

Polling - Whistleblowers

April 2025

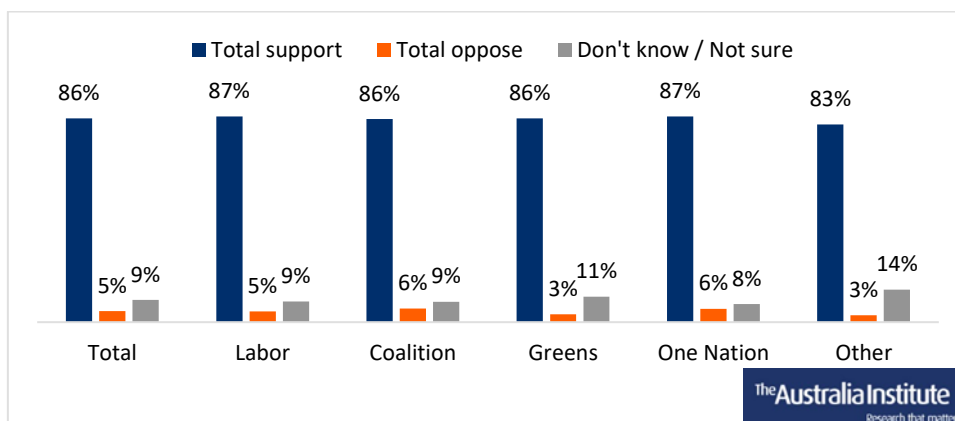
Key results

The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 2,009 Australians about their attitudes to Australian whistleblowers. The survey was developed in collaboration with the Human Rights Law Centre and Whistleblower Justice Fund.

The results show that:

- 86% of Australians support having stronger legal protections for Australian whistleblowers, including more than half (52%) who strongly support such protections.
 - There is majority support for stronger legal protections across all voting intentions.
- Four in five Australians (81%) think whistleblowers make Australia a better place; only 5% think they make Australia a worse place.
- 84% of Australians support the introduction of an Australian whistleblower protection authority, only 5% oppose.
- Three in four Australians (77%) think the Australian Government should intervene to end the prosecution of Richard Boyle.
- Seven in ten Australians (68%) agree that the Australian Government should pardon David McBride.

Figure 1: Stronger legal protections for whistleblowers, by voting intention

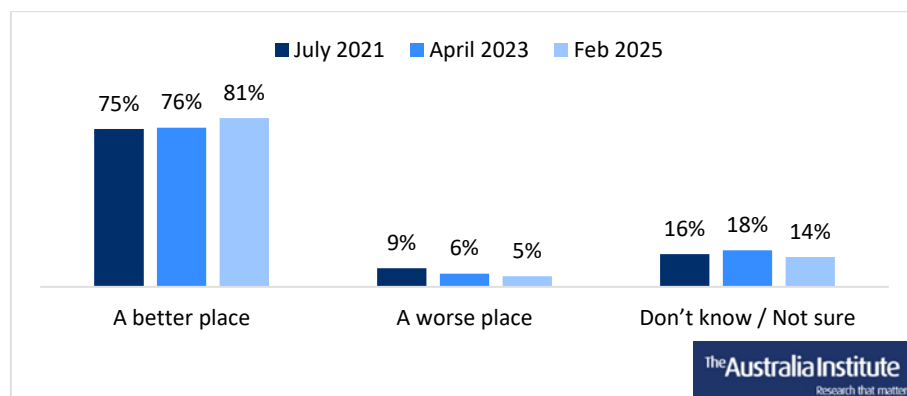


Respondents were told that a whistleblower is someone who reports potential wrongdoing that isn't already being addressed and then asked whether they think whistleblowers make Australia a better or worse place. The Australia Institute has also asked this question in 2021 and 2023.¹

Results over time show:

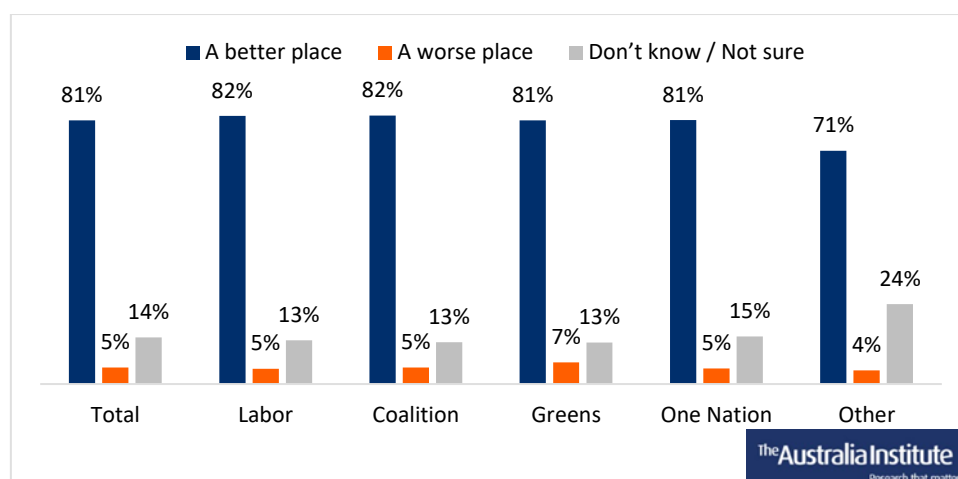
- The majority of Australians (81%) think that whistleblowers make Australia a better place, more than in 2023 (76%) and 2021 (75%).

Figure 2: Whistleblowers make Australia ...



There is broad agreement across all voting intentions that whistleblowers make Australia a better place, and little variation between voters for different political parties: around four in five Labor voters (82%), Coalition voters (82%), Greens voters (81%) and One Nation voters (81%) and around seven in ten other voters (71%).

Figure 3: Whistleblowers make Australia ..., by voting intention



¹ The Australia Institute (2021) *Polling – Whistleblowers*, <https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/polling-whistleblowers/>; The Australia Institute (2023) *Polling – Whistleblowing & secrecy*, <https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/polling-whistleblowing-secrecy/>

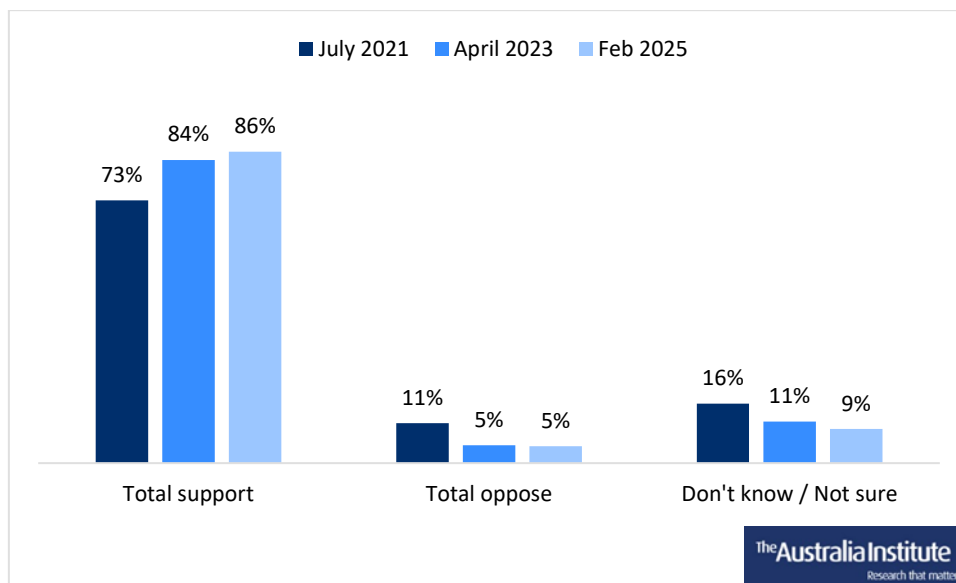
Respondents were told that research shows that a high proportion of Australians who blow the whistle on wrongdoing at work suffer direct damage as a result, such as harassment, suspension, demotion or even job loss. They were then asked whether they support or oppose stronger legal protections for Australian whistleblowers.

The Australia Institute asked this question in 2023 and a similarly worded question in 2021.

Results over time show:

- Nearly nine in ten Australians (86%) currently support having stronger legal protections for Australian whistleblowers, including more than half (52%) who strongly support them. This is around the same as when this question was asked in 2023 (84%) and higher than in 2021 (73%).
- Within these results, “strong support” for greater legal protections has increased from 36% in 2021, to 41% in 2023, to more than half (52%) in 2025.

Figure 4: Stronger legal protections for Australian whistleblowers



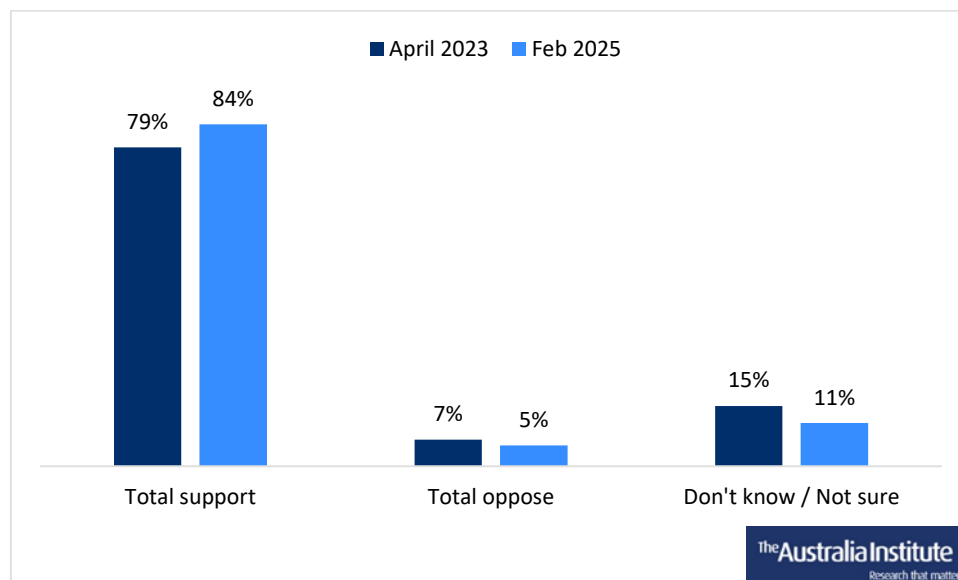
Note: The wording of the 2021 question was slightly different: *Research shows that 80% of Australians who blow the whistle on wrongdoing at work suffer retaliation. Some lose their jobs. Would you support or oppose more legal protections for Australian whistleblowers?*

Respondents were told that several countries have bodies that oversee and enforce whistleblower protection laws and provide guidance to whistleblowers and that Australia has no such body. They were then asked if they would support or oppose the introduction of an Australian whistleblower protection authority. The Australia Institute has previously asked this question in 2023.

Results over time show:

- 84% of Australians support introducing an Australian whistleblower protection authority, including 46% who strongly support. This is higher than the 79% of Australians who supported this in 2023, which included 35% strong support.
- A related question was asked in 2021, at which point 71% of Australians agreed that whistleblower protections for public servants should be strengthened.²

Figure 5: Introduction of an Australian whistleblower protection authority



² The Australia Institute (2021) *Polling – Whistleblowers*, <https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/polling-whistleblowers/>

Method

Short disclosure statement

Panel provider	Dynata
Research company	The Australia Institute
Client commissioning the research	NA
Fieldwork dates	18 February 2025 to 25 February 2025
Mode of data collection	Online recruited from research panel
Target population	Australian adults aged 18+
Sample size	2,009
Australian Polling Council compliant	Yes
Voting intention published	No
Long disclosure statement	See below

Long disclosure statement

Effective sample size after weighting applied	1,927
Margin of error associated with effective sample size	±2.2%
Variables used in weighting	Age, gender, state/territory based on Australian Bureau of Statistics “National, state and territory population” data
Gender identity categorisation	Those who answered the gender identity question as “Non-binary”, “I use a different term”, or “Prefer not to answer” had their responses included with females for the purpose of reporting, due to constraints from weighting data availability
Weighting method used	Raking method
Full question text, responses categories and randomisation	See below
Source of online sample	Dynata’s online panel
Positioning of voting intention questions in questionnaire	Immediately after demographics, before policy questions: Lower house voting intention was asked first, followed by upper house voting intention
How were undecided voters handled?	Respondents who answered “Don’t know / Not sure” for voting intention were then asked a leaning question; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs
Method of calculating ZPP	NA
Voting intention categorisation	Voting crosstabs show voting intentions for the House of Representatives/name of state lower house. “Coalition” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” refers to Independent/Other, and minor parties in cases where they were included in the voting intention but represent too small a sample to be reported separately in the crosstabs
Location results	Results are shown only for larger states



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Quality Mark**

Detailed results

No preceding questions in the poll are expected to have influenced the results of the questions published here.

A whistleblower is someone who reports potential wrongdoing that isn't already being addressed.

In general, do whistleblowers:

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
Make Australia a better place	81%	82%	79%	82%	80%	83%	75%
Make Australia a worse place	5%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%
Don't know / Not sure	14%	12%	16%	14%	15%	12%	19%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Make Australia a better place	81%	82%	82%	81%	81%	71%
Make Australia a worse place	5%	5%	5%	7%	5%	4%
Don't know / Not sure	14%	13%	13%	13%	15%	24%

Research shows that a high proportion of Australians who blow the whistle on wrongdoing at work suffer direct damage as a result, such as harassment, suspension or demotion. Some even lose their jobs.

Would you support or oppose stronger legal protections for Australian whistleblowers?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
Strongly support	52%	51%	52%	53%	49%	55%	44%
Support	34%	37%	32%	33%	36%	35%	36%
Oppose	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%	2%	4%
Strongly oppose	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%
Don't know / Not sure	9%	7%	12%	8%	11%	7%	12%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Strongly support	52%	54%	46%	58%	55%	49%
Support	34%	33%	39%	28%	32%	34%
Oppose	4%	3%	5%	2%	3%	2%
Strongly oppose	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Don't know / Not sure	9%	9%	9%	11%	8%	14%

Several countries have bodies that oversee and enforce whistleblower protection laws and provide guidance to whistleblowers. Australia has no such body.

Would you support or oppose the introduction of an Australian whistleblower protection authority?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
Strongly support	46%	46%	47%	45%	46%	51%	42%
Support	38%	40%	36%	39%	38%	36%	39%
Oppose	3%	4%	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%
Strongly oppose	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Don't know / Not sure	11%	8%	13%	11%	12%	8%	12%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Strongly support	46%	49%	41%	54%	47%	43%
Support	38%	37%	43%	30%	35%	36%
Oppose	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Strongly oppose	2%	1%	2%	1%	4%	3%
Don't know / Not sure	11%	10%	9%	12%	11%	15%

Richard Boyle blew the whistle on unethical debt recovery practices at the Australian Taxation Office. Although three independent inquiries confirmed his concerns, Boyle is being prosecuted and faces the prospect of jail-time if convicted.

Do you think:

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
The Australian government should intervene to end the prosecution	77%	79%	75%	79%	76%	80%	73%
The prosecution should go ahead	8%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	9%
Don't know / Not sure	15%	12%	17%	13%	16%	12%	18%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
The Australian government should intervene to end the prosecution	77%	77%	75%	82%	82%	74%
The prosecution should go ahead	8%	9%	10%	4%	6%	7%
Don't know / Not sure	15%	14%	15%	14%	12%	19%

David McBride blew the whistle on alleged war crimes committed by Australian forces in Afghanistan. Although the Brereton Report confirmed his concerns, McBride was convicted for breaching secrecy laws and sentenced to nearly six years in jail.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

“The Australian Government should pardon David McBride.”

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
Strongly agree	40%	42%	39%	42%	40%	41%	34%
Agree	28%	27%	29%	26%	31%	28%	28%
Disagree	7%	9%	5%	7%	6%	7%	8%
Strongly disagree	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%	5%
Don't know / Not sure	21%	17%	24%	21%	20%	19%	25%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Strongly agree	40%	45%	32%	50%	40%	40%
Agree	28%	29%	27%	29%	19%	30%
Disagree	7%	4%	12%	2%	10%	4%
Strongly disagree	4%	2%	6%	2%	9%	2%
Don't know / Not sure	21%	19%	23%	16%	23%	24%

In the United States, whistleblowers can be financially rewarded for exposing corporate wrongdoing.

Would you support or oppose new laws that rewarded whistleblowers in Australia who exposed corporate wrongdoing?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
Strongly support	28%	31%	26%	28%	31%	30%	25%
Support	37%	38%	37%	38%	36%	36%	37%
Oppose	13%	13%	13%	13%	12%	15%	15%
Strongly oppose	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%
Don't know / Not sure	17%	13%	21%	17%	17%	16%	20%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Strongly support	28%	30%	25%	33%	34%	26%
Support	37%	36%	39%	39%	39%	34%
Oppose	13%	14%	16%	9%	9%	10%
Strongly oppose	4%	4%	4%	2%	6%	3%
Don't know / Not sure	17%	16%	16%	18%	12%	27%