e.g. their grievance, complaint handling or workplace health and safety policies).

Where can I find more information?
The Crime and Misconduct Commission, the Queensland Ombudsman and the Public Service Commission have been working together to develop a series of guides about PIDs for the Queensland public sector.

Visit any of our websites to access:
• Making a public interest disclosure: a guide for individuals working in the public sector
• Handling a public interest disclosure: a guide for public sector managers and supervisors
• Managing a public interest disclosure program: a guide for public sector organisations