

Australian Research Council / Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Large Research Grants Scheme
Application Form for Year 2000 Grants

Total number of sheets contained in this application		
Chief Investigator (Person 1)	Martin	
File (<i>Research Office use only</i>)		

When completing this form, please comply strictly with the 'Large Research Grants Scheme Guidelines for Year 2000 Grants'.

1. Organisation to administer grant

University of Wollongong

2. Support being applied for

Total project funds requested (\$)	2000	2001	2002	Total
	52871	61394	53203	167468

3. Project title Provide a short descriptive title of no more than 20 words. Please do not use quotation marks as they create information storage problems.

The failure of whistleblowing

4. Project summary In no more than 100 words, summarise aims, significance and expected outcomes.

Whistleblowers are nearly always unsuccessful in fixing the problems about which they speak out, to the detriment of both themselves and their organisations. Anonymous accounts of whistleblowing, based on detailed accounts of actual cases, will be used to solicit comments from managers, employees and whistleblowers, focussing on key decision points. The results will be used to test the theory of bureaucratic opposition and to develop accounts informed by perceptions of participants, and will provide guidance for more productive action by both whistleblowers and managers.

5. Participant summary

Chief Investigator(s) (CI), Partner Investigator(s) (PI) and named Associate Investigator(s) (AI) (Participant details are sought at Section 9)

Person number	Family name	Title	Initial	Organisation	Role (CI, PI, AI)
1	Martin	Dr	B	University of Wollongong	CI
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					

6. Budget

6.1 Detailed budget

Items (Personnel/Teaching Relief, Equipment, Maintenance, Travel, Other)	Priority A, B, C	Amount requested (\$)		
		2000	2001	2002
Personnel Research associate including 26% on-costs	A1	49377	51192	53003
Travel Trips to Melbourne and Brisbane, 2000 and 2001	A2	2894	9902	
Maintenance Purchase of documents, telephone	C	600	300	200
Total	(n/a)	52871	61394	53203

6.2 Financial summary

Year	Support requested (\$)					Total
	Personnel	Equipment	Maintenance	Travel	Other	
2000	49377		600	2894		52871
2001	51192		300	9902		61394
2002	53003		200			53203

NB. Totals must equal those shown in Section 2.

7. Classifications and other statistical information

7.1 Keywords

whistleblowing corruption freedom of speech	accountability dissent suppression
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7.2 Research classifications

Research Fields, Courses and Disciplines (RFCD)	%
370199	30
379999	70

Socio-Economic Objective (SEO)	%
159999	85
150502	15

7.3 Indicate the subpanel under which this application should be considered. **A7**

7.4 If the proposed research involves international collaboration, please specify country/ies.

8. Additional project details

8.1 Concurrent ARC/DETYA grant applications

If this application is associated with any concurrent Research Fellowships or RIEF application(s), please provide details of the concurrent application(s).

Description (Name of applicant, type of application eg. SRF, ARF, APD, QEII, RIEF, administering organisation)	File number (if known)	Success dependent (1)	Dual request (2)

(1) Tick the box if the success of this project is dependent on the associated application.

(2) Tick the box if the salary of a Research Associate or funding for a piece of equipment is requested on both this and the associated application.

8.2 Have you submitted a similar application to any other agency? **No**

If Yes, please provide details.

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8.3 Is funding for this project contingent on support from elsewhere? **No**

If Yes, please provide details.

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8.4 If any of the investigators on this proposal is associated with, but not the Director of, a Commonwealth Government-funded Centre (eg. Special Research Centre, Key Centre of Teaching and Research, or Cooperative Research Centre), please explain the difference between the research proposed in this application and the core activities of the Centre.

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9. Participant details

9.1 Individual details for each Chief Investigator, Partner Investigator and named Associate Investigator

Please complete a copy of this page for each participant listed in Section 5.

Person number (see Section 5)

Name and personal details (sex and date of birth data are used only for statistical and identification purposes)

Family name	Martin			Title	Dr
First name	Brian	Second name			
Role (CI, PI, AI)	CI	Sex	M	Date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy)	14/02/1947
Phone	02-4221 3763		Fax	02-4221 3452	
Email	brian_martin@uow.edu.au				

Organisation postal address and contact details (please include area and country codes)

Department/school/other	Science and Technology Studies				
Organisation	University of Wollongong				
Postal address line 1					
Postal address line 2					
	State	NSW	Postcode	2522	Country

Current position

Position title	Associate professor	Year appointed	1986
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Highest academic qualification

Type	PhD	Organisation	University of Sydney	Country	Australia
Year awarded	1976	(or) Date thesis submitted			

Affiliations

Are you at all associated with an organisation that is ineligible?	No
If Yes, please specify the nature of your employment, association and/or financial interest	

Time commitment

Number of days to be spent on this project out of a maximum of 21 working days per month available for all activities	5
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Are you or any of your close relatives, social and professional associates a member of the ARC, its committees or panels? No

Are you an Early Career Researcher? (refer to the guidelines for a definition) No

9.2 Total research support

Please complete a copy of this page for each Chief Investigator and Partner Investigator listed in Section 5.

Support types (**Sup. type**) are 'C' for current support, 'R' for requested support for 2000, 'P' for past support. Asterisk (*) any support **related** to this project.

The current proposal must be included as 'R' under 'Sup. type'.

The **File number** (if known) is only for past and current ARC/DETYA grants.

Time commitment (**Time com.**) is the number of days to be spent on each project/scheme out of a maximum of 21 working days per month available for all activities.

Participant's family name

Person number (see Section 5)

Description (Chief Investigator family name project title source of salary source of support scheme)	(*)	Sup. type (C, R or P)	File number (if known)	Time com. (days)	1998 (\$'000)	1999 (\$'000)	2000 (\$'000)
Martin, Communication technology for nonviolent struggle, ARC large		C	A79905285	6		48,755	50,411
Martin, The failure of whistleblowing, ARC large		R		5			52,871

10. Certification

The completion of this page is the responsibility of the administering institution/research body which must obtain the required signature prior to submission of the application to DETYA.

Certification by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) or their delegate (or equivalent) in the administering institution/research body

I certify that:

- I. I am prepared to have the project carried out in my institution under the circumstances set out by the applicant(s);
- II. To the best of my knowledge all details on this application form are true and complete;
- III. the amount of time which the investigator/s will be devoting to the project is appropriated to existing workloads;
- IV. the Head of Department has approved the application;
- V. approval of the Partner Investigator's participation to the extent indicated has been received from his/her employer;
- VI. this institution supports this application and if successful it will provide basic infrastructure for the project;
- VII. the project can be accommodated within the general facilities in this institution and that sufficient working and office space is available for any proposed additional staff; and
- VIII. if successful, the project will not be permitted to proceed until appropriate ethical clearance has been obtained.

Signature of PVC(R) or delegate (or equivalent)

Name (please print)

Date

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Aims, significance and expected outcomes

Whistleblowers, who typically speak out about corruption or dangers to health or the environment, are almost always ineffective in getting the perceived problem fixed. Instead, the whistleblower is usually attacked. The result is that whistleblowing “is always more or less disastrous for both the individual and the organization.”¹ Yet there is relatively little research into whistleblowing, especially into what can be learned from and about the counterproductive behaviours of both whistleblowers and institutions. This project integrates insights from individual cases with perceptions from members of institutions in order to prepare detailed accounts of whistleblower experiences in their institutional context and provide insights to help both whistleblowers and managers to deal more effectively with perceived problems. It constitutes the first multiperspective examination of whistleblowing using the theoretical framework of bureaucracies as political systems.

Aims

- To prepare six detailed case study accounts of whistleblower interactions with institutions.
- To gain insights about how (potential) whistleblowers can be most effective in gaining fair-minded attention to their concerns.
- To gain insights about how institutions and managers can more effectively deal with problems so that whistleblowing is not necessary.
- To assess the value of the theory of bureaucracies as political systems in understanding institutional responses to whistleblowing.
- To develop and test a procedure for investigating whistleblowing.

Background

Whistleblowing, conceived broadly, means speaking out about a perceived problem. Some definitions are more narrow, such as “the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action.”² In either case, whistleblowing involves speech that can be challenging to people in positions of power.

In a large number of cases, whistleblowers are penalised for their actions. Typical reprisals include ostracism, petty harassment, threats, formal reprimand, demotion, forced transfer, referral to psychiatrists, dismissal and blacklisting. The drastic impact of such attacks on whistleblowers is hard to appreciate without close familiarity with one or more cases.³

It requires stating at the outset that not all whistleblowers are correct and that there are quite a few individuals who cloak their damaging behaviour behind the whistleblower label. Nevertheless, some whistleblowers are vindicated by subsequent events, such as the engineers who raised the alarm about O-rings in the Challenger spacecraft,⁴ U.S. Defense Department employee Ernest Fitzgerald who exposed vast cost overruns,⁵ and NSW policeman Philip Arantz who revealed the falsity of official crime statistics.⁶

1. Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries, *Leaders, Fools, and Imposters: Essays on the Psychology of Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993), p. 103.

2. Janet P. Near and Marcia P. Miceli, “Organizational dissidence: The case of whistle-blowing,” *Journal of Business Ethics*, 4, 1985, pp. 1-16, at p. 4.

3. K. Jean Lennane, “‘Whistleblowing’: a health issue,” *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 307, 11 September 1993, pp. 667-670.

4. Diane Vaughan, *The Challenger Launch Decision: Risky Technology, Culture, and Deviance at NASA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

5. A. Ernest Fitzgerald, *The High Priests of Waste* (New York: Norton, 1972).

6. Philip Arantz, *A Collusion of Powers* (Dunedoo, NSW: the author, 1993).

There is a body of writing and research on whistleblowing, presenting case studies, policy guidelines, legislative responses and social implications.⁷ Nevertheless, much remains to be analysed.

For those who talk to many whistleblowers, it is remarkable how the same scenarios recur time and time again. As a result, the advice given to whistleblowers by people experienced in the field is quite similar. It includes suggestions such as documenting evidence of wrongdoing, not putting too much trust in formal channels and using publicity as a powerful tool.⁸ However, much of this practical advice has never been tested by social science research.

Whistleblowers commonly report that they are not helped, and indeed often hurt, by official channels such as making reports to managers, internal grievance procedures, ombudsmen, anticorruption bodies and the courts. De Maria, in the most important study of its kind, found that whistleblowers reported that official channels had helped them in less than one out of ten instances.⁹

This finding points to the remarkable ineffectiveness of most whistleblowing. Not only do whistleblowers seldom bring about any solution to problems in their own organisations, but they frequently spend years and large amounts of effort and money in a futile search for vindication through official channels. In defending against whistleblower claims, institutions spend large amounts of time and money, lose valuable employees and may become even more entrenched in their ways.

In summary, scrutiny of the experience of whistleblowers points to an intriguing gap in knowledge: to explain the precise mechanisms by which whistleblowing fails. Insight into this area will be valuable for at least three purposes. First, it will provide practical advice to would-be whistleblowers on how to achieve change without suffering adverse consequences. Second, it will provide guidance to managers, consultants and others designing or reforming organisations on how to make use of the information provided by whistleblowers to improve performance. Third, it will provide a practical test of the theory of bureaucracies as political systems.

⁷. See, for example, William De Maria, *Deadly Disclosures* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1999); Quentin Dempster, *Whistleblowers* (Sydney: ABC Books, 1997); Frederick Elliston, John Keenan, Paula Lockhart and Jane van Schaick, *Whistleblowing: Managing Dissent in the Workplace* (New York: Praeger, 1985); David W. Ewing, *Freedom Inside the Organization: Bringing Civil Liberties to the Workplace* (New York: Dutton, 1977); Myron Peretz Glazer and Penina Migdal Glazer, *The Whistleblowers: Exposing Corruption in Government and Industry* (Basic Books, New York, 1989); Geoffrey Hunt (ed.), *Whistleblowing in the Health Service: Accountability, Law and Professional Practice* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995); Geoffrey Hunt (ed.), *Whistleblowing in the Social Services: Public Accountability and Professional Practice* (London: Arnold, 1998); Nicholas Lampert, *Whistleblowing in the Soviet Union: Complaints and Abuses under State Socialism* (London: Macmillan, 1985); Marcia P. Miceli and Janet P. Near, *Blowing the Whistle: The Organizational and Legal Implications for Companies and Employees* (New York: Lexington Books, 1992); Ralph Nader, Peter J. Petkas and Kate Blackwell (eds.), *Whistle Blowing: The Report of the Conference on Professional Responsibility* (New York: Grossman, 1972); Charles Peters and Taylor Branch, *Blowing the Whistle: Dissent in the Public Interest* (New York: Praeger, 1972); Judith A. Truelson, "Blowing the whistle on systematic corruption: on maximizing reform and minimizing retaliation," *Corruption and Reform*, Vol. 2, 1987, pp. 55-74; Gerald Vinten (ed.), *Whistleblowing—Subversion or Corporate Citizenship?* (London: Paul Chapman, 1994); Alan F. Westin, with Henry I. Kurtz and Albert Robbins (eds.), *Whistle Blowing! Loyalty and Dissent in the Corporation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981).

⁸. Compare, for example, advice given by Tom Devine, *The Whistleblower's Survival Guide: Courage Without Martyrdom* (Washington, DC: Fund for Constitutional Government, 1997)—the most important manual on the topic—and Jean Lennane, "What happens to whistleblowers, and why," in Klaas Woldring (ed.), *Business Ethics in Australia and New Zealand: Essays and Cases* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1996), pp. 51-63.

⁹. William De Maria and Cyrelle Jan, "Behold the shut-eyed sentry! Whistleblower perspectives on government failure to correct wrongdoing," *Crime, Law & Social Change*, Vol. 24, 1996, pp. 151-166. See also Thomas M. Devine and Donald G. Aplin, "Whistleblower protection—the gap between the law and reality," *Howard Law Journal*, Vol. 31, 1988, pp. 223-239; Devine, op. cit.

Relevance of the applicant's skills, training and experience to the project

Since the late 1970s, I have been studying “suppression of dissent,” which can be defined as an attempt by a powerful individual or group to penalise someone who poses a threat due to their public statements, research or other activities. Initially I concentrated especially on dissidents in science but this soon led to other areas of suppression.¹⁰ The book *Intellectual Suppression*, for which I was lead editor and a major contributor, is the major Australian collection on this topic.¹¹ This work has involved documentation of case studies (including extensive searching for materials, interviewing, and endless checking), formulation of conceptual frameworks—including the idea of suppression used in this context—and demonstration of patterns of suppression, such as in the areas of fluoridation and nuclear power.

I had links with Whistleblowers Australia since its formation in 1991, and in 1996 became national president. This has led to a much greater contact with whistleblowers around the country—for example, I met whistleblowers in all Australian capital cities in 1996—and a profound feel for how ineffective most of them are.

It is important to note that Whistleblowers Australia, a voluntary organisation with no outside funding, promotes self-help and mutual help and does not undertake advocacy on behalf of individuals. Whistleblowers Australia as an organisation does not attempt to pass conclusive judgement on the merits of individual cases but rather fosters the general goal of making it safer to speak out in the public interest without reprisal. This orientation is thus quite compatible with the research aim of gaining greater insight into the dynamics of whistleblowing.

Over the years, and especially in recent years, I have talked to hundreds of whistleblowers and dissidents, and made links with others in the field both nationally and internationally. Compiling my web site on suppression of dissent¹²—one of the most extensive in the world—has given me more insights into the issues. This experience has been immensely stimulating, but it has also made me acutely aware of the gaps in research work on whistleblowing, especially the need to learn more about institutional responses to whistleblowers.

While contact with whistleblowers and experience in Whistleblowers Australia has provided me with numerous hands-on insights, for this project to be successful I will have to put on my research hat and be prepared to be critical of whistleblowers as well as institutions. This should not cause too much difficulty given my long experience of being an internal critic (often unwelcome) within social movements, for example in challenging beliefs about nuclear war within the peace movement¹³ and criticising environmental movement electoral strategies

¹⁰. Publications prior to 1994 include: Brian Martin. The scientific straightjacket: the power structure of science and the suppression of environmental scholarship. *Ecologist*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 33-43 (January-February 1981); Brian Martin. Suppression of dissident experts: ideological struggle in Australia. *Crime and Social Justice*, No. 19, pp. 91-99 (Summer 1983); Brian Martin. Nuclear suppression. *Science and Public Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 6, December 1986, pp. 312-320; Brian Martin. Analyzing the fluoridation controversy: resources and structures. *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 18, May 1988, pp. 331-363; Brian Martin. *Scientific Knowledge in Controversy: The Social Dynamics of the Fluoridation Debate* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Brian Martin. Peer review and the origin of AIDS—a case study in rejected ideas. *BioScience*, Vol. 43, No. 9, October 1993, pp. 624-627.

¹¹. Brian Martin, C. M. Ann Baker, Clyde Manwell and Cedric Pugh (eds.), *Intellectual Suppression: Australian Case Histories, Analysis and Responses* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1986). See also the guest-edited issue of *Philosophy and Social Action*, January-March 1988, on the theme of suppression.

¹². <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/>.

¹³. Brian Martin, “Critique of nuclear extinction,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1982, pp. 287-300; Brian Martin, “How the peace movement should be preparing for nuclear war,” *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 13, No. 2, June 1982, pp. 149-159.

and publishing claims about corruption in the movement.¹⁴ Indeed, my own experience as internal critic—believing in the goals of the movement but disagreeing about methods—gives me a special interest in the failure of whistleblowing.

What the project *isn't*

- a defence of whistleblowing as an approach;
- an investigation into whether particular whistleblowers were right or wrong;
- a study of institutional failure.

What the project *is*

- an investigation of why whistleblowing fails.

Research plan, methods, techniques and proposed timetable

The plan is to use insights from detailed accounts of whistleblower cases to solicit comments from a range of individuals, and then to prepare revised accounts using insights gained. However, to use actual cases for soliciting comments would be difficult in the extreme. Parties to the conflict often have adopted partisan positions and official lines that overshadow the more nuanced responses to cases that are less developed. To gain access to “backstage” attitudes of stakeholders from different points of view would require a large team and virtually unlimited resources. As found by Robert Jackall in *Moral Mazes*, just gaining access to *any* corporation—not to mention a specific one—may take many months, and then many further months are required to develop rapport with employees.¹⁵ Gaining access to the range of organisations and individuals involved in a single major whistleblower case—such as a transport authority, police, ombudsman, auditor-general, psychiatrists, politicians and other whistleblowers—could well be impossible even with unlimited resources. Furthermore, any single researcher or small team would have the limitation of being identified with one side or the other, thus making it extremely difficult to gain trust from those on the other side. Added to this are problems with defamation, confidentiality and potential interference with ongoing cases.

To overcome these problems, the plan is to develop six generic accounts of several whistleblower cases, drawing on detailed studies of prominent cases. By studying specific cases for which there is plenty of documentation, key steps in whistleblower cases can be extracted and highlighted with some faithfulness to the originals. However, in seeking responses from stakeholders, generic accounts are not likely to trigger the specific sorts of defensiveness that would prevent access or honest responses, and do not pose problems with confidentiality or defamation. If respondents take the initiative to comment on specific cases, this will be a bonus.

The stages of the project can be summarised as follows:

- Stage 1. Prepare six accounts of well-documented whistleblower cases.
- Stage 2. Based on these accounts, prepare six generic accounts.
- Stage 3. Using the generic accounts, undertake interviews with managers, employees, whistleblowers and others to obtain responses about the most effective ways to respond (by both whistleblower and institutions) at various key points in the narrative.

¹⁴ Brian Martin, “Environmentalism and electoralism,” *The Ecologist*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1984, pp. 110-118; Brian Martin (guest editor), *Philosophy and Social Action*, Vol. 10, No. 3, July-September 1990, special issue on corruption.

¹⁵ Robert Jackall, *Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). This is one of the only studies available that gives insights into how employees justify inaction or complicity in attacks on whistleblowers.

- Stage 4. Use the theory of bureaucratic opposition to help construct generic accounts. Assess the theory in the light of insights from the interviews.

- Stage 5. Prepare revised case study and generic accounts using the findings from the interviews and in light of theoretical assessment.

- Stage 6. Write up results.

In practice the stages will overlap—especially stage 4, the theoretical dimension—as suggested in this time line.

Stage	1&2. WB accounts	3. Interviews	4. Theory	5. Revised accounts	6. Publication
Jan-June 2000	Prepare 6 case study accounts	List potential interviewees	Extract WBs' implicit theories-in-use		Prepare one or more accounts for publication
July-Dec 2000	Prepare 6 generic accounts	Make contacts; pilot interviews	Use theory in constructing accounts		Prepare one or more accounts for publication
Jan-June 2001		Interviews	Assess theory		
July-Dec 2001		Interviews	Assess theory		Plan book
Jan-June 2002			Use theory in constructing accounts	Prepare revised accounts	Begin book and articles
July-Dec 2002			Summarise findings about theory		Complete book and articles

Stage 1: whistleblower case study accounts. Six cases of whistleblowing will be studied in considerable detail. The criteria for selection will include the availability of a large quantity of public documentation, involvement of a range of organisations and types of individuals, and preferably some independent finding of the prima facie validity of the whistleblower's claims or of reprisals against the whistleblower. Some likely possibilities are:

- The case of Helen Hamilton, a local resident who led opposition to reopening of a copper smelter in Wollongong. Special legislation was passed by the NSW Parliament to prohibit her court challenge.

- The case of Cynthia Kardell, who challenged an appointment in a Sydney hospital and was dismissed. The subsequent court case was the longest in the history of the NSW Industrial Court; the judge found overwhelmingly for Kardell.¹⁶

- The case of Jim Leggate, who pointed out failure of the Queensland government to enforce mining regulations, at a cost to the taxpayer of \$1 billion.¹⁷

- The case of Kevin Lindeberg, in which the Queensland state cabinet approved the shredding of documents gathered during an official inquiry into a youth centre, although they were being sought for purposes of a prospective court case.¹⁸

¹⁶. Industrial Relations Court of Australia, *Kardell v South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service* (970261).

¹⁷. Senate Select Committee on Unresolved Whistleblower Cases, *The Public Interest Revisited* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, October 1995), pp. 109-114.

¹⁸. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-66. This case has been spotlighted in a series of stories in the Brisbane newspaper *The Weekend Independent*. See <http://www.uq.oz.au/jrn/twi/top10.html>.

- The case of Vince Neary, an engineer at the NSW State Rail Authority who spoke out about misappropriation of money and unsafe signaling practices and was harassed and eventually dismissed.¹⁹

- The case of Mick Skrijel, a fisherman who spoke out about drug smuggling in South Australia and who suffered various reprisals (boat burned; house burned; framed on a weapons charge, being exonerated after spending six months in prison). David Quick QC, who reported on the case at the request of the federal government, found that there was evidence of corrupt behaviour by the National Crime Authority.²⁰

- The case of Bill Toomer, a quarantine inspector who insisted on fumigating a ship in accordance with regulations. Numerous government authorities have investigated the case over many years, with several finding that Toomer was unfairly treated.²¹

While there is ample documentation about these and other cases, in no case is there a careful account that highlights the crucial points where things might have been done differently, by the whistleblower or others. (Indeed, this is virtually never done in any of the whistleblower literature.) Therefore, for each case, an account will be drawn up highlighting these crucial points. Specifically, attention will be paid to:

- the whistleblower's initial perception of a problem;
- whether other workers knew about the problem;
- the whistleblower's initial choice of whom to inform;
- the initial response (including reprisals) to the whistleblower's message;
- subsequent choices of whom to inform, including outside authorities;
- subsequent responses.

The later stages of whistleblower cases, involving outside authorities, are often the most well documented, so preparing this part of the account will be more straightforward, though time consuming due to the volume of documentation. The whistleblowers will be consulted for their views on their initial perceptions and choices of whom to inform.

Stage 2: generic accounts. Some of the accounts will be worth writing up for publication on their own. However, for the further development of the project, their primary purpose is to serve as a foundation for generic accounts. Each case study will be used to formulate a generic account, with names and details removed or changed, about two pages in length. Each generic account will include a number of queries at key points, such as “What could Fred have done differently here?” or “What other response could the agency director have made at this point?” The word “whistleblower” will not be used in the generic accounts, and more generally any suggestions of rightness or wrongness will be toned down or eliminated.

The conversion of the case studies to generic accounts is a crucial part of the project. The goal is to remove identifying specifics and excess detail while retaining the essential dynamics of key decision points.

An alternative would be to formulate generic accounts as purely fictional creations. This would be easier but would have several disadvantages. First and most important, fictional accounts would lack credibility when approaching stakeholders for comments. Second, fictional accounts would not allow easy reformulation of case study accounts using comments received.

In order to ensure that the generic accounts are faithful to the dynamics of the actual cases, the two versions will be shown to a number of individuals—some who are familiar with the actual cases and some who are not—for feedback.

¹⁹. NSW Ombudsman, *The Neary/SRA Report: Special Report to Parliament* (Sydney, October 1993).

²⁰. Max Wallace, “Fishing for the truth,” *Alternative Law Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1, February 1997, pp. 33-36.

²¹. Senate Select Committee, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-131.

Stage 3: feedback from the generic accounts. Interviews will be sought with a range of individuals to obtain responses to the key questions in the generic accounts. Approaches to organisations and individuals will be made using appropriately tailored requests, referring variously to effective management, organisational learning, conflict resolution and other goals. After a number of pilot interviews to refine use of the generic accounts, systematic approaches will be made to:

- managers and workers in organisations where whistleblowers may work, such as the public service, schools, police and hospitals;
- employees in appeal bodies such as ombudsmen, administrative appeals tribunal, anticorruption authorities and antidiscrimination boards;
 - whistleblowers;
 - whistleblower activists (those with much experience advising whistleblowers);
 - scholars and activists interested in organisational dynamics and change.

No difficulty is anticipated in gaining access to whistleblowers, scholars or activists. Access to managers and workers in employing organisations and appeal bodies may prove more difficult. However, given that no actual cases are to be discussed and that the goal is to gain insights on how to better deal with disclosures by employees (and to deal with vexacious claims), it should prove possible to talk to individuals in some if not all organisations. In any organisation, there are commonly multiple perspectives on local whistleblowers, and certainly on generic issues, with some managers arguing (at least rhetorically) the value of learning from employee disclosures. In addition, whistleblower activists often have sympathetic contacts in relevant bodies. For example, members of Whistleblowers Australia have contacts in the NSW Police, members of which are trying to change the closed police culture, despite ongoing victimisation of some police whistleblowers.

Feedback from the interviews is the most important data generated by the project. It will be used for several purposes:

- to provide advice to whistleblowers and organisations on acting more effectively;
- to offer insight into the perspectives of different actors and their relation to their position and experience (the views of whistleblowers and managers are likely to diverge);
- to be a source of data for testing implicit theories of institutional dynamics.

Stage 4: theory. From past assessments, the most useful theory of institutional dynamics for understanding the whistleblower experience is one which likens bureaucracies to political systems, which can be called the bureaucratic opposition model.²² In this picture, bureaucracies can be subject to protests, opposition movements and coups, though the more usual situation is lack of any apparent resistance. In this model, whistleblowing employees are in essence internal opponents with no supporters, which explains why they are so frequently attacked and so seldom successful.

In preparing the generic accounts in stage 2, some understanding of institutional dynamics will be required so that each account includes not only descriptions of actions but implicit assessment of institutional resistances and flexibilities. The bureaucratic opposition model will be used for this purpose.

²². Deena Weinstein, *Bureaucratic Opposition: Challenging Abuses at the Workplace* (New York: Pergamon, 1979). See also Randall Collins, *Conflict Sociology: Toward an Explanatory Science* (New York: Academic Press, 1975), pp. 286-347; Robert Perrucci, Robert M. Anderson, Dan E. Schendel, and Leon E. Trachtman "Whistle-Blowing: Professionals' Resistance to Organizational Authority," *Social Problems* 28, 1980, pp. 149-164; Deena Weinstein, "Bureaucratic Opposition: The Challenge to Authoritarian Abuses at the Workplace," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 1 (2), 1977, pp. 31-46; Mayer N. Zald and Michael A. Berger, "Social Movements in Organizations: Coup d'État, Insurgency, and Mass Movements," *American Journal of Sociology* 83, 1978, pp. 823-861. For an assessment of this model in relation to whistleblowing, see Brian Martin, "Elites and suppression," in Martin et al. (1986), op. cit.

The responses in stage 3 provide a resource base for testing commonplace conceptualisations about institutional dynamics, held variously by whistleblowers, nonwhistleblowing employees, managers and members of appeal bodies. Some characteristic perspectives are:

- “The system works.” This is a common view among those who become (often inadvertently) whistleblowers: they speak out because they believe the problem will be fixed and are terribly shocked when the system turns on them. This view often includes the assumption that problems are due to a few “bad apples.” It is compatible with a liberal view of institutions.
- “The system can’t be challenged.” This is a common view among those who do not speak out, including those who are doing well, and fits the views expressed by Jackall’s informants. It is compatible with a view of the organisation as a hegemonic force, and has links with the standard model of bureaucratic rationality.
- “Reform must come from the top.” This is a common view among reformers of all sorts who seek change by lobbying and by seeking to get better people in positions of power by election, appointment or promotion. Whistleblowers who have been victimised commonly adopt this view when seeking redress through various appeal bodies.
- “The system is corrupt.” Whistleblowers who become disillusioned through the failure of official channels may come to this view, believing that corruptions and cover-ups extend all the way to the “top.”
- “Change comes from the bottom.” This view is common among social activists who seek to mobilise support for grassroots campaigns.

The practical task in this stage is to elucidate and classify these and other theories-in-practice used by various interviewees, to see how they relate to the social position and view of whistleblowing of those who hold them, and to see what value they have for whistleblowers and managers for developing better strategies. The theoretical task is to assess the theory of bureaucratic opposition for its adequacy in dealing with the whistleblower experience, and to revise it, if necessary, to take into account the self-perceptions of actors, which both reflect and help produce institutional dynamics.

Stage 5: revised case study and generic accounts. Using the results of the interviews (stage 3) and the modified theoretical framework (stage 4), the case study and generic accounts will be revised to provide fuller and more nuanced pictures of individual action in the context of institutional dynamics.

Stage 6: writing up. Various publications, including a book, will be completed.

Outcomes

- A book and a series of articles on the case studies and the general issue of whistleblowing and institutional dynamics, highlighting diverse perceptions and options.
- Six detailed case study accounts, and associated generic accounts, of whistleblower interactions with institutions.
- Advice for whistleblowers on being more effective in having their concerns addressed fairly.
- Advice for managers and executives on designing systems and implementing policies on whistleblowing, both to respond fairly, to gain the benefit of whistleblower insights and to deal efficiently with vexacious claims.

Justification of budget

The most important budget item is salary for a full-time research associate. The principal tasks of the associate are:

- to collect and summarise documents about the six case studies;
- to check facts in the case study summaries;
- to help in preparing generic accounts;
- to help organise interviews, participate in interviews and write up notes on interviews;
- to check facts and help write revised generic and case study accounts;
- to assist and/or collaborate in preparing publications;
- to prepare relevant documents for a web site dealing with the project.

The initiative, understanding and ability required for these tasks requires an appointment at no less than the research associate level. The amount of work is quite large, more than enough to require a full-time appointment. For example, to collect and summarise documents on one case study is easily a month's work, given the incredible complexity of typical whistleblowing cases. The project can be completed on schedule by adjusting the number of interviews. Note that the RA will be able to learn on the job in a progressive fashion, beginning with the more routine tasks of collecting documents, making summaries and checking facts, progressing to support for and participation in interviews, and finally leading to a role in writing. Given the sensitive aspects of whistleblowing cases, it is vital that the CI provide strong direction and guidance until the RA becomes more familiar with what is involved.

The CI will be responsible for project planning and design, writing the accounts, deployment and assessment of theory, leading the interviews and pursuing publications.

The whistleblowers in two of the anticipated case studies reside in Brisbane and two in or near Melbourne. Hence, in the first year, a three-day trip to each of these cities is necessary for both the CI and RA, to interview the whistleblower and other individuals, and to collect documents otherwise not easily available. This is costed at \$239 Sydney-Melbourne return and \$249 Sydney-Brisbane return plus \$153 per day, plus \$100 for airport transfers. Trips to Sydney to interview the other whistleblowers can be undertaken at minimal expense.

In the second year, which centres around interviews with a range of individuals concerning the generic accounts, it is appropriate to pursue interviews with managers and employees in the same cities as the whistleblowers—Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney—plus Canberra, since several of the cases have involved federal government agencies. Two five-day trips to each of Brisbane and Melbourne, plus one five-day trip to Canberra, are needed for both the CI and RA. This is costed as above, with \$50 bus fare Wollongong-Canberra return.

In principle, interviewing individuals using the generic accounts could be done in any of a number of cities. However, it will prove extremely valuable to visit agencies directly involved with the whistleblower case studies. Even though the cases will not be mentioned directly, local knowledge about the cases is likely to lead interviewees to raise gems of insight. Hence, trips to Brisbane and Melbourne will be well worth the effort.

The additional budget items are for phone costs and obtaining documents. Much of the checking of case study and generic accounts will be done by phone. Most of these costs will be in the first two years of the project.

Publications, 1994-

* indicates relevance to this project

The full text of many of these publications is available at <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/>.

Books

¶ externally refereed

* Brian Martin. *The Whistleblower's Handbook: How to Be an Effective Resister* (Charlbury, UK: Jon Carpenter, 1999, in press). [55,000 words]

Lyn Carson and Brian Martin. *Random Selection in Politics* (Westport, CT: Praeger, in press). [60,000 words]

Brian Martin (ed.). *Technology and Public Participation* (Princeton, NJ: Xlibris, 1999, in press). [self-published]

Brian Martin. *Information Liberation* (London: Freedom Press, 1998), 189 pages. ¶

* Brian Martin. *Suppression Stories*. (Wollongong: Fund for Intellectual Dissent, 1997), 171 pages. [self-published]

* Brian Martin (ed.). *Confronting the Experts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 204 pages. ¶

Booklet

* Brian Martin, Sharon Callaghan and Chris Fox, with Rosie Wells and Mary Cawte. *Challenging Bureaucratic Elites* (Wollongong: Schweik Action Wollongong, 1997), 56 pages. [self-published]

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* Brian Martin. Introduction: experts and establishments. In: Brian Martin (ed.). *Confronting the Experts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 1-12. ¶

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* Brian Martin. Suppression of dissent in science. *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*, 1999, in press.

* Brian Martin. Strategies for dissenting scientists. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 1999, in press.

* Brian Martin. Suppressing Research Data: Methods, Context, Accountability, and Responses. *Accountability in Research*, 1999, in press. [special issue on suppressing research data, guest editors Mark Diesendorf and Brian Martin].

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* Brian Martin. Political refutation of a scientific theory: the case of polio vaccines and the origin of AIDS. *Health Care Analysis*, Vol. 6, 1998, pp. 175-179.

Brian Martin. Science, technology and nonviolent action: the case for a utopian dimension in the social analysis of science and technology. *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 27, 1997, pp. 439-463.

Brian Martin. Technological vulnerability. *Technology in Society*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1996, pp. 512-523.

David Dingelstad, Richard Gosden, Brian Martin and Nickolas Vakas. The social construction of drug debates. *Social Science & Medicine*, Vol. 43, No. 12, 1996, pp. 1829-1838.

* Brian Martin. Sticking a needle into science: the case of polio vaccines and the origin of AIDS. *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 26, No. 2, May 1996, pp. 245-276.

Brian Martin. Beyond mass media. *Metro Magazine*, No. 101, 1995, pp. 17-23.

Brian Martin. Possible pathologies of future social defence systems. *Pacifica Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1995, pp. 61-68.

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* Brian Martin. *The Whistleblower's Handbook: How to Be an Effective Resister* (Charlbury, UK: Jon Carpenter, 1999, in press).

Lyn Carson and Brian Martin. *Random Selection in Politics* (Westport, CT: Praeger, in press).

Brian Martin. *Information Liberation* (London: Freedom Press, 1998), 189 pages.

* Brian Martin. *Suppression Stories*. (Wollongong: Fund for Intellectual Dissent, 1997), 171 pages.

* Brian Martin (ed.). *Confronting the Experts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 204 pages.

Brian Martin. *Social Defence, Social Change* (London: Freedom Press, 1993), 157 pages.

* Brian Martin. *Scientific Knowledge in Controversy: The Social Dynamics of the Fluoridation Debate* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 266 pages.

* Brian Martin, C. M. Ann Baker, Clyde Manwell and Cedric Pugh (eds.), *Intellectual Suppression: Australian Case Histories, Analysis and Responses* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1986), 304 pages.

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