Is there a duty to listen to whistleblowers?

Wim Vandekerckhove, University of Greenwich, UK

RMIT School of Accounting Seminar, 21 November 2018
Any person may address a complaint or report an alleged breach of the Code to the Ethics Commission. The Secretariat shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint or denunciation, although the person submitting the file shall have no entitlement for proceedings to be opened, to be a party to proceedings or to be informed of any decision passed. The Ethics Commission will have free discretion to consult this person or any other person and request his participation in proceedings.

Only the persons who are alleged to have committed a violation of the provisions of the Code and against whom proceedings have been initiated shall be considered as parties before the Ethics Commission.
Australia & NZ: 40% (Brown, Olsen & Lawrence, 2018)

UK: 74% - 63% - 44% (Vandekerckhove, James & West, 2013)
Whistleblowing

‘the disclosure by organisation members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organisations that may be able to effect action’ (Near & Miceli 1985:4)
Epistemic injustice

Miranda Fricker

- hermeneutic injustice
- testimonial injustice

A person in wronged in their capacity as a knower, a capacity essential to human value.
3-tiered whistleblowing (Vandekerckhove)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Listen</th>
<th>Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | 1st order perfect duty | - explain  
- involve  
- investigate  
- inform  |
|       |        | - anonymous WB  
- achieving closure                          |
| 2     | 2nd order perfect duty | - explain  
- engage  
- investigate  
- inform  |
|       |        | - anonymous WB  
- piece of the puzzle  
- referral  
- achieving closure |
| 3     | 2nd order imperfect duty | - if information is valuable / newsworthy  |
|       |        | - confidentiality of source ID  
- support high profile WBer  |
Thank you.

Dr Wim Vandekerckhove
Reader in Business Ethics
University of Greenwich
Business School