

COMMISSIONER’S OPENING – FEDERAL COURT PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE

KEY NARRATIVE

- In 2020, the Commission investigated a public interest disclosure (PID) relating to recruitment practices in the Federal Court of Australia.
- In December 2021, we were informed that the Commonwealth Ombudsman was conducting a preliminary inquiry into whether to conduct an investigation into the handling of the PID complaint.
- Until then, I was not aware of any concerns.
- I await the findings of the Ombudsman’s preliminary inquiry.

Do you have any concerns about the way in which the Commission has handled this investigation?

- The Commission takes its obligations under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (PID Act) and Standards seriously when undertaking investigations.
- I was not aware of any concerns with the handling of this investigation until the Commonwealth Ombudsman notified us that it is conducting a preliminary inquiry into it in December 2021.
- In the event the Ombudsman conducts an investigation, I will consider its findings on the handling of the investigation once they have been made.
- I welcome any feedback the Ombudsman may have on how the Commission conducts investigations.

The Australian newspaper’s investigation found that the Federal Court breached public service rules. As APS Commissioner, what action will you take?

- Given the Ombudsman is currently conducting a preliminary inquiry on the handling of this matter, it would be premature for me to take any action at this time.
- I will consider what, if anything, I need to do once the preliminary inquiry has been finalised.

If asked about details relating to the complaint or PID investigation:

- Under the PID Act, it is an offence for me to disclose or use information about this matter.

Giorgina Strangio	Assitant Commissioner, Integrity, Performance and Employment Policy	s 47F
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