

Statement from ABC Director, News, Justin Stevens:

The ABC welcomes today's decision not to convict whistleblower Richard Boyle, although his case again highlights the need for whistleblower protections to be strengthened.

In 2018 Boyle was working as a debt collector for the ATO when he gave information to investigative journalist Adele Ferguson revealing the heavy-handed tactics being used on taxpayers who owed money. The result was "Mongrel Bunch of Bastards", an investigation led by Ferguson conducted jointly for Nine Newspapers and the ABC's *Four Corners*.

Boyle helped expose systemic abuse of powers by the ATO. His disclosures led to multiple inquiries, including by the Inspector-General of Taxation, which resulted in reforms that have benefited thousands of ordinary Australians and small business owners.

Boyle pleaded guilty to disclosing protected information, making a record of protected information, using a listening device to record private conversations and recording another person's tax file number.

We acknowledge the seriousness of these offences. However, Boyle had principled intentions, and his actions were in the public's interest. His allegations were vindicated. He received no personal gain and has paid a high personal price for his whistleblowing.

If it wasn't for whistleblowers such as Richard Boyle coming forward to journalists, there are many important issues affecting people's wellbeing and livelihoods that the public would never know about.