

## Review of the Crime and Corruption Commission's activities

**Submission No:** 11  
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**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Members of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee,

I am compelled to share my firsthand account of the systemic failures within the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) [REDACTED]

The CCC's composition, predominantly former police officers, raises critical concerns about conflicts of interest and the organisation's independence. This structure fosters an environment where self-investigation and leniency toward colleagues become possible, severely undermining accountability and public confidence. To restore trust, it is essential that investigations prioritise victims' voices, ensuring their experiences are at the forefront.

The current climate is further hampered by the lack of robust whistleblower protections, discouraging ethical individuals from reporting corrupt conduct for fear of retaliation. This silence perpetuates a cycle of systemic abuse, eroding transparency and justice.

Promoting a culture of corrective action over retaliation is crucial. When misconduct is identified, accountability must be paired with positive reinforcement of ethical behaviour, cultivating integrity, transparency, and trust rather than fear and silence. As Prenzler (1995) emphasises, vigilance and strong oversight are vital to prevent corruption from becoming entrenched within organisations.

Addressing these issues is not just about reform; it's about restoring faith in our institutions and empowering those who seek to do the right thing. Only through genuine accountability and cultural change can we hope to rebuild the trust necessary for a fair and just system, as the Stoic said to the Artist, "You have to draw the line somewhere"

1. Prenzler, T. (1995). Civilian oversight of police in Australia. Griffith University, School of Criminology. Australian Institute of Criminology. <https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/tandi141.pdf>

## **The Role of the CCC and Systemic Failures**

The systemic corruption I encountered is part of a wider pattern of misconduct, cover-up, and collusion involving the QPS, ESC, and other agencies. The CCC's failure to independently monitor or oversee investigations has allowed police to manipulate the narrative and influence external bodies, including the Queensland Ambulance Service, hospitals, legal entities such as WLSQ, NQWLS, and Legal Aid, as well as victim support services like DV Connect, 1800 RESPECT, and CRDVS [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

I was initially referred to the CCC by the Victims' Commission, which identified systemic corruption, yet the CCC's subsequent action and abandonment have contributed to my ongoing victimisation and the escalation of misconduct. [REDACTED]

## Background and Personal Experience

In early April 2025, I filed a series of complaints with the CCC [REDACTED]

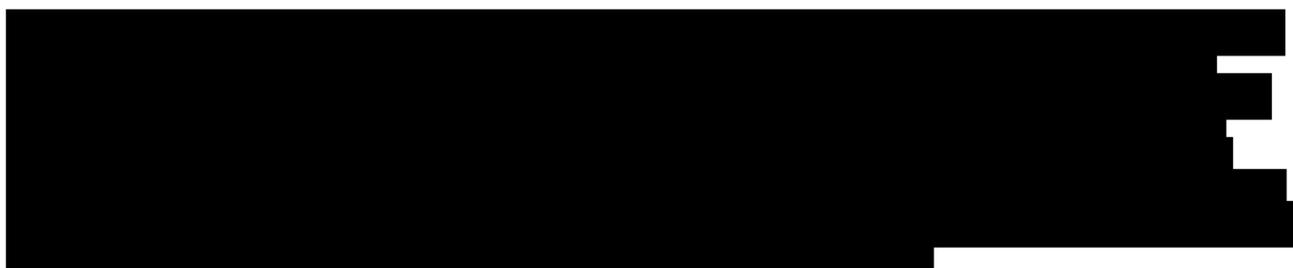
My case was immediately referred to the Ethical Standards Command (ESC). [REDACTED]

I have since referred the matter back to the CCC but have found reopening the matter through the complaints process especially challenging after how the ESC handled the matter. The specific correct form and timeframe for re investigating presents further obstacles. One of my recommendations is that official complaints can be submitted via email directly to the CCC and do not have to be supplied on the correct PDF form provided as the form does not display or load properly on many devices as I've encountered personally further hindering the complaint process.

Throughout the seven months during which the ESC investigated the CCC's findings, I persistently sought the assistance of the CCC to monitor and oversee the investigation and prevent further misconduct out of retaliation. [REDACTED]

Despite persistent efforts and requesting oversight, the CCC failed to intervene effectively, exposing me to ongoing retaliation that severely impacted my mental health and safety. I now suffer from PTSD, suicidal thoughts, and trauma, despite no prior mental health issues.

The failure of the CCC to effectively hold police and other institutions accountable not only undermines public trust but also has tragic real-world consequences. Cases like that of Hannah Clarke and Jessica Laverack are just two of many that highlight the devastating impact when systemic failures allow perpetrators of domestic violence to continue unchecked. The Prevention of Future Deaths Report into Jessica's death underscores how victims, overwhelmed by fear and a lack of protection, can feel compelled to take their own lives, believing they will never be safe or receive justice. When oversight bodies like the CCC fail to ensure accountability, victims are left feeling abandoned and helpless, often pushing them further into despair. This systemic neglect risks perpetuating a cycle where victims are silenced, and perpetrators remain free to cause further harm, ultimately leading to preventable deaths. It is imperative that the CCC reforms its processes to prevent such tragedies and ensure victims are protected, believed, and given a real pathway to safety and justice.



ge that ensures those who are supposed to serve justice do so with integrity, not by turning a blind eye or passing the buck.

### **Misapplication of Jurisdiction and Need for Reform**

I believe part of the issue I encountered with the CCC isn't necessarily a lack of legislative power, but its reluctance or failure to assert the authority already granted. Increasing their legislative powers without addressing the fundamental misapplication risks amplifying their capacity to avoid actions rather than ensuring accountability. If we truly want the CCC to be effective, we need to start by ensuring they're using the powers they already have because giving them more authority won't make a difference if they're not willing to use the current tools properly. Sometimes, the key to progress isn't in adding more legislation, but in encouraging responsible and proactive use of existing powers, the CCC should focus on fostering accountability and integrity first and foremost.

The Crime and Corruption Act does not currently provide a mechanism for members of the public to make direct complaints to the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee (PCCC), which oversees the conduct and accountability of the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC). This gap limits the capacity for independent oversight and ongoing monitoring of corruption allegations from outside the agency, thereby reducing transparency and public accountability. Without direct channels for public complaints, there is a risk that systemic issues and unchecked misconduct may go unnoticed or unaddressed, undermining efforts to detect, investigate, and prevent corruption. Consequently, the lack of a formal process for public input hampers the effectiveness of oversight bodies in maintaining integrity within the CCC and diminishes public confidence in the anti-corruption framework.

True reform begins with proper use of existing authority, especially when systemic issues are evident. More power, without accountability often equates to more room for oversight and inaction under these circumstances.

Despite the powers conferred under the Act, evidence indicates that the CCC often elects not to exercise these options, choosing instead to rely on the police internal processes or to decline involvement altogether. This reluctance can result in missed opportunities to thoroughly scrutinise police conduct, especially in cases of systemic misconduct or corruption, thereby weakening accountability and the effectiveness of oversight. The fact that the CCC can intervene more directly, by reviewing, auditing, or taking over investigations, yet frequently does not, raises concerns about the adequacy and consistency of oversight. Such decisions not to intervene limit the capacity for independent monitoring, reduce transparency, and diminish public confidence in the integrity of the anti-corruption framework.

While the CCC appear to possess statutory powers to scrutinise and investigate police misconduct more proactively, the frequent abstention from exercising these powers undermines ongoing efforts to detect, address, and prevent systemic corruption within law enforcement agencies.

The CCC's inaction is compounded by its frequent reliance on Section 46 (2) (g) of the Act, which allows the Commission to discontinue investigations if it deems that dealing with the complaint:

- (i) would not be in the public interest; or
- (ii) would be an unjustifiable use of resources; or

- the subject matter of the complaint—
- (iii) is not within the commission’s functions; or
  - (iv) has been dealt with by another entity

While section 46 might appear to provide flexibility, it often becomes a cop-out that enables the CCC to avoid addressing misconduct rather than fulfilling its primary responsibility. This misuse of the section effectively exempts the CCC from its duty to monitor and investigate, thereby allowing disreputable behaviour to remain concealed and unchallenged.

The CCC’s favourite “go to” assertion that they are “unable to take ANY action” because “facts

[REDACTED]

The reality is that if the CCC fails to monitor complaints or to act upon reports of misconduct, especially when they are about the police. The Act does not compel the CCC to take proactive steps and subsequently it neglects its duty to oversee or intervene, allowing misconduct to continue unchecked and unexposed. This legislative discrepancy hinders oversight, enabling systemic misconduct and corruption to persist behind a veil of inaction. The current legislation permits and facilitates the CCC’s avoidance of responsibility through mechanisms like section 46, which is often exploited to negate proactive oversight. This results in a failure to hold police and others accountable, undermines transparency, and damages public trust.

The failure of members of the CCC to act is on par with watching a wombat trying to pole-vault, best intentions and a lot of guts but not really built for the sport, they have enabled ongoing systemic misconduct in my case which has destroyed my hope for the future and has prevented me from accessing essential services. I know my case is not isolated and the failure of the CCC has contributed to similar and much worse experiences among other victims, perpetuating a cycle of silence and impunity.

*Silence isn’t golden, it’s a green light for corruption, break the silence, break the cycle.*

## **Reform Recommendations to Strengthen Accountability within the CCC Framework**

In light of the five-year review of the CCC, I respectfully submit the following recommendations aimed at addressing systemic failures and enhancing the CCC’s capacity to hold public officials and law enforcement accountable. These proposals are rooted in the urgent need to prevent ongoing abuse, systemic cover-ups, and the current barriers victims face in reporting corruption and seeking justice. The inclusion of submissions from victims ensures that systemic change is grounded in lived experience, prioritising justice, and systemic accountability.

### **1. Incentive Program Tied to Ethical Performance**

Implement a formal incentive scheme that aligns rewards, such as bonuses, or other tangible benefits, with measurable ethical KPI indicators. This approach incentivises staff not only to meet operational targets but also to uphold high standards of integrity and compliance. Creating recognition programs that highlight and celebrate employees, teams, or units who demonstrate exceptional commitment to ethical practices, transparency, and foster a culture of honesty, not

only rewards individual integrity but also sets a standard for peers, encouraging widespread adoption of ethical behaviours.

- **Metrics for Ethical Performance:** Develop clear, transparent criteria such as customer satisfaction scores, compliance audit results, peer review assessments, and incident report outcomes related to misconduct.
- **Recognition Programs:** Establish awards such as “Ethical Innovator of the Quarter” or “Anti Corruption Champion,” with acknowledgment within the organisation and opportunities for professional development or other incentives.
- **Peer Nominations:** Encourage employees to nominate colleagues who exemplify integrity and ethical innovation, fostering peer driven recognition and positive reinforcement.
- **Regular Monitoring and Feedback:** Establish ongoing monitoring and quarterly or bi-annual reviews to ensure performance remains aligned with ethical standards. Employee feedback sessions can help reinforce positive behaviours and clarify expectations.
- **Training and Support:** Provide training to help employees understand how ethical performance is measured and how they can improve their scores, fostering a culture where integrity is valued and understood. Regularly communicate the importance of ethics through internal channels, and embed ethical standards into onboarding, training, and performance evaluations.
- **Spotlight Ethical Leaders:** Feature stories and case studies of employees who have demonstrated proactive ethical behaviour, creating role models for others to follow.

#### Expected Outcomes:

Recognition and reward create positive reinforcement, making ethical behaviour a desirable and visible trait. It encourages employees to go beyond compliance and actively seek innovative ways to uphold integrity in their roles, cultivating a culture where honesty is celebrated and normalised.

These strategies leverage transparency, social incentives, and cultural reinforcement to embed integrity into the organisational fabric. They shift the focus from punitive measures alone to fostering an environment where ethical behaviour is recognised, rewarded, and normalised as the standard operating procedure. This approach aims to transform workplace culture, making honesty and accountability the expected and celebrated behaviours rather than the exception. Implementing such programs requires strong leadership commitment, clear communication, and ongoing evaluation to ensure they are effective and fair. When properly designed, these incentives can significantly reduce opportunities for misconduct, build public trust, and reinforce the integrity of institutions like the Crime and Corruption Commission.

## **2. Dedicated Legal Support**

Implementation of a comprehensive system where victims of systemic misconduct are automatically assigned dedicated legal advocates and representatives upon identification of criminal or systemic corruption by the CCC would fundamentally transform accountability in policing and public institutions. Legal advocates would work alongside investigators, escalating issues to courts or oversight bodies as needed, thus making systemic cover-ups and impunity far more difficult to sustain. This integrated legal support system would be a cornerstone of systemic reform, ensuring victims’ rights are prioritised and protected throughout the process.

A national, government funded legal aid pool should be established to provide immediate legal representation to victims once systemic or criminal misconduct is flagged by the CCC. This system would ensure that victims are not coerced into silence or financially disadvantaged and would empower them to challenge corruption more effectively.

## Proposed Framework: Legal Advocacy System

### 1. Trigger Mechanism for Legal “Ethical Maintenance Protection Orders” (EMPO)

Once the CCC identifies criminal misconduct or systemic corruption involving an individual or institution, an automatic EMPO is activated for the victim. Once misconduct is flagged by the CCC, and a Protection Order is generated victims can then be assigned a dedicated legal representative or advocate.

2. Victims’ Legal Fund: Establish a government funded legal assistance pool that victims can access immediately upon misconduct identification. Use blockchain technology to ensure transparency in fund allocation, disbursement, and case tracking, preventing corruption or diversion of resources. This fund would provide access to legal representation tailored to victims’ needs.

3. Assigning Legal Advocate: The victim is assigned a dedicated legal representative or advocate, akin to a public defender, whose sole responsibility is to represent, support, and protect the victim’s rights throughout the investigation, potential civil proceedings, and any subsequent legal actions. These advocates would provide continuous legal advice, safety planning, and representation, making sure the victim’s voice is heard in court and oversight processes. They can also facilitate communication with other support services such as mental health, housing, and social welfare.

### 4. Legal Shield Certification Program for Victim Advocates

Develop a certification program for lawyers and advocates trained specifically in victims’ rights, anti-retaliation strategies, and systemic reform. Certified professionals would be prioritised in public legal aid pools, guaranteeing victims access to highly qualified, dedicated legal support that understands systemic issues.

### 5. Mandatory Rapid Response Legal Units in Oversight Bodies

Form a dedicated legal division of volunteer and pro bono lawyers, that specialises in victims’ rights cases. Embedding these lawyers within oversight agencies, with the authority to provide immediate legal assistance to victims upon misconduct findings, offering victims legal advice, representation, and protection from retaliation from the outset. These units would operate independently of police and prosecution systems,

### 6. Victims’ Rights Charter with Enforceable Remedies

Draft an enforceable legal document that guarantees access to legal representation and protection for victims of misconduct, with provisions for inclusion into the Victims Rights Charter.

### 7. Retaliation Deterrent Civil Penalties for Perpetrators

Introduce legislation that automatically imposes civil penalties or sanctions on perpetrators of retaliation, including police officers and officials, who attempt to silence or retaliate against victims. This creates a legal deterrent against further harm..

## Legal and Systemic Impact:

This proactive protection system would act as a safeguard against systemic cover-ups, as police and officials would recognise that victims are supported by legal teams capable of escalating issues to courts and oversight bodies, deterring abuse from the outset. These solutions also focus on proactive, victim-centred solutions that leverage innovative legal frameworks to ensure victims receive the support they need to seek justice and safeguard their rights

## Expected Outcomes:

### 1. Deterrence of Ongoing Misconduct

When police and other officials involved in misconduct are aware that victims have immediate access to legal representation, especially advocates trained specifically to counter retaliation and negate potential undue influence, they are less likely to engage in further misconduct. Knowing that victims are protected by legal counsel who can escalate issues to courts or oversight bodies creates a significant disincentive for abuse of power. It shifts the risk calculus, making misconduct a far riskier endeavour.

### 2. Empowering Victims and Ensuring Justice

Many victims are left in untenable financial situations, forced to deplete personal resources or lose everything, simply to defend their reputation or seek accountability. Providing access to dedicated legal advocates and representatives ensures victims are not financially penalised for seeking justice. This support makes it practically possible for victims to challenge systemic corruption without the fear of financial ruin, increasing the likelihood they will come forward and remain engaged in seeking accountability inevitably holding more people to account should reduce the occurrences of misconduct.

### 3. Preventing Escalation and Retaliation

The presence of a legal representative or advocate from the outset acts as a protective buffer. These advocates can intervene early, prevent retaliatory acts and further misconduct, and ensure the victim's safety, mental health, and legal rights are maintained throughout the process. This ongoing legal support can de-escalate situations before they spiral into harassment, and further systemic cover-ups.

### 4. Facilitating Systemic Reform and Ending Impunity

By consistently holding misconduct to account in a court of law, supported by dedicated legal advocates, perpetrators lose the confidence that their tactics can be hidden or escaped. Over time, I believe this would create a culture where misconduct is less likely to be tolerated or repeated. It also sends a powerful message that systemic corruption will no longer be shielded by lack of legal resources or intimidation tactics.

## **Summary of Key Recommendations for Legislation**

- Amend Section 338(1): Expand the criteria to include systemic misconduct and legal support needs.
- Add new provisions: Allow the CCC to appoint or facilitate dedicated legal advocates for witnesses and victims.
- Enable coordination: Grant the CCC authority to collaborate with external legal support entities to strengthen witness protection and advocacy.

## **Proposed Amendment Directions for the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 (Qld)**

### 1. Definition Section

Insert into existing definitions:

"Victim" means an individual who has suffered severe harm or loss as a result of systemic misconduct or criminal conduct, identified by the CCC including but not limited to, victims of systemic corruption, abuse, or other criminal acts, for the purposes of this Act.

"Witness" includes victims of systemic or criminal misconduct who are involved in or impacted by an investigation or proceeding under this Act.

## 2. Implementation of Legal Protection Order

Insert new subsections after section 338(1) (c) or amend existing provisions to include the following process:

### (d) Generation of Protection Order:

Upon the CCC's identification of systemic misconduct or criminal corruption, the CCC must generate an automatic Ethical Maintenance Protection Order (EMPO) to be recorded on electronic system. This order must include details of the victim/witness, the nature of misconduct, and specific protective measures.

### (i) Notification to Legal Aid and Advocacy Units:

The CCC must immediately contact the Legal Aid Queensland Ethical Advocacy Unit or designated legal support agency to facilitate legal advocacy, safety planning, and victim support.

### (ii) Notification to Police Commissioner:

The CCC must send an official notification to the Queensland Police Commissioner or designated police authority, advising that a Protection Order has been activated for the specified individual(s), ensuring law enforcement awareness and support.

### (iii) Notification to Witness or Victim:

- The CCC must provide notice directly to the affected witness or victim, including:
- Details of the Protection Order in place.
- Information about the legal advocacy and support programs available.
- Instructions on how to access these supports.
- Contact details for the legal support provider.

## 3. Expand the Scope of Witness Support under Section 338 or other General Provision to include:

Insert a new subsections after section 338(1) (d):

- Sect 338(1) (e) The commission may, in relation to a person involved in an investigation or proceeding, provide or facilitate access through referral to dedicated legal advocates or support personnel where systemic corruption, criminal misconduct, intimidation, or potential retaliation is identified.
- (f) In addition to the considerations in subsection (1) (e), the commission may, where it appears necessary to ensure the safety, rights, or effective participation of a witness or victim, facilitate the appointment of a dedicated legal advocate or representative to assist the individual throughout the investigation, hearing, or subsequent proceedings.
- (f) (i) The appointment of a legal advocate under subsection (1) (e) and (f) may include legal advice, safety planning, representation, and support.
- (f) (ii) The commission may coordinate with government legal aid agencies, independent legal advocates, or other authorised entities to provide or facilitate access to these dedicated legal supports.
- (iii) The commission must ensure that the appointment or facilitation of a legal advocate is made promptly and in accordance with guidelines developed in consultation with victims' rights and legal support bodies.
- (g) The commission may, with the consent of the person, provide witness protection or support, including the appointment of legal advocates, to ensure the safety and rights of persons involved in investigations concerning systemic misconduct or corruption.

- (h) For the purposes of this section, 'legal advocate' includes a qualified legal professional or support worker trained to assist victims and witnesses in systemic misconduct cases, with a focus on victims' rights, anti-retaliation, and systemic reform.

## **Amendments to the Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994**

### **Section 3: Amendments to Definitions under schedule**

Currently, the Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994 (Qld) and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010, primarily provide some protections for government employees who disclose misconduct within their agencies. However, there is a significant oversight: private individuals who expose systemic abuse do not have explicit protections under the Act. This gap leaves such individuals vulnerable to retaliation, intimidation, or other adverse consequences, discouraging the reporting of serious misconduct by authorities.

The police and others realise that people have given up on attempting to report misconduct and monitor performance due to the surmountable obstacles in pursuing accountability which in turn is allowing more misconduct to go unreported and is causing an escalation in unlawful conduct as no one is holding those in charge to account. When people stay silent and choose not to report corruption it only compounds the issue. Less reporting equals less accountability.

To address this gap, amendments could be made to the Act to explicitly extend whistleblower protections to private individuals who make disclosures of systemic abuse or misconduct in the public interest through the CCC. This statutory requirement would enshrine informants' rights as an integral part of systemic accountability, making it an enforceable obligation rather than discretionary practice. These amendments could include:

- **Trigger Mechanism:** Once the CCC identifies criminal misconduct or systemic corruption involving an individual or institution, an automatic legal "Protection Order" is activated for the victim.
- **Recognition of Public Disclosures:** Clarify that disclosures made by private individuals concerning systemic misconduct and corruption are protected if made with reasonable grounds.
- **Protection from Reprisal and Retaliation:** Establish clear protections and monitoring systems to detect and prevent against retaliation, including harassment, intimidation, or legal action, for these informants.

Proposed legislative amendments to existing Queensland legislation, specifically the Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994 (Qld) and the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2010 (Qld), to strengthen protections for whistleblowers. These clauses aim to expand protections to private individuals and include specific provisions to prevent false retaliation

Implementing these legislative changes would encourage greater transparency and accountability by empowering ordinary citizens to safely monitor and report systemic misconduct without fear of reprisal, thus strengthening integrity and public trust in law enforcement and public institutions.

In Section 3: Definitions and the use of under Schedule 5 and Schedule 6 insert the following definitions:

- "False charge" means a charge or allegation that is knowingly false or made with reckless disregard for its truth or falsity, intended to retaliate against or discredit a discloser.
- "Retaliation" includes any adverse action taken against a whistleblower, including but not limited to dismissal, demotion, harassment, or intimidation, because of a protected disclosure or because the individual is perceived as a whistleblower.

- "Whistleblower" or "Discloser" means any individual, including but not limited to employees, contractors, volunteers, or members of the public, who makes a disclosure of misconduct, maladministration, or systemic abuse in good faith, regardless of employment or contractual status

### **Additional Protections**

Introduce a new section into the Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994, that specifically provide protection for all individuals making a public interest disclosure, including protections against retaliation. This section would operate alongside the existing sections, explicitly outlining protections and obligations. The primary aim is to establish a dedicated section affirming that disclosures made under the Act made by ANY individual are protected and that the discloser's safety is prioritised.

In the relevant section/s, insert:

#### **Protection against False Charges and Retaliation**

- (1) A person must not knowingly or recklessly make a false charge or allegations against a discloser with the intent to retaliate against or discredit the whistleblower.
- (2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or a fine not exceeding 200 penalty units, or both.
- (3) Any person who retaliates against a whistleblower, by conspiring with another person to bring false charges, commits an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or a fine not exceeding 300 penalty units, or both.

#### **Presumption Against Retaliation**

- (4) Where a person alleges retaliation or false charges, the onus of proof shifts to the respondent to demonstrate that the adverse action was not taken because of the whistleblower's protected disclosure.
- (5) Evidence of false charges or retaliation may be considered as an aggravating factor in determining penalties or remedies.

#### **Miscellaneous**

Insert the following new sections into relevant parts of the existing legislation:

##### **Remedies and Penalties**

- (a) Courts or tribunals may order remedies including compensation, reinstatement, or damages for losses suffered due to false charges or retaliation.

##### **Presumption and Evidence**

- (b) In proceedings under this Act, evidence of false charges or retaliation may be used to establish breach of protections, and the burden of proof may shift as specified.

#### Expected Outcomes:

This approach aims to shift the power dynamic, empowering victims thereby making systemic misconduct costly and risky for perpetrators. It creates a culture where accountability is reinforced not just through internal oversight but through tangible legal consequence. Ultimately, this would foster an institutional environment where integrity is valued, misconduct is swiftly addressed, and victims, regardless of their financial situation, are given a fair right to justice, protected and heard.

Further amendments can be made to the Legal Aid Act and other relevant legislation to incorporate and facilitate the access to justice making accountability measures more effective.

## Conclusion

These recommendations aim to fundamentally shift the current paradigm, transforming victims and informants from passive recipients of systemic failure into active agents of accountability. By embedding automatic legal protections, transparency, and victim-centred oversight into the fabric of the CCC's operations, we can create an environment where systemic misconduct is effectively deterred, victims are safeguarded, and impunity is eliminated.

I urge the Committee to consider these proposals as part of its review to ensure that future systemic reforms prioritise integrity, justice, and genuine accountability.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

  
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Kirsty Verona Bell  


1 October 2025