"All that is needed for evil to prosper is for people of good will to do nothing"—Edmund Burke

The Whistle



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News

Lessons learnt about staying well and out of gaol
Cynthia Kardell, President of Whistleblowers Australia.

I think globally we, the people, have reached a turning point. And some of the things we point to are serious matters first raised by whistleblowers like Mordecai Vanunu, Andrew Wilkie, Julian Assange, Ed Snowden, David McBride, Jeff Morris and more recently, Atturo Dejar, who initially had to get over the realisation that Zuckerberg, his work buddy, wasn't on the same page after all. META was busy stealing information, while he was busy investigating allegations of theft as the programmer heading up the compliance unit.

I appreciate the whistleblowers who I have identified above will be remembered for a variety of things, but here I'm more interested in the things that have stirred nation states into claiming it's a security issue.

Mordecai Vanunu - Israel was revealed as a nuclear power and arguably, the USA mostly does Israel's bidding in manipulating Middle East interests.

Witness K and his lawyer Bernard Collaery – who proved Australia's ASIS spied on East Timor's Cabinet, and took it all the way to the UN's International Court of Justice.

Julian Assange – for proving that the USA treats other countries as their back lawn, particularly those who try so hard to prove the USA is still bent on maintaining the rules-based system they helped set up after WWII.

Ed Snowden – who showed that the USA spies on its' people. It would have you think only China does this. He now lives safely in Russia.

Andrew Wilkie – who blew the whistle internally, then resigned, telling his boss why, before walking down the hill to an interview with journalist Laurie Oaks – Howard was lying, there were no weapons of mass destruction.

David McBride – he claimed the ADF had reliably punished its' whistleblowers, while celebrating war crime criminals as heroes, like Ben Roberts Smith, who only now is facing trial.

Jeff Morris –who teamed up with Nationals MP, "Wacka" Williams to force the Coalition to establish the Haynes Royal Commission – it found the Commonwealth Bank executives were little better than the Zuckerbergs of later years.

Each one in turn has warned their fellow citizens and voters to look beyond their governments' attempts to say we have the same chance as they do to realise our dreams - because that chance remains safely in the hands of global corporations, the stock market and those politicians who are flattered into playing their game. It usually means we, the voters, will be encouraged to blame those they single out by colour and or religion. It's an old game of come in spinner.

Then there are the tech giants of today, with AI and a punishing need to pay the workers less so as, to drive up their profits.

Listen to our whistleblowers and put your faith in the public good when you are blowing the whistle – not those who routinely lie about themselves to others to encourage you to lie about yourself – it's the stuff of social media and it's destroying the best in us.

Segregation of Duties
Jane Anderson

In September 2026 ICAC released A Guide to Segregation of Duties file:///C:/Users/world/Downloads/Segregation-of-Duties-24Sep26-FA-web.pdf . ICAC gathered examples from numerous investigations in which insufficient or failed segregation-of-duties controls ('SoD controls') were a major factor allowing corrupt conduct. This guide is designed as a fundamental techniques to prevent corruption and a critical step to ensure the integrity of agencies processes and systems by allocating tasks to different people. A key aim is to dilute the concentration of power and to make corruption harder to commit, easier to identify and less likely to be rationalised. One example given is the same officer who refused a development application then being responsible for reviewing a formal complaint from the affected party. This is a clear example of the need to segregate functions, in this case separating assessment from review so the assessor does not risk lack of objectivity as a result of reviewing their own decision. ICAC describes this example as the combination of incompatible tasks and agencies need to identify staff who perform incompatible duties or have excessive autonomy over a process and in order to mitigate risks by spreading functions among individuals. Risks to effective segregation of duties protocols include allowing staff with certain authorities to override the segregation, collusion amongst officers or falsifying the nature of the task, eg splitting an order into smaller parts to avoid scrutiny.



I Scratched an Itch - and Found the State Scratching Back
By Matilda Bawden

Blowing the whistle on government corruption is not new to me. I first ventured down that rabbit hole in the 1990s when I was a young, green and naïve social worker, blowing the whistle on my employer's misappropriation of government grants which resulted in the death of a disabled woman after she was burned in hot bathwater. In the course of that, I stumbled across the Scheme Critical List - a "hit list" of individual legal cases that could never succeed on merit in any of the courts or tribunals in the country and certainly not in South Australia. You can read about that on my website, which provides a transcript of the SBS *Insight* exposé from 15 June 2000, titled "Bullies at Work".
Recently, I rejoined Whistleblowers Australia and National Director, Cynthia Kardell, asked: "What did you blow the whistle on [this time]?… why did you do it all over again? Couldn't you help yourself?"
I replied: "Ha ha ha - yeah, I just couldn't help myself. I had an itch and I had to scratch."
That is probably the shortest explanation I can give for how I ended up here.
I certainly didn't wake up one morning and decide that taking on multiple South Australian government agencies simultaneously sounded like an enjoyable retirement plan.
I've been a social worker and advocate in the disability sector for decades, specialising in child protection, homelessness, poverty, hoarding and squalor. Over the years, my reputation has naturally drawn people in desperate need to contact me by word-of-mouth.
In the last year, I again started advocating for parents. More specifically, I began working with parents who had lost their children to child protection services, including women fleeing domestic violence and coercively controlling relationships. And then I started noticing not an anomaly but a pattern!
Some of these women weren't simply losing their children due to domestic dysfunction, housing instability, substance abuse or relationship breakdown. After they fled their abusers, complained, questioned government decisions, challenged authorities or refused to accept the official narrative, they were entering another system entirely: the mental-health system!
I encountered allegations of false or disputed psychiatric diagnoses, usually obtained in secret by the most illogical and implausible evidence, involuntary treatment, forced medication and forced psychiatric detention. After several of these cases, I began documenting their Lived Experience in my Substacks and lodging formal complaints.
In one extraordinary case I documented, a mother wrote directly to South Australia's Minister for Health, Chris Picton, complaining about the removal of her child. Her child was taken in just 36 days, 45 case note entries, no Safety Plan, no court Orders, no Reunification Plan and no parental consent. She was not guilty of drug use, bad parenting or causing any imminent risk of harm. She was guilty of being homeless, broke and destitute after fleeing DV! When justification for removal was lacking, DCP cobbled together a historic dossier from a decade earlier. Then the mental-health system was brought into play, and she was subsequently detained in a psychiatric ward on the pretext of "reputational harm". Her written complaint to a government Minister became part of the circumstances leading to her psychiatric detention.
But she was not alone. I encountered other mothers similarly being coerced into psychiatric assessments and treatments by the Department for Child Protection (DCP) - even where there was no diagnosis!
One such diagnosis was secured by a psychiatrist in SA after Victorian child protection falsely claimed the mother was fleeing the state against court orders - except there were no such court orders preventing her from freely crossing state borders. By the time she could prove it, she was already incarcerated, force-medicated and her son removed.

I started documenting people's Lived Experiences

As a forensic social worker and advocate, I have spent decades reading records, constructing chronologies, interviewing people and looking for the gaps between what institutions say happened and what the documentary evidence shows really happened, alongside relevant details sanitised out of a vulnerable person's file.
I began reconstructing their lived experiences and publishing stories about real people whose experiences had largely remained hidden inside government files: child protection, adult guardianship, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and systemic abuses within those portfolios - and, repeatedly, the enormous imbalance of power between an individual citizen and the State.

Then Crown Law arrived

Eventually, I received threats of legal consequences from the Office of Public Advocate over publications and demands that material be removed. Potential penalties included a $10,000 fine. I

had a decision to make: remove the stories or stand by the principle that Australians should be able to scrutinise public institutions, with transparency and accountability at the forefront of government integrity?

I refused to disappear the material simply because the State demanded it. Then something extraordinary happened - my Working With Children Check (WWCC) became the battlefield!

South Australia's Department of Human Services moved against my clearance, but that's not the real story. The documents contain one phrase that crystallises the entire affair. My conduct, according to the Department's "preliminary notice", appeared to have arisen in the context of a "worldview that presents alternative ideas and reasoning that may question or challenge the status quo" which causes the Crown "collective unease".

Now, read that again!

There was no allegation that I assaulted, neglected or harmed a child. In fact, after the wash, they removed any concocted wrongdoing against a child altogether. Instead, I was guilty of holding a "worldview" that makes the State government uncomfortable.



I have worked in human services for decades and always imagined questioning the status quo was one of the functions of advocacy. Apparently, somewhere along the way, it became evidence of alleged wrongdoing.

Six agencies enter the story

Then I saw where the information used against me had come from. The assessment identified information obtained from at least six State bodies:

- the Department of Human Services (DHS);
- the Department for Child Protection (DCP);
- the Adult Safeguarding Unit (ASU);
- South Australia Police;
- South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT); and
- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC).

Think about the institutional power represented by those names when a citizen is being blackmailed into silence; demonstrating just how easily it can also lean on politicians, judges, tribunal members and other public officials, through its enormous information-sharing capacity. Although I dispute the narrative constructed from that material; events separated by years, involving different people and entirely different circumstances, were assembled into one adverse portrait.

The net was cast all the way back to 2014!

The child ("Child 1") who was supposedly never endangered

The State reached back more than a decade to matters involving a child whose circumstances I repeatedly reported. Yet the State's position creates an extraordinary, logical problem.

Regulatory and complaints authorities have denied or minimised the danger and abuse I reported, but if the child wasn't endangered in the way I said she was, what exactly was my wrongdoing in alerting authorities? And if she was endangered, why were my repeated warnings not acted upon?

Sometimes retrospective bureaucratic narratives collapse when the documents are placed chronologically on a table, but what this exposed was the State's omission of exculpatory evidence DHS knowingly withheld to show my innocence of the false narrative. For example, legally, I was never a regulated Mandated Notifier in the first instance, regardless of the fact that I repeatedly made notifications. You cannot treat a person as unreasonable for reporting danger, insist that danger did not exist, and years later repurpose those reports as evidence that the reporter, who had no legal reporting obligation, represents a danger to children for allegedly failing to notify a non-event. That is why chronology matters and why people who construct chronologies can become extremely inconvenient.

When the child-risk narrative changed

The story became stranger still.

Two child-related matters ("Child 1" and "Child 2") were subsequently removed from the final formulation against me, including one in which I saved six children from foster care after refusing to be the department's "hired gun". The social worker in that case, I know for fact, is a drug user, but I think I can safely say she won't be losing her WWCC any time soon.

What remained prominently included matters involving adults I helped get released from guardianship. Not children. Adults! Among them were four guardianship matters in which I advocated for people challenging State control.

That should concern every advocate in Australia because guardianship is one of the most coercive powers a State can exercise over an adult citizen. It can affect fundamental aspects of their personal autonomy. Extraordinary powers require extraordinary scrutiny - and scrutiny is precisely what I provided.

The murder of Dr Kathleen Maros

One of those stories concerned the tragic and suspicious death of Dr Kathleen Maros just months after entering "state care" (I use the words very loosely!). We say the State of South Australia killed her!

Kathleen's case involved guardianship and administration proceedings, the rapid removal from her home and placement into residential care. She died only months later – just days before a critical SACAT Internal Review.

The real travesty is that under s75 of the Constitution, the application to guardianship Dr Maros should never have been heard by SACAT in the first place as the applicant was from interstate! SACAT had no excuse not to know that this was ultra vires, but despite the vigorous protestations of her son, SACAT proceeded without lawful powers to do so anyway.

Dr Maros's family and advocates have raised profound questions about the medical evidence, decision-making surrounding her care and actions of public institutions in her final months. I published her story because guardianship should not make a person invisible, nor should their untimely death end the public's right to ask legitimate questions about what government institutions did while exercising enormous authority over somebody's life.

Dr Maros died alone, isolated from the son she cherished, never knowing how or why things were done to her. She can no longer tell us what happened, but the documents and witnesses can, and journalists and advocates can assemble those pieces and ask questions.

Then there was 91yo Ian Butler

Another case involved my friend of 30 years, Ian Butler. Ian is in his 90s and profoundly deaf. Ian went into hospital for gall bladder surgery and came out with a dementia diagnosis which he doesn't have, simply because his family didn't want him back home and Mt Barker Hospital needed to detain him until suitable accommodation could be found. Rather than discharge him into my care, Ian was wrongfully detained in a nursing home - against his wishes - whilst SACAT sought desperately to deny him the right to be cared for by me. After six months, he was released, but not before other atrocities were committed by SACAT and the Crown Solicitor's Office, which sought to silence me from ever telling Ian's story.

Apparently, my involvement in adult guardianship matters was relevant enough to appear in proceedings concerning whether I should be permitted to work with children, including an email titled "Public Interest Disclosure: Formal Regulatory Complaint & Brief Of Evidence Involving NDIA Delegate & Planner Corruption", which DHS falsely claims did not have "consent".

Contrary to the suggestion, that was not the real objection. The real message is that we now need the consent of the State of South Australia to blow the whistle on Commonwealth government corruption or communicate those disclosures to Members of Federal Parliament and regulatory authorities, or risk losing our WWCC and who knows what other privileges to even do business and trade.

The allegation eventually became the journalism

This is the point at which my story stops being merely about the revocation of a WWCC, because there is a much larger issue here.

As they say, "The process is the punishment".

Even if I "win", I will have lost.

That much I know!



One to watch

https://www.icac.nsw.gov.au/investigations/current-investigations/2026/electoral-funding-act-operation-rosny

The gift that keeps giving. Central to electoral funding the hearing in this public inquiry has concluded.

Allegations include:

• wrongful soliciting/acceptance of political donations including from prohibited donors, in amounts that were not declared and exceeded applicable donation caps, for purposes that included the recruitment and/or renewal of members to the Liberal Party

• undeclared and exceeding applicable donation caps donations by Catholic Schools New South Wales for purposes that included the recruitment and/or renewal of members to the Liberal Party.

• circumventing the prohibitions or requirements of Part 3 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 (NSW)

• damage to the political career of the Hon David Elliott MP and the removal of the Building Commissioner, David Chandler OAM, from public office

• Strathfield Councillors engaging in conduct towards another councillor that involves the dishonest or partial exercise of their official functions and/or a breach of public trust.

We await the report.

NOTICE
AGM Sunday 15 NOVEMBER 2026

You'll all know Marg Banas is our public officer to NSW's Department of Fair Trading (DFT). And that each year the AGM authorises her to submit the treasurer's reassurance that we continue to operate as a Not For Profit (NFP) voluntary association.

About two years ago the federal authorities - that's the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) - wrote to the treasurer requesting that we do certain things within twelve months. Namely - to appoint a public officer, make a self-reviewed tax 'return' and consider whether recent changes made to the Model Constitution would require WBA to change its' Constitution.

I don't know why he kept it to himself. Or for that matter why he abruptly resigned after I gave the Committee a copy of my version of the Draft Minutes of the AGM in January last year: refer the "Real Minutes" in the August newsletter you recently received.

Marg Banas contacted the ATO. They wouldn't talk to her about WBA because she was not the Public Officer to the ATO, but they did tell her about how to go about getting a deferral.

The Committee appointed her as the Public Officer to the ATO and she made an application in writing - it always makes me smile to think that even in this day and age, the ATO still wants it on paper.

When Marg Banas followed up on the application she was told we could deal with everything at the AGM in November.

This means the acting treasurer will prepare the self-referred tax 'return' for submission to the ATO by the end of November, and I will ask you to adopt the changes as follows -

1. delete/replace the text of clause 43 of WBAs Constitution, which deals with the 'Service of Notices', with the text of clause 41 of the Model Constitution as follows.

(1) Service of notices

(2) For the purposes of this constitution, a notice may be given to or served on a person:

(3) by delivering the notice to the person personally, or

(4) by sending the notice by pre-paid post to the address of the person, or

(5) by sending the notice by electronic transmission to an address specified by the person for giving or serving the notice.

(6) A notice is taken to have been given to or served on a person, unless the contrary is proved:

(7) for a notice given or served personally - on the date on which the notice is received by the person or

(a) for a notice sent by pre-paid post - on the date on which the notice would have been delivered in the ordinary course of post, or

(8) for a notice sent by electronic transmission: on the date the notice was sent, or if the machine from which the transmission was sent produces a report indicating the notice was sent on a later date—on the later date.

*Note the new clause 41 will have the same heading as the old - it introduces the use of emails etc.

2. add a clause number 44 to WBA's Constitution to include the title and wording of clause 41 of the Model Constitution as follows -

"Distribution of property on winding up"

"Subject to the Act and the Regulation, in a winding up of the association, the surplus property of the association must be transferred to another organisation:

with similar objects, and which is not carried on for the profit or gain of the organisation's members.

In this clause:

surplus property has the same meaning as in the Act, section 65".

So let me know you're coming, and I'll let the chef know too.

Regards,

Cynthia.

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Cynthia Kardell
ckardell@iprimus.com.au
President
Whistleblowers Australia Inc.
https://www.whistleblowers.org.au/
https://www.facebook.com/Whistleblowers-Australia-Inc-172621456093012
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Whistleblowers Australia contacts

Postal address: c/o Cynthia Kardell, 94 Copeland Road, Beecroft NSW 2119

Contacts for information and advice
Cynthia Kardell
Telephone (02) 9484 6895
President
Email ckardell@iprimus.com.au
Website: http://www.whistleblowers.org.au/
Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/Whistleblowers-Australia-Inc-172621456093012/

Queensland Whistleblowers Action Group
Website http://www.whistleblowersqld.com.au

Secretary: Greg McMahon, phone 07 3378 7232

The Whistle
Acting Editor:
Jane Anderson ,jane@worldwidewisdom.com.au
Phone 0435 111 554
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Previous issues of *The Whistle*
https://www.bmartin.cc/dissent/contacts/au_wba/whistle.html

Whistleblowers Australia conference

Whistleblowers Australia's annual conference will be held at 9.00am Saturday 14 November 2026, registration from 8.15, at the Uniting Conference Centre, North Parramatta (Sydney), https://atparramatta.com/plan-your-stay/conference-venues/uniting-venues-north-parramatta
To book your accommodation, contact Kathy Chai, Guest Relations Officer, Uniting Venues by email to northparramatta@unitingvenues.org, option of a single room or a two room suite.

Annual General Meeting

Whistleblowers Australia's AGM will be held at 9am Sunday 15 November 2026 at the Uniting Conference Centre, North Parramatta (Sydney). Members travelling from regional NSW or from interstate who attend both days (14/15 November) can have their onsite accommodation costs reimbursed by providing the treasurer with their receipt.

Nominations for national committee positions must be delivered in writing to the acting secretary at least 7 days in advance of the AGM, namely by Sunday 8 November. Nominations should be signed by two financial members and be accompanied by the written consent of the candidate.

Proxies A member can appoint another member as their proxy by giving notice in writing to the Acting Secretary at least 24 hours before the meeting. No member may hold more than five proxies.

Whistleblowers Australia membership

- Membership of WBA involves an annual fee upfront of $25, payable to Whistleblowers Australia. Membership includes an annual subscription to The Whistle, and members receive discounts to seminars, invitations to briefings/ discussion groups, plus input into policy and submissions.
- To subscribe to The Whistle, but not join WBA, the annual subscription fee is $25.
- The activities of Whistleblowers Australia depend entirely on voluntary work by members and supporters. We value your ideas, time, expertise and involvement. Whistleblowers Australia is funded almost entirely from membership fees, donations and bequests.
- Renewing members: you can post a cheque made out to Whistleblowers Australia Inc to WBA, c/o 94 Copeland Road, Beecroft NSW 2119 or make an online deposit to NAB BSB 084 034 Account Number 291738485. Use your surname/fees as the reference.
- You are subscribed to the mailing list of Whistleblowers Australia. If you wish to be removed from this list, please email us at wba@whistleblowers.org.au .