



Whistleblower Program

Executive Summary

Our Commitment

- Organisation Name is committed to ethical behaviour that is aligned with our values and complies with all relevant laws.
- To demonstrate our commitment, in addition to our internal reporting procedures, our Whistleblower Program has been developed to provide guidance for any person associated with Organisation Name to disclose actual or suspected wrongdoing outside existing internal reporting procedures.

Understanding Whistleblowing

- Blowing the whistle is different from making an everyday complaint or reporting a minor incident. Our Whistleblower Program is designed to deal with matters that are of a serious nature that cannot be reasonably handled through existing internal reporting and incident management procedures. Refer to [Checkpoint: Is Whistleblowing the Best Option?](#)
- A whistleblower disclosure is a special kind of disclosure that meets three sets of criteria:
 - the disclosure must be made to an eligible recipient (e.g., a staff member, GM/Board or the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner)
 - the disclosure must be made orally or in writing
 - the disclosure must be about wrongdoing with respect to Organisation Name and must meet some additional criteria. Refer to [What is a Whistleblower Disclosure?](#)
- “Wrongdoing” means misconduct, a reportable incident (as defined under the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS)), any breach of any part of the Aged Care Act 2024 (Cth), or an improper state of affairs with respect to Organisation Name.

How to Blow the Whistle

- We have developed clear and simple procedures to enable whistleblower disclosures to be made. Refer to [How to Make a Whistleblower Disclosure](#).
- A person who makes a whistleblower disclosure is expected to have reasonable grounds to suspect that wrongdoing has occurred.

Responding to a Whistleblower Disclosure

- Members of the Board of Directors and staff are responsible for responding to a whistleblower disclosure. Refer to [Key Roles and Responsibilities](#).
- All potential whistleblower disclosures made under this Whistleblower Program will be properly assessed and, if necessary, appropriately investigated.
- Any person who is mentioned or implicated in a whistleblower disclosure will be supported during the investigation and principles of procedural fairness will be followed.
- A person who makes a whistleblower disclosure is entitled to special “whistleblower protections”. These include confidentiality and protection from liability and victimisation. Refer to [Protection and Support for Whistleblowers](#).
- Organisation Name is committed to providing a supportive environment for any person making a whistleblower disclosure. In particular, a person making a disclosure can expect that:
 - their identity will remain confidential at all times to the extent permitted by law or that is practical in the circumstances
 - they will be protected from detrimental conduct, including retaliation, harassment and victimisation
 - if detrimental conduct occurs it will be treated as serious misconduct.

Accessibility and Communication

- We have designed our Whistleblower Program so that it is transparent and accessible to all members of the Board of Directors, staff, Residents and their families, representatives and/or carers, and other key stakeholders. For more information, refer to [Whistleblower Program Accessibility](#).
- In addition to this Whistleblower Program that is made available to all staff, Organisation Name has developed a [Whistleblower Policy](#) that is available on our public website.

Source of Obligation: Who Must Comply with Whistleblower Laws?

- There are two separate but overlapping sources of whistleblower laws: the Aged Care Act 2024 (Cth) (Aged Care Act) and the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (Corporations Act).

- “Disclosure qualifying for protection” is the term used in the Aged Care Act and it means effectively the same thing as “whistleblower disclosure”. In this Program, when we say “whistleblower disclosure” we also mean “Disclosure qualifying for protection”.
- Every aged care home must comply with the whistleblower requirements set out in the Aged Care Act. Many aged care homes must also comply with some or all of the whistleblower requirements set out in the Corporations Act. The rules for determining if the requirements in the Corporations Act apply are complex, and those requirements can apply even to incorporated associations and not-for-profit charities.
- This Whistleblower Program follows a best practice approach that is designed to meet the requirements set by both the Aged Care Act and the Corporations Act. Refer to Source of Obligation in [Whistleblower Program Overview and Objectives](#).
- Part IVD of the Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cth) provides for whistleblower disclosures concerning an entity’s tax affairs. Generally, the provisions are similar to the whistleblower provisions in the Corporations Act.

This Whistleblower Program describes the protections available to whistleblowers (“whistleblower protections”) and explains how Organisation Name meets its obligations to protect those who make a whistleblower disclosure.

Pages in this Section

- [Whistleblower Program Overview and Objectives](#)
- [Checkpoint: Is Whistleblowing the Best Option?](#)
- [What is a Whistleblower Disclosure?](#)
- [How to Make a Whistleblower Disclosure](#)
- [Key Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Receiving a Disclosure and Conducting an Investigation](#)
- [Management of a Person Named in a Whistleblower Disclosure](#)
- [Protection and Support for Whistleblowers](#)
- [Internal Reporting and Corrective Action](#)
- [Maintenance and Review](#)
- [Whistleblower Program Accessibility](#)
- [Our Whistleblower Policy](#)
- [References and Resources](#)

Whistleblower Program Overview and Objectives

A whistleblower is a person who makes a disclosure outside our existing internal reporting procedures with respect to actual or suspected wrongdoing, including the occurrence of a SIRS reportable incident, serious misconduct such as corruption, fraud or other illegal or undesirable activity, or any breach of the provisions of the Aged Care Act.

We recognise that people who have a work, service or customer relationship with Organisation Name are often best placed to identify illegal or other undesirable activity. Without a whistleblower program, people who see or suspect serious wrongdoing may remain silent for various reasons, including that:

- there is not a clear mechanism for them to speak up
- they are concerned that they may not have sufficient evidence to support their disclosure
- they believe that action will not be taken
- they believe that they may suffer detriment if they report the matter.

Statement of Commitment

Organisation Name is committed to developing a culture of compliance and ethical behaviour and has developed this Program to deter wrongdoing and to encourage reporting of actual or suspected wrongdoing through appropriate channels. We are committed to protecting and respecting whistleblowers. This includes our commitments to protecting whistleblowers' identities to the extent that it is practical and permitted by law, and to prohibiting reprisals, discrimination, harassment or victimisation against any suspected whistleblower, their colleagues or relatives.

Whistleblower Program Objectives

This Whistleblower Program documents the internal governance mechanisms that the Organisation must implement and maintain in order to ensure that whistleblowers are made aware of their rights and feel comfortable that they can make a whistleblower disclosure without fear of recrimination or reprisal.

The objectives of our Whistleblower Program are to:

- encourage and enable individuals to disclose actual or suspected wrongdoing knowing that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated
- give effect to whistleblower laws that prohibit regulated entities from taking adverse action against a whistleblower
- provide clearly articulated guidance on how to disclose actual or suspected wrongdoing

- provide a safe and confidential environment where individuals can raise reasonable concerns without fear of reprisal, even if their suspicions are not confirmed on investigation
- enable the Organisation to deal effectively with whistleblower disclosures in a transparent and timely way that protects the identity of the whistleblower, provides fair treatment to persons named in whistleblower disclosures, facilitates appropriate investigation of whistleblower disclosures and provides for the secure storage of the information provided and gathered
- establish policies and procedures for protecting whistleblowers from retaliation, harassment or victimisation
- provide for the appropriate governance infrastructure to allow the Organisation to effectively implement and maintain our whistleblower procedures.

Our Governance Framework

It is important to recognise that our Whistleblower Program does not stand alone but rather is an integral part of our overall governance framework. The Organisation has established the following internal reporting procedures designed to allow key stakeholders to raise concerns in the normal course of business:

- Incident Management – designed to manage and prevent incidents and meet the requirements of the SIRS
- Internal Grievance Procedures – designed to capture personal work-related grievances of staff
- Feedback and Complaints Handling Procedures – designed to capture feedback and complaints from third parties
- Occupational Health and Safety Notifications – our OHS Program is designed to capture information with respect to workplace hazards and incidents
- Privacy Incidents and Breaches – our Privacy Program is designed to capture information with respect to privacy incidents and concerns.

Whistleblower Policy

To ensure the transparency and accessibility of our Whistleblower Program we have developed a Whistleblower Policy (replicating the key elements of this Program) that is available to all key stakeholders through our public website.

Training of Staff

Organisation Name is committed to training its Board members and staff on the importance of reporting actual and suspected wrongdoing, as well as emphasising the undesirability of false or vexatious reporting.

To this end, the Organisation has developed an internal Whistleblower Learning Course that is provided to all new Board members and staff as part of our induction program and on an ongoing basis as required.

Disciplinary Action

The reporting of actual or suspected wrongdoing and the subsequent management of investigations and whistleblower protections are highly sensitive issues that require strict compliance with the terms of this Program, including that:

- information contained in whistleblower disclosures must not be released without authority to any person who is not involved in the investigation or resolution of the matter, unless required by law, or as outlined in this Program
- the identity, or any information that may lead to the identification of a whistleblower, must not be released to any person, unless required by law or as outlined in this Program
- a person must not knowingly make a false whistleblower disclosure.

A breach of our Whistleblower Program will be regarded as serious misconduct and a disciplinary matter.

Allocation of Resources

To support the effective implementation and maintenance of our Whistleblower Program, the Organisation has allocated the following resources:

- appointment of a senior staff member as our GM/Board
- appointment of senior staff members as our Whistleblower Protection Officers
- appointment of External Whistleblower Service Provider as an External Whistleblower Service

Source of Obligation

There are two separate but overlapping sources of whistleblower laws: the Aged Care Act 2024 (Cth) (Aged Care Act) and the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (Corporations Act).

Every aged care home must comply with the requirements set out in the Aged Care Act. Many aged care homes must also comply with some or all of the whistleblower requirements set out in the Corporations Act. The rules for determining if the requirements in the Corporations Act apply are complex, and those requirements can apply even to incorporated associations and not-for-profit charities.

This Whistleblower Program follows a best practice approach that is designed to meet the requirements set by both the Aged Care Act and the Corporations Act.

Different Rules May Apply if a Whistleblower Disclosure is Made to an External Agency

We take a best practice approach that treats a disclosure as a whistleblower disclosure if it meets the criteria set by either the Aged Care Act or the Corporations Act.

However, other agencies do not take the same approach. External agencies such as the aged care and corporate regulators would apply the legislation that is relevant to them. Whistleblowers who wish to disclose directly to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner (Quality and Safety Commissioner) or the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) should familiarise themselves with the requirements that are relevant to those agencies and, if unsure, seek legal advice.

Obligations Under the Aged Care Act

Organisation Name is required by law to comply with the whistleblower protections requirements set out in Chapter 7, Part 5 of the Aged Care Act.

This Whistleblower Program provides guidance on the types of disclosures that are considered “Disclosures qualifying for protection” under the Aged Care Act, and explains the protections that are provided under that Act. “Disclosure qualifying for protection” is the term used in the Aged Care Act and it means effectively the same thing as “whistleblower disclosure”. In this Program, when we say “whistleblower disclosure” we also mean “Disclosure qualifying for protection”.

Obligations Under the Corporations Act

The obligations in Part 9.4AAA of the Corporations Act do not apply to all organisations. However, the rules for determining if the obligations apply are complex, and those obligations can apply even to incorporated associations and not-for-profit charities. So, unless they have received legal advice to the contrary, aged care homes should assume that they are subject to Part 9.4AAA of the

Corporations Act. In any event, the obligations in the Corporations Act represent good governance and should be followed.

Part 9.4AAA of the Corporations Act also includes an obligation for some companies to have a whistleblower policy that they make available to their officers and employees.

ASIC, which is tasked with regulating compliance with the whistleblower protection provisions in the Corporations Act, has published [Regulatory Guide 270 Whistleblower Policies](#) explaining how ASIC interprets the law and provides practical guidance to assist entities to comply with their legal obligations under the Corporations Act.

ASIC also provides good practice guidance. For example, ASIC recommends that companies do not only make their whistleblower policies available to their officers and employees. If a company publishes its whistleblower policy on its website, the company's external stakeholders will have access to information about how to make a disclosure and how they will be supported and protected. Our best practice approach means that we publish our whistleblower policy on our website.

This Whistleblower Program provides guidance on the types of whistleblower disclosures that are eligible for protection under the Corporations Act as well as the nature of the protections that are provided under the Act.

Part IVD of the Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cth) (Taxation Act) corresponds to Part 9.4AAA of the Corporations Act. It provides protections to eligible whistleblowers for disclosures that relate to an entity's tax affairs. Information about tax whistleblowers is published on the Australian Taxation Office [website](#). References throughout this Program to the Corporations Act whistleblower protections are also a reference to the whistleblower protections under the Taxation Act.

Checkpoint: Is Whistleblowing the Best Option?

Blowing the whistle is different from making an everyday complaint or reporting a minor incident. A whistleblower disclosure is a special form of disclosure that must meet certain criteria, is recognised by the law and entitles the whistleblower to special protections.

Not every disclosure will qualify as a whistleblower disclosure. Also, even if the disclosure does qualify, the discloser may want to report via some other channel. For these reasons, it is important for potential whistleblowers and staff to understand:

- when a disclosure will qualify as a whistleblower disclosure and entitle the person to special protections
- what other reporting options are available.

These are complex issues that must be determined on a case-by-case basis. The information below is only a general guide. For more information, refer to [What is a Whistleblower Disclosure?](#).

Under the Aged Care Act, a Disclosure May Qualify as a Whistleblower Disclosure and Entitle the Person to Protections if:

- the disclosure is made to a relevant person under the Act, such as an aged care worker, a registered provider, a responsible person of the provider, police officer or a regulator;
- the individual making the disclosure has reasonable grounds to suspect that an entity* may have contravened a section of the Aged Care Act; and
- the disclosure meets the eligibility requirements (refer to [What is a Whistleblower Disclosure?](#)).

*An “entity” means an individual, body corporate, body politic, partnership or any other unincorporated association that has a governing body.

Generally, a Disclosure May Not Qualify as a Whistleblower Disclosure if:

- the matter is not serious or does not involve any contravention of the Aged Care Act;
- the person making the disclosure does not have reasonable grounds to suspect that any wrongdoing occurred; or
- the disclosure does not meet the eligibility requirements (refer to [What is a Whistleblower Disclosure?](#)).

Other Reporting Options

Aside from whistleblowing, there are many procedures you can use to make a report. These include:

- Incident Management
- [Internal Grievance Procedures](#)
- [Feedback and Complaints Handling Procedures](#)
- Occupational Health and Safety Notifications
- [Privacy Incidents and Breaches](#)

What is a Whistleblower Disclosure?

Blowing the whistle is different from making an everyday complaint or reporting a minor incident. A whistleblower report (also called a “whistleblower disclosure”) is a special kind of disclosure that meets three sets of criteria:

- the disclosure must be made to an **eligible recipient**
- the disclosure must be made orally or in writing
- the disclosure must be about wrongdoing with respect to Organisation Name and must meet the additional criteria below (**eligible content**).

Note: with regard to these criteria there are some differences between the requirements in the Aged Care Act and the requirements in the Corporations Act. These differences are noted in the relevant sections below.

Eligible Recipient

To qualify as a whistleblower disclosure, a disclosure must be made to one or more of these people or agencies:

- the Quality and Safety Commissioner or a member of their staff
- the approved provider (i.e the Organisation)
- one of the Organisation's responsible persons (including any person responsible for day-to-day operation of the service and any person who holds a nursing qualification and is responsible for nursing services, whether or not such persons are employed by the Organisation)
- an officer or senior manager of the Organisation or a related body corporate
- an aged care worker of the Organisation
- another person authorised by the Organisation to receive reports of wrongdoing (e.g. the Whistleblower Protection Officer)
- an independent aged care advocate
- if the disclosure is reported to another person in accordance with the Aged Care Rules 2025
- a police officer
- an auditor, or a member of an audit team conducting an audit, of the Organisation or a related body corporate (if the disclosure is made under the Corporations Act)
- an actuary of the Organisation or a related body corporate (if the disclosure is made under the Corporations Act)
- the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) (if the disclosure is made under the Corporations Act)

- the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) (if the disclosure is made under the Corporations Act)
- a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or legal representation in relation to whistleblower laws (if the disclosure is made under the Corporations Act).

A disclosure may be made to a journalist or member of Parliament if it qualifies as a “public interest disclosure” or “emergency disclosure”. See Public Interest and Emergency Disclosure below.

A disclosure may be made to the Commissioner of Taxation if it qualifies as a “tax-related disclosure”. See Tax-Related Disclosure below.

Eligible Content

To qualify as a whistleblower disclosure, a disclosure must be about wrongdoing with respect to Organisation Name. The person making the report must have reasonable grounds to suspect that the wrongdoing has occurred.

“Wrongdoing” means:

- a contravention of a provision of the Aged Care Act 2024 (Cth)
- misconduct or an improper state of affairs or circumstances in relation to Organisation Name or a related body corporate.

Examples of Conduct that May Qualify as Wrongdoing

- Reportable incidents (as defined under the SIRS and including elder abuse, assault, theft and neglect).
- Dishonest and/or unethical conduct.
- Fraud, forgery, misappropriation, misuse, misdirection, misapplication, maladministration or waste of funds.
- Gross mismanagement.
- Conflicts of interest that are not declared or managed appropriately, nepotism, favouritism.
- Theft, embezzlement, tax evasion.
- Corruption, taking or offering bribes or secret commissions.
- Dishonesty involving influence such as blackmail.
- Coercion, harassment or discrimination by, or affecting, any of our staff, volunteers or contractors.
- Abuse of public trust.

- Misleading or deceptive conduct of any kind, including conduct or representations that amount to improper or misleading accounting or financial reporting practices by or affecting the Organisation.
- Other criminally prosecutable offences.
- Failure to report, or concealment of, an indictable offence.
- Conduct that poses an unreasonable danger to the health or safety of others.
- Failure to act in accordance with applicable professional and ethical standards.
- A significant threat to the environment.
- A significant breach of the terms of any contract that binds the Organisation.
- Other serious acts such as refusing to carry out lawful and/or reasonable actions under a contract.
- Other serious misconduct that may materially damage the Organisation's reputation, or may otherwise be detrimental to the Organisation.
- Any other act that would otherwise be considered by a reasonable person to be serious improper conduct, or an improper state of affairs or circumstances.

Wrongdoing would also include a deliberate attempt to conceal any of the actions described above.

Examples of Conduct That Should Not Be Reported Under This Whistleblower Program

- Mismanagement of the budget for the end of financial year celebration that does not involve misconduct such as fraud or embezzlement or nepotism.
- Failure by a staff member to meet the personal expectations of a Resident or their family members or carers (where the failure does not also constitute misconduct or a SIRS reportable incident, or involve a contravention of any provisions of the Aged Care Act).
- A personal work-related grievance that has no serious implications for the Organisation (see below).

Grievances and complaints that do not qualify for whistleblower protections should be managed under our incident management and internal reporting procedures.

Personal Work-Related Grievances

A "personal work-related grievance" is a grievance about a matter that relates to the discloser's employment or former employment and has implications for them personally. Examples are:

- an interpersonal conflict between the discloser and another employee
- a decision relating to the engagement, transfer or promotion of the discloser

- a decision to suspend or terminate the discloser's engagement, or otherwise discipline the discloser.

Generally, a disclosure about a personal work-related grievance will not be considered a whistleblower disclosure.

However, where a personal work-related grievance involves a contravention of any of the provisions of the Aged Care Act or has serious implications for the Organisation, it may be considered a whistleblower disclosure. Also, if the disclosure is about the victimisation of a whistleblower it may be considered a whistleblower disclosure.

An employee who has a personal work-related grievance that does not relate to a contravention of any of the provisions of the Aged Care Act or have significant implications for the Organisation should use our [Internal Grievance Procedures](#). They may also wish to seek independent legal advice about their rights and protections under laws such as employment and contract law.

Special Forms of Disclosure: Public Interest Disclosure, Emergency Disclosure and Tax-Related Disclosure

These forms of disclosure are subject to complex laws. Before making such a disclosure, a whistleblower should seek legal advice.

Public Interest and Emergency Disclosure

Usually a whistleblower disclosure would only be protected if it was made to one of the "eligible recipients" listed above. However, mechanisms of Public Interest Disclosure and Emergency Disclosure allow a whistleblower to receive protection for a disclosure made to a member of Parliament (of the Commonwealth or a state or territory), or a journalist working in a professional capacity.

The protections are only available if the whistleblower disclosure has already been made to ASIC, APRA or other prescribed Commonwealth authority, and several other conditions are also met. Refer to the Corporations Act Part 9.4AAA for more information.

Tax-Related Disclosure

Under the Taxation Act, whistleblower protections are available to eligible whistleblowers who make a disclosure to the Commissioner of Taxation or one of the other eligible recipients, provided the disclosure relates to taxation affairs. Refer to Part IVD of the Taxation Act.

How to Make a Whistleblower Disclosure

Determine if Whistleblowing Is the Best Option

Before making a whistleblower disclosure, consider:

- does the disclosure qualify as a whistleblower disclosure? Refer to [What Is a Whistleblower Disclosure?](#).
- is blowing the whistle the best option or is it better to report via another channel? Refer to [Checkpoint: Is Whistleblowing the Best Option?](#).

Submitting a Whistleblower Disclosure

If you wish to obtain additional information before making a whistleblower disclosure, you may contact External Whistleblower Service Provider, a Whistleblower Protection Officer or an independent legal adviser.

You can choose to make an anonymous disclosure. By providing non-identifying contact details, you will assist us to investigate your disclosure by enabling us to contact you if we need further information from you. You will also enable us to advise you of the outcome of the investigation.

If you provide your identity when you make your disclosure, this will help us to oversee your wellbeing.

To provide effective protection of whistleblowers, including allowing continuous discussion with anonymous whistleblowers during the course of the investigation and after the investigation is finalised, Organisation Name has chosen to use the external and independent service provider External Whistleblower Service Provider who are contracted to receive disclosures impartially and confidentially.

External Whistleblower Service Provider is an independent service provider with staff who are specifically trained to deal with the types of sensitive issues that are reported through whistleblower systems.

You may provide a whistleblower disclosure to External Whistleblower Service Provider anonymously or on the basis that your identity is disclosed to External Whistleblower Service Provider only and kept confidential from the Organisation.

You can submit a whistleblower disclosure directly to External Whistleblower Service Provider through any of the following methods:

Online: Service Industry Advisory Group

Phone: 03 9644-1400

Email: info@siag.com.au

Mailing Address: 7/75 Lorimer Street Docklands Vic 3008

External Whistleblower Service Provider is our preferred mechanism for making a whistleblower disclosure as it establishes secure, anonymous if required, two-way communication between the Whistleblower and the Organisation's Whistleblower Protection Officers.

Alternatively, you can contact one of the following Whistleblower Protection Officers:

Anita Shrestha, GM, 97191600

A whistleblower should not use the whistleblower service to report a personal work-related grievance or a complaint about a matter, not amounting to misconduct, that could be effectively managed through our existing internal reporting procedures.

Information to Provide in a Whistleblower Disclosure

For a whistleblower disclosure to be investigated it must contain enough information to form a reasonable basis for investigation. This includes any known details about the events underlying the actual or suspected wrongdoing, including:

- a description of the events or activities, including locations
- the names of the people involved and their roles
- relevant dates and times
- possible witnesses to the events
- supporting documentary evidence of the events.

In your disclosure include any steps that you may have already taken to report the matter elsewhere or to resolve the concern.

You may provide a whistleblower disclosure anonymously; you may also provide non-identifying contact details when you make a disclosure. By providing non-identifying contact details, you will

assist us to investigate your disclosure by enabling us to contact you if we need further information from you. You will also enable us to advise you of the outcome of the investigation.

If you provide your identity when you make your disclosure, this will help us to oversee your wellbeing.

A whistleblower should not use the whistleblower service to report a personal work-related grievance or a complaint about a matter, not amounting to misconduct, that could be effectively managed through our existing internal reporting procedures.

Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

Organisation Name is committed to providing a supportive environment for any person making a whistleblower disclosure and we will always strive to ensure that every whistleblower is protected from detriment as a result of blowing the whistle. This includes protection from dismissal or demotion, and any form of reprisal including retaliation, harassment or victimisation. Refer to [Protection and Support for Whistleblowers](#).

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Organisation Name has identified the following roles and responsibilities relevant to the overall implementation and management of our Whistleblower Program.

It is important that the roles of the Whistleblower Protection Officer and the Whistleblower Investigator are not held by the same person. These roles should operate, and be seen to operate, independently.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- approving the Organisation's Whistleblower Program
- approving the Organisation's Whistleblower Policy that is published on the Organisation's public website
- approving the appointment of the GM/Board
- approving the appointment of the Whistleblower Protection Officers
- approving the appointment of an External Whistleblower Service

- approving the appointment of Whistleblower Investigators, whether they be internal and/or external
- promoting a culture within the Organisation that supports transparency of and accessibility to our Whistleblower Program, as well as its effective operation
- ensuring that the Management/Executive Team has sufficient resources in place and that relevant staff are adequately skilled and qualified to effectively implement and manage our Whistleblower Program
- ensuring that the GM/Board and the Whistleblower Protection Officers have a direct line of communication to the Board
- ensuring that it receives regular reports including on the number, nature and status of any whistleblower disclosures that have been received through our Whistleblower Program.

The GM/Board

Anita Shrestha has been appointed as Whittlesea Lodge's GM/Board.

Our GM/Board has a direct communication line with the GM and the Chair of the Board of Directors to satisfy the objectives of our Whistleblower Program.

Our GM/Board is responsible for:

- effectively implementing our Whistleblower Program
- recommending the appointment of Whistleblower Protection Officers to the Board of Directors for approval
- recommending the appointment of the External Whistleblower Service to the Board for approval
- promoting a culture within the Organisation that supports transparency of and accessibility to our Whistleblower Program, as well as its effective operation
- ensuring that our Whistleblower Program remains easily accessible to all Board members and staff through our Policy Content site
- ensuring that our [Whistleblower Policy](#) is published on the Organisation's public website and is easily accessible to Residents and their families, representatives and/or carers, staff, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and other key stakeholders
- ensuring that each whistleblower disclosure received has been assigned to an appropriate Whistleblower Investigator and is appropriately investigated by the Whistleblower Investigator
- providing regular reports to the Board including on the number, nature and status of any whistleblower disclosures that have been received through our Whistleblower Program

- providing a report, or ensuring relevant Management/Executive Team members provide a report, to the Board on any corrective action taken as a result of a whistleblower disclosure
- the overall maintenance of our Whistleblower Program to ensure its continued currency and practical application
- ensuring that all new directors, employees and contractors receive training.

Whistleblower Protection Officers

Whistleblower Protection Officers are responsible for:

- receiving potential whistleblower disclosures via External Whistleblower Service Provider, our External Whistleblower Service, and, where practical and/or appropriate, maintaining communications with the whistleblower through External Whistleblower Service Provider
- assessing disclosures received to determine whether they qualify as whistleblower disclosures under the Aged Care Act or the Corporations Act and the nature and extent of the investigation that may be required, including timeframes
- providing protection and support to the whistleblower in accordance with our Whistleblower Program (refer to [Protection and Support for Whistleblowers](#))
- respecting and protecting the whistleblower's anonymity (if the whistleblower wants to be anonymous)
- assigning a Whistleblower Investigator to each whistleblower disclosure received
- ensuring that each disclosure received is appropriately investigated by a Whistleblower Investigator
- where appropriate, providing assistance to the Whistleblower Investigator in carrying out the investigation
- storing all information and documents relevant to the investigation securely
- providing regular reports to the GM/Board with respect to whistleblower activities
- ensuring fair treatment of individuals mentioned in a disclosure.

Organisation Name has appointed the following Whistleblower Protection Officers:

Anita Shrestha, GM, 97191600

Refer to [Receiving a Disclosure and Conducting an Investigation](#) for more information on the roles and responsibilities of Whistleblower Protection Officers.

Whistleblower Investigators

Whistleblower Investigators are appointed by the Board and are assigned to whistleblower disclosures by the Whistleblower Protection Officer on a case-by-case basis depending on the particular circumstances of the whistleblower disclosure.

Whistleblower Investigators can be internal or external, however they must have appropriate qualifications and experience to conduct the investigation. Any internal investigator who is appointed must be independent and cannot be the Whistleblower Protection Officer for the matter.

Refer to [Receiving a Disclosure and Conducting an Investigation](#) for more information on the roles and responsibilities of Whistleblower Investigators.

General Staff

Receiving a Whistleblower Disclosure

Any staff member who receives a whistleblower disclosure should promptly inform a Whistleblower Protection Officer of the disclosure. If the discloser wishes to remain anonymous, the staff member must take reasonable steps to protect the discloser's anonymity. This may include withholding the discloser's identity from the Whistleblower Protection Officer and other staff.

Protecting and Supporting Whistleblowers

All staff have a responsibility to contribute to a culture that supports and protects whistleblowers.

All staff have a responsibility to respect the confidentiality of a whistleblower disclosure and not share any information about the disclosure, or the discloser, except as authorised by this Program.

Staff must not engage in any behaviour that causes detriment to a person because that person blew the whistle. Such detrimental behaviours include reprisals, retaliation, harassment and victimisation. Staff who witness such detrimental behaviours must promptly report them to a Whistleblower Protection Officer or other appropriate staff member.

For more information, refer to [Protection and Support for Whistleblowers](#).

Staff Who Blow the Whistle

Staff who are making a whistleblower disclosure should refer to Whistleblower's Responsibilities below.

External Whistleblower Service

Organisation Name has appointed External Whistleblower Service Provider as our External Whistleblower Service to give the opportunity for a whistleblower to make a disclosure completely independently of Whittlesea Lodge's Board and Management/Executive Team.

The role of the External Whistleblower Service is to:

- establish a secure and easily accessible mechanism for individuals to make whistleblower disclosures
- receive whistleblower disclosures and gather the information necessary in order to allow an investigation to commence
- respect and protect whistleblowers' anonymity (if anonymity is desired by the whistleblower)
- report all whistleblower disclosures to our GM/Board and Whistleblower Protection Officers, unless one of these individuals is implicated in the disclosure
- where appropriate, provide assistance to the Whistleblower Investigator in carrying out the investigation
- store all information and documents relevant to the investigation securely
- provide regular reports to the GM/Board with respect to whistleblower disclosures.

Whistleblowers' Responsibilities

Our Whistleblower Program is designed to deal with matters that are of a serious nature that cannot be reasonably handled through existing internal reporting and incident management procedures.

A person making a whistleblower disclosure is expected to:

- have reasonable grounds for suspecting that wrongdoing has occurred, or will occur
- not use the whistleblower service to report matters that they know to be false.

Refer to [Checkpoint: Is Whistleblowing the Best Option?](#) for more information.

The inappropriate use of our whistleblower service will be viewed as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action.

Receiving a Disclosure and Conducting an Investigation

Initial Assessment

When a disclosure of wrongdoing is received, External Whistleblower Service Provider or the Whistleblower Protection Officer will assess the disclosure, as a matter of priority, to determine

whether it qualifies as a whistleblower disclosure and the nature and extent of the investigation that may be required, including timeframes that will allow the investigation to be conducted both thoroughly and with expediency. Refer to [What is a Whistleblower Disclosure?](#).

Assigning a Whistleblower Investigator

The Whistleblower Protection Officer will assign a Whistleblower Investigator to investigate the disclosure. Whistleblower Investigators are assigned by the Whistleblower Protection Officer on a case-by-case basis depending on the particular circumstances of the whistleblower disclosure and, in the interests of both perceived and actual objectivity, consideration will be given to engaging external, independent investigators, particularly where the disclosure is serious.

The Whistleblower Protection Officer will act independently of the Whistleblower Investigator and focus on the protection of the whistleblower during the investigation.

Conducting the Investigation

The assigned Whistleblower Investigator is responsible for conducting investigations with respect to the whistleblower disclosure with the purpose of locating objective evidence relating to the claims made in the whistleblower disclosure.

The Whistleblower Investigator will be provided reasonable access to independent specialist advice if required and all Board members, staff members, volunteers and contractors at Organisation Name will be required to assist the Whistleblower Investigator in carrying out their investigations to the maximum possible extent.

The Whistleblower Investigator will, as far as reasonably possible, follow best practice in investigations ensuring that:

- all reports of suspected wrongdoing that are determined to require investigation are investigated in a way that adheres to the principles of objectivity, procedural fairness, confidentiality and natural justice. This includes providing fair treatment to people who have been mentioned in a report of wrongdoing by informing them of the substance of statements that have been made about them and giving them a reasonable opportunity to respond.
- the system used to manage investigations is flexible. Communication is clear and unambiguous, and a multi-disciplinary approach is advisable where relevant to the issue in question. Successful resolution may be compromised if certain procedural steps are not followed during an investigation.

- investigations are structured to reflect the reality of available resources and so project management techniques may need to be applied over a number of phases, each having clear statements of their objectives in terms of quality, time and cost
- the investigation process is open to internal review, at the discretion of the Board of Directors. An audit trail will be maintained of investigation activities, and critical decisions made during the investigation will be documented.
- any person who may be affected by the investigation is made aware of the allegations and evidence against them and is given the opportunity to respond. Their responses will be documented as part of the investigation's findings.
- investigations are carried out as fast as reasonably practical and with a degree of confidentiality consistent with the seriousness of the allegations raised
- professional management techniques are applied to the investigation.

Review of Investigation Outcome

If a whistleblower is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation, they may escalate the matter in writing to the Board of Directors for a formal review.

Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

Organisation Name is committed to providing a supportive environment for any person making a whistleblower disclosure and we will always strive to ensure that every whistleblower is protected from detriment as a result of blowing the whistle. This includes protection from dismissal or demotion, and any form of reprisal including retaliation, harassment or victimisation.

The Whistleblower Protection Officer will act independently of the Whistleblower Investigator and focus on protecting and supporting the whistleblower during the investigation in accordance with the procedures set out in [Protection and Support for Whistleblowers](#).

If the whistleblower's identity is known or they can be contacted through anonymous channels, the Whistleblower Protection Officer and/or the External Whistleblower Service will:

- always seek to protect a whistleblower from being compromised in the investigation and will seek to exclude the whistleblower from the investigation at the whistleblower's request, or if it is considered in the best interests of the whistleblower
- provide feedback to the whistleblower during the course of the investigation in a way that does not compromise the confidentiality of their identity. The frequency and timeframes for

providing feedback will probably vary according to the nature of the disclosure and the investigations.

- ensure that the whistleblower will be informed of the outcome of an investigation where appropriate. In particular:
 - if the whistleblower's concern was substantiated, the action that has been taken or will be taken to address the issues
 - if the whistleblower's concern was not substantiated, that no further action will be taken unless further information becomes available.

There may be circumstances where it is not appropriate to provide details of the outcome to the whistleblower.

Management of a Person Named in a Whistleblower Disclosure

Organisation Name recognises that individuals named in a whistleblower disclosure must also be supported during the preliminary assessment of the whistleblower disclosure and during any subsequent investigation.

The Whistleblower Investigator and the relevant Whistleblower Protection Officer will provide support in accordance with the procedures set out in Management of a Person Named in a Whistleblower Disclosure.

Management of a Person Named in a Whistleblower Disclosure

Organisation Name recognises that individuals who are named in a whistleblower disclosure must also be supported during the preliminary assessment of the whistleblower disclosure and during any subsequent investigation.

All reports of actual or suspected wrongdoing will be investigated in a way that adheres to the principles of objectivity, procedural fairness, confidentiality and natural justice. This includes ensuring that any persons who are implicated in the whistleblower disclosure:

- are informed of the substance of the allegations against them at an appropriate time, and in an appropriate manner
- are given a reasonable opportunity to respond
- are informed about the substance of any adverse findings prior to the finalisation of the Whistleblower Investigator's report
- have their response to any allegations set out fairly in the Whistleblower Investigator's report.

Procedures Where the Disclosure Does Not Qualify as a Whistleblower Disclosure

Where the disclosure does not qualify as a whistleblower disclosure, it will be at the discretion of the Whistleblower Investigator and the relevant Whistleblower Protection Officer to determine if and when the person implicated should be informed. This will often be determined by Whittlesea Lodge's existing internal reporting procedures and investigation processes. The decision will take into account the desire to maintain the integrity of the person named, the maintenance of workplace harmony, the need to protect the person who made the disclosure, and the risk posed to any ongoing investigation.

Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

Organisation Name is committed to providing a supportive environment for any person making a whistleblower disclosure and we will always strive to ensure that every whistleblower is protected from detriment as a result of blowing the whistle. This includes protection from dismissal or demotion, and any form of reprisal including retaliation, harassment or victimisation.

Further details of support and protections provided are set out below.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Organisation Name will, as far as reasonably possible, provide to whistleblowers the ability to make a report anonymously and will take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk that the whistleblower will be identified as a result of the investigation of their disclosure.

A whistleblower can choose to remain anonymous while making a disclosure, over the course of the investigation and after the investigation is finalised. Where non-identifying contact is maintained between the whistleblower and Whistleblower Protection Officer during a subsequent investigation of the disclosure, a whistleblower may choose not to answer any further questions posed if they are concerned that it will lead to their identity being revealed. However, this may compromise the thoroughness of the investigation.

Procedures Where a Whistleblower Chooses to Disclose Their Identity

If a whistleblower provides their identity or non-identifying contact details to a Whistleblower Protection Officer, this can assist in any subsequent investigation, and also allows the Whistleblower Protection Officer to follow up to seek any clarification and provide feedback.

If a whistleblower's identity is disclosed to a Whistleblower Protection Officer, they will at the first opportunity discuss with the whistleblower the issue of confidentiality and the degree of risk that their identity may become known during an investigation and the risk that they may suffer detriment. In practice, people may be able to guess the whistleblower's identity if they have previously mentioned to other people that they are considering making a disclosure, they are one of a small number of people with access to the relevant information, or the disclosure contains information that they have previously been told privately and in confidence.

If a whistleblower's identity becomes known to a Whistleblower Protection Officer and/or Whistleblower Investigator, they will keep the identity of the whistleblower to themselves, where possible, in accordance with this Program

The whistleblower's identity will be held in the strictest confidence and will only be disclosed if:

- the whistleblower has been consulted and consents in writing to the disclosure; or
- the Organisation is authorised or compelled by law to do so.

Information that is likely to lead to the identification of the whistleblower may be disclosed where it is reasonably necessary for investigating a whistleblower disclosure and all reasonable steps are taken to reduce the risk that the whistleblower will be identified.

"Reasonable steps" that Organisation Name will take to reduce the risk of a whistleblower being identified include, where possible:

- ensuring that any meetings with the whistleblower are held in a private setting
- ensuring that all communications, files and records that relate to the whistleblower are kept securely
- informing any personnel who are aware of the whistleblower's identity that they have an obligation to keep that identity confidential.

One of the primary purposes of retaining the External Whistleblower Service External Whistleblower Service Provider is to allow whistleblowers to disclose their identity to External Whistleblower Service Provider only and to keep their identity confidential from Organisation Name.

If a whistleblower provides their identity or non-identifying contact details to External Whistleblower Service Provider, this can assist in any subsequent investigation, and also allows External Whistleblower Service Provider to follow up to seek any clarification and provide feedback.

A whistleblower can choose to remain anonymous while making a disclosure, over the course of the investigation and after the investigation is finalised. Where non-identifying contact is maintained between the whistleblower and External Whistleblower Service Provider during a subsequent investigation of the disclosure, a whistleblower may choose not to answer any further questions posed if they are concerned it will lead to their identity being revealed. However, this may compromise the thoroughness of the investigation.

If a whistleblower's identity is disclosed to External Whistleblower Service Provider, they will at the first opportunity discuss with the whistleblower the issue of confidentiality and the degree of risk that their identity may become known during an investigation and the risk that they may suffer detriment. In practice, people may be able to guess the whistleblower's identity if they have previously mentioned to other people that they are considering making a disclosure, they are one of a small number of people with access to the information, or the disclosure contains information they have previously been told privately and in confidence.

Reporting A Breach of Confidentiality

A whistleblower may complain to their Whistleblower Protection Officer about a breach of confidentiality. A whistleblower who has made a disclosure under the Corporations Act may also complain to ASIC. For more information, see [ASIC's Information Sheet 239, How ASIC handles whistleblower reports](#).

Supportive Environment

Organisation Name is committed to providing a supportive environment for any person making a whistleblower disclosure. In particular, a whistleblower can expect that:

- any request for anonymity is respected and if their identity is revealed it will, as far as possible, remain confidential and only be disclosed on an "as needed basis", or as required by law
- the details of their whistleblower disclosure will remain confidential to the extent that is practical in the circumstances and will only be released on an "as needed basis", or as required by law
- they will be protected from retaliation, harassment or victimisation
- should retaliation, harassment or victimisation occur, it will be treated as serious misconduct and the perpetrator of the retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Where a whistleblower has provided their identity, it is the role of the Whistleblower Protection Officer who received the report to ensure that the whistleblower is supported throughout the

investigation process. A whistleblower who has disclosed their identity can expect that the Whistleblower Protection Officer will:

- provide information about professional support services, such as confidential professional counselling services, that may be available to them
- discuss with them strategies for minimising and managing stress and other challenges resulting from their disclosure and/or its investigation
- discuss with them actions that may be necessary to protect them from the risk of their identity becoming known or from the risk of detriment, such as changing their work location or providing leave of absence.

Organisation Name acknowledges that there may be a substantial personal cost to a person who makes a whistleblower disclosure.

Protection from Retaliation, Harassment or Victimisation

It is against the law to cause detriment to a person, or threaten to cause detriment to a person, because they made a whistleblower disclosure.

“Detriment” includes:

- dismissal of an employee
- injury of an employee in their employment
- alteration of an employee’s position or duties to their disadvantage
- discrimination between an employee and other employees of the same employer
- harassment or intimidation of a person
- harm or injury to a person, including psychological harm
- damage to a person’s property
- damage to a person’s reputation
- damage to a person’s business or financial position
- any other damage to a person.

A threat to cause detriment includes threats that are express or implied, conditional or unconditional. It is not necessary that the person who has been threatened actually fears that the threat will be carried out.

Detrimental conduct does not include taking reasonable administrative action to protect a whistleblower from detriment. For example, where a whistleblower’s disclosure has been about their

immediate work area, we may move them to another work area to protect them from detriment. In these circumstances, the Whistleblower Protection Officer will explain the reasons for taking this action.

Our Policy

We do not tolerate reprisals or adverse action being taken against whistleblowers for reporting actual or suspected wrongdoing, including when suspicions are not substantiated following a thorough investigation.

We take steps to promote awareness to all staff of their responsibilities to treat their colleagues and stakeholders with respect and never to engage in behaviour that is discriminatory or that characterises bullying or harassment. These responsibilities encompass acknowledging that reporting actual or suspected wrongdoing is integral to an ethical culture and nobody who reports actual or reasonably suspected wrongdoing should experience detriment as a result.

Steps we take to promote awareness and protect whistleblowers include, where possible:

- sharing this Program with staff and other stakeholders
- staff training
- facilitating a clear, easy process for whistleblowers to make reports and to do so anonymously if they wish
- where a whistleblower's identity is known, assigning a Whistleblower Protection Officer to the case to monitor the workplace for signs of retaliation, harassment or victimisation and intervene when necessary
- facilitating a clear, easy process for reporting retaliation, harassment or victimisation
- taking disciplinary action against anyone who retaliates against, harasses or victimises a whistleblower.

Reporting Retaliation, Harassment or Victimisation

A whistleblower who experiences actual or threats of retaliation, harassment or victimisation should immediately report it to their Whistleblower Protection Officer. Any such conduct will be treated as serious misconduct and the perpetrator of the retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Whistleblowers can also report externally to police (if the disclosure is made under the Aged Care Act) or a lawyer (if the disclosure is made under the Corporations Act). A whistleblower whose disclosure relates to a Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) reportable incident may also report to the Quality and Safety Commissioner. A person whose disclosure qualifies as a whistleblower

disclosure under the Corporations Act may also contact the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). For more information, refer to ASIC's [Information Sheet 239, How ASIC handles whistleblower reports](#).

Protection from Liability and Internal Disciplinary Action

The Aged Care Act and Corporations Act both say that a whistleblower is not subject to liability for making their disclosure. This means the whistleblower cannot be sued, criminally prosecuted or subjected to internal disciplinary action because they blew the whistle.

Note that the whistleblower is not liable *for making the disclosure*, but they may be held liable for other acts that came to light because of the disclosure. For instance, if the whistleblower's disclosure leads to an investigation and the investigation reveals that the whistleblower committed a crime, they could be held liable for that crime. Also, if the whistleblower's disclosure is false, they could be held criminally liable for making a false disclosure.

If a disclosure under the Corporations Act is made to ASIC, APRA or a prescribed Commonwealth authority, the information in the disclosure cannot be used against the whistleblower in a criminal trial, unless the whistleblower is being prosecuted for making a false disclosure.

Our Policy: No Liability for Whistleblower Disclosures

In accordance with the law, we will not take legal or disciplinary action against a person for making a whistleblower disclosure.

Note: where a person knowingly makes a false disclosure, this will not qualify as a whistleblower disclosure. Accordingly, the person will not be entitled to protections, and we may take disciplinary action against them.

Our Policy: Wrongdoing Committed by A Whistleblower

We recognise that individuals may be reluctant to make reports with regard to serious misconduct as they may fear reprisals such as retaliation, harassment or victimisation.

To promote a culture that encourages whistleblower disclosures it is our policy that where a whistleblower has been involved in the wrongdoing but has not engaged in serious misconduct or illegal activity, the whistleblower may not, at the discretion of the Board, be subject to internal disciplinary proceedings that may have otherwise arisen from the matters that are the subject of the whistleblower disclosure.

Consequences of a Breach of Whistleblower Protections

A breach of whistleblower protections can harm the health and wellbeing of the whistleblower and other staff and damage the reputation of the organisation.

Breach of the protections also has legal consequences, which may include the imposition of a civil penalty or, where a whistleblower suffers damage as a result of retaliation, harassment or victimisation, payment of compensation.

Organisation Name could also be subject to a range of orders, including orders to:

- stop conduct that is causing detriment to the whistleblower
- apologise to the whistleblower
- reinstate a whistleblower who is an employee that has been dismissed
- pay exemplary damages (these are damages assessed in order to punish the defendant for outrageous conduct, reform the defendant and deter the defendant and others from engaging in similar conduct in the future).

Internal Reporting and Corrective Action

Whistleblower Disclosure Reporting

External Whistleblower Service Provider Reporting

External Whistleblower Service Provider will report to the GM/Board and/or Whistleblower Protection Officers relevant details of each whistleblower disclosure as soon as it is received by External Whistleblower Service Provider.

If the whistleblower disclosure relates to a Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) reportable incident, the Organisation will immediately follow the procedures set out in our Incident Management procedures.

In addition, External Whistleblower Service Provider will provide quarterly reports to the GM/Board summarising the number, nature and status of whistleblower disclosures (including non-qualifying disclosures) that have been received or remain open during the period. The report should specify which, if any, disclosures relate to SIRS reportable incidents.

Internal Reporting of Whistleblower Disclosures

Each individual whistleblower disclosure will be dealt with on its merits by the GM/Board and/or a Whistleblower Protection Officer.

Because of the potential for investigations to damage the career prospects and reputation of people who are subject to allegations of wrongdoing, reports from the GM/Board and/or Whistleblower Protection Officer about whistleblower disclosures which have been received and reports from the Whistleblower Investigator on the progress of the investigation will only be made to the Director of Care and to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

If the Director of Care and the Chair of the Board of Directors are both compromised the GM/Board and/or the Whistleblower Protection Officer must report the disclosure to the most senior member of the Board and/or senior manager within the Organisation that they believe is not compromised by the subject matter of the whistleblower's disclosure.

Information with respect to a whistleblower investigation must only ever been provided on a 'need to know' basis.

It is the responsibility of the Director of Care and the Chair of the Board, or other delegated responsible person, to consider the nature, the seriousness and the complexity of each whistleblower disclosure and determine how and when details of the disclosure will be reported to the Board of Directors.

If the whistleblower disclosure relates to a SIRS reportable incident, the Organisation will immediately follow the procedures set out in our Incident Management procedures.

Board of Directors Reporting

As noted above, whistleblower disclosures will be reported to the Board on an 'as needed basis'.

Additionally, the GM/Board will provide quarterly reports to the Board summarising the number, nature and status of whistleblower disclosures (including non-qualifying disclosures) that have been received or remain open during the period. The report should specify which, if any, disclosures relate to SIRS reportable incidents.

The GM/Board will also report or ensure relevant Management/Executive Team provide a report to the Board on any corrective action taken, including progress updates, as a result of whistleblower disclosures, including any recommendations made by a Whistleblower Investigator.

On the establishment and approval of this Whistleblower Program, “Whistleblower Disclosures” shall be a standing item on the Board Meeting Agenda with a positive note being made if no whistleblower disclosures have been received during a reporting period.

Corrective Action

The whistleblower disclosure reporting processes described above are designed to ensure that all verifiable corruption and compliance failures are reported appropriately, and the Board is informed of all corrective actions and their progress.

Regular analysis of all whistleblower disclosures will be undertaken by the GM/Board. Where this analysis identifies the need for a review of internal processes and potential corrective action this should be reported to our GM for further analysis to be undertaken to identify whether or not further corrective action should be taken to prevent such an incident occurring in the future.

Maintenance and Review

The GM/Board is responsible for ensuring that our Whistleblower Program and Whistleblower Policy is reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure its currency and effectiveness.

The key objective of our maintenance and review process is to ensure that:

- the structure of this Program and the Policy continues to meet our legal and regulatory obligations, as well as industry best practice
- all Board members and staff are trained as to the key elements of this Program
- the Program remains highly visible with directions on how to make a whistleblower disclosure prominently displayed at all times
- that there has been appropriate reporting with respect to the operation of our Whistleblower Program.

Whistleblower Program Accessibility

It is important that we make information about our Whistleblower Program, and how to access it, available to all Board members, staff, Residents and their families, representatives and/or carers, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and other key stakeholders.

Our commitment to ensuring the highest standards of ethical conduct within the Organisation includes creating and maintaining a 'speak-up culture', where all staff are encouraged to identify

issues in the workplace and participate in resolving them. This includes 'speaking up' through our existing internal reporting procedures, including our Incident Management Program, Internal Grievance Policy and Feedback Policy and Complaints Handling Program.

Accessibility for Board Members and Staff

We take the following steps to make our Whistleblower Program accessible to all Board members and staff:

- our Whistleblower Program is easily accessible through our Policy Content site
- all Board members and staff are required to complete our online Whistleblower Training Course
- a 'Blow the Whistle' icon appears prominently on our Policy Content site that provides a link that details how to submit a whistleblower disclosure
- we have developed a Whistleblower Policy, available on our public website, which replicates the key elements of our Whistleblower Program
- our Whistleblower Program allows Board members and staff to make reports through multiple mediums including online reports, telephone, email and mail
- regular reminders with respect to the availability of our Whistleblower Program are forwarded in staff and Board communications.

Accessibility for Residents and their Representatives and/or Carers, Volunteers and Contractors

We take the following steps to make our Whistleblower Program accessible to Residents and their representatives and/or carers, volunteers and contractors:

- our [Whistleblower Policy](#), is available on our public website
- regular reminders with respect to the purpose of our Incident Management procedures and [Feedback Policy and Complaints Handling Program](#), as well as our Whistleblower Policy, are contained in Policy Connect for staff and in newsletter for residents and relatives, also on our website..

Accessibility for Suppliers and Other Key Stakeholders

We take the following steps to make our Whistleblower Program accessible to suppliers and other key stakeholders:

- our [Whistleblower Policy](#) is available on our public website

- regular reminders with respect to our Incident Management Program and Feedback Policy and Complaints Policy, as well as our Whistleblower Policy, are forwarded to key suppliers.

Our Whistleblower Policy

To ensure transparency of and accessibility to our Whistleblower Program we have developed a Whistleblower Policy (replicating the key elements of this Program) that is available to all key stakeholders through our public website.

A copy of our Whistleblower Policy is available on our website.

References and Resources

Legislation

- Aged Care Act 2024 (Cth)
- Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)
- Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cth)

General

- ASIC: [How ASIC handles whistleblower reports](#)
- ASIC: [Regulatory Guide 270 Whistleblower Policies](#)
- Australian Taxation Office: [Tax whistleblowers](#)
- Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety: [Final Report – Volume 3B: The new system](#)