



# Australian Citizens Party

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Must watch—“An ASIC Whistleblower is Screaming for Help!”**

In a stunning development that confirms the worst suspicions about Australia’s corporate regulator, a whistleblower has mailed a handwritten note to the Australian Citizens Party’s Melbourne office revealing a “culture of fear” pervades the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

The whistleblower addressed the note to independent economist John Adams and ACP Research Director Robbie Barwick, who had accused ASIC of corruption in a 6 August 2024 episode of the ACP’s *Citizens Insight* program on YouTube, “[The final battle in the great war against ASIC corruption](#)”.

The whistleblower wrote: “Your videos are 100% spot on.” They described ASIC as being in its worst state ever and getting worse, even worse than Adams and Barwick portrayed.

Adams and Barwick have just discussed this extraordinary development with experienced financial system analyst Martin North from Digital Finance Analytics on the Adams-North YouTube program *In The Interests Of The People*.

Click here to watch “[An ASIC Whistleblower is Screaming for Help!](#)”

#### **Chicago cops**

ASIC is an agency under siege, from Senators who’ve had enough of the consequences of its disasters; from regulation experts speaking out against its systemic failings; and from thousands of financial victims who have suffered the consequences of ASIC’s unwillingness to actually police the financial system.

It has been the subject of four major inquiries in ten years, including a major 2014 Senate inquiry, the 2018 banking royal commission, the 2021 Senate inquiry into ASIC and Sterling First, and the most recent 2023-24 Senate Economics References Committee inquiry into ASIC investigation and enforcement.

Each inquiry has excoriated ASIC, but the government of the day has always protected it from calls for change; the most recent inquiry, under Senator Andrew Bragg, has gone the hardest and called for ASIC to be abolished and replaced with two specialised agencies, but again the government of the day—this time Labor—is trying to protect it from change.

#### **By design**

The Bragg inquiry heard evidence from ASIC’s fellow regulators that effectively revealed ASIC’s law enforcement weakness and ineffectiveness were by design, at the insistence of a Treasury working for the major banks who are a law unto themselves and don’t want an effective regulator.

The banks are the equivalent of Al Capone’s Chicago mob, and ASIC is the Chicago Police Department who let them get away with murder because it is on the mob’s payroll.

In ASIC’s 26 years since it replaced the previous regulator, the Australian Securities Commission, the banks are the one sector that, conspicuously, has never complained about ASIC, except for a brief period following the 2018 banking royal commission when ASIC’s previous chairman did attempt to apply Commissioner’s Hayne’s directive that ASIC should step up law enforcement against them.

The result was the banks went on a credit strike, i.e. drastically reduced lending, to scare the government into stopping ASIC’s moves towards more law enforcement, which the government duly did, with the heads of both Treasury and the Reserve Bank leaning on ASIC to stop litigation against Westpac.

The Morrison-Frydenberg government then installed current ASIC Chairman Joe Longo, with a Statement of Expectations that ASIC should “contribute to the Government’s economic goals, including supporting Australia’s economic recovery”.

Not only is this not the job of the regulator, it is the opposite of ASIC’s job—Frydenberg was effectively ordering ASIC to pull its legal punches so banks and other corporations could get on with business.

Despite being in office for more than two years, Treasurer Jim Chalmers has not updated that statement of expectations, and his government—which is under the thumb of his “confidante” Anna Bligh, CEO of the Australian Banking Association—is opposing the Bragg inquiry recommendations.

### **ASIC under siege; staff demoralised**

However, evidence is mounting that, as pressure grows on ASIC, which Joe Longo and upper management are resisting with the government’s support, the rank and file ASIC staff, who know their job is law enforcement, are extremely demoralised and finding ways to speak out.

A recent ASIC staff survey, to which half of ASIC’s 2000 staff responded, was a stunning indictment of ASIC, with staff ranking “organisational-level quality” at an almost unbelievable 2 out of 100—*almost* not believable, but increasingly so.

ABC on 14 August reported revelations from a “veteran ASIC officer” that “Culture is the worst it has ever been, as evidenced by the survey. This is primarily due to senior executive leaders creating a culture of fear where people are too scared to provide feedback as we are called ‘negative’ and ‘annoying’.”

According to ABC, the ASIC veteran revealed staff were taking more sick leave and “crying at our desks. We have all quietly quit. The only solution is to get rid of the current leaders. The place is like a cult!”

The whistleblower who has reached out to Adams and Barwick confirms this report.

ASIC is the cop of the financial system. If PM Albanese, Treasurer Jim Chalmers, and Assistant Treasurer Stephen Jones don’t respond to this crisis by cleaning it out and implementing the Senate recommendations, the only conclusion the Australian people can draw is that the government is complicit in the high-level financial corruption that is allowed to flourish by having a dysfunctional, weak, and ineffective regulator.

Click here to watch “[An ASIC Whistleblower is Screaming for Help!](#)”