

Whistleblower Policy

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Policy Statement

The Australian College of Optometry (ACO) promotes and supports a culture of good governance and values a workplace with open communication. To this end, the ACO encourages the reporting of “disclosable conduct” and will protect anyone covered by this policy from detrimental action taken against them because of an actual, perceived or potential disclosure.

Objectives of this policy

This policy aims to:

- ensure that we observe the highest standards of fair dealing, honesty and integrity in our activities
- encourage anyone with reasonable grounds to suspect that disclosable conduct covered by this policy has occurred, or could occur, to make a report
- ensure that anyone who, in good faith, discloses information covered by this policy is not subjected to any detrimental action (e.g. victimisation, harassment or discrimination) because of their disclosure.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- ACO’s Board of Directors
- ACO’s Council and Committee members
- ACO’s staff members (including full-time, part-time, casual, fixed-term, permanent staff)
- anyone who supplies, or has supplied, or is or was a potential supplier of services or goods to ACO (whether paid or unpaid)

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- an employee of a person or organisation that supplies, or has supplied, or is or was a potential supplier of services or goods to ACO (whether paid or unpaid)
- a person who is an associate of ACO.

In addition, it may apply to:

- relatives and dependants of any person in the above list
- relatives and dependants of the spouse of any person in the above list.

Definitions

Refer to [Appendix A](#).

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Policy in Practice

1. Different types of disclosures

This policy addresses three types of disclosure, covered by different state and federal laws, as shown in the following table.

Type of Disclosure	Based on
Corporations Law Disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)The Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019 (Cth)
Victorian Public Interest Disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 (Vic) (in effect as of 1 January 2020)
Federal Public Interest Disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (Cth)

Because each type of disclosure has different definitions, reporting options and requirements, this policy contains:

- policy statements that relate to all types of disclosure
- policy statements that relate specifically to Corporations Law Disclosures
- policy statements that relate specifically to Victorian Public Interest Disclosures
- policy statements that relate specifically to Federal Public Interest Disclosures
- a Quick Reference Guide summarising the different types of disclosures (see [Appendix B: Quick Reference Guide](#)).

Before taking any action related to disclosures, you must identify the relevant disclosure type, so that you follow the relevant policy statements. To identify the relevant disclosure type, refer to the policy statement titled '**Disclosable conduct**' of each section.

2. Whistleblower officers at ACO

The ACO has a Whistleblower Protection Officer (WPO) and at least one Whistleblower Investigation Officer (WIO).

Whistleblower Protection Officer (WPO)

The ACO's Whistleblower Protection Officer must:

- ensure that all reported disclosures are taken seriously and investigated
- safeguard the interests of whistleblowers, which includes:
 - maintaining their privacy and confidentiality

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- keeping them informed of developments
- monitoring the effectiveness of protection offered under this policy
- ensure the integrity of the reporting process.

The WPO has authority to:

- receive and review reports relating to the following types of disclosures:
 - Corporations Law Disclosures
 - Federal Public Interest Disclosures
- determine the appropriate course of action (in consultation with other ACO representatives, if relevant)
- coordinate any necessary action relating to a report, which may include:
 - referring the matter to a Whistleblower Investigations Officer (WIO) for investigation or
 - determining that the report is baseless or unfounded and therefore no formal investigation is warranted and informing the whistleblower of this decision.

Current WPO

ACO's WPO is the Chief Executive Officer.

Whistleblower Investigations Officers (WIO)

A WIO may be an employee of ACO or an external person. A WIO can be designated to this role or appointed by the CEO for the duration of an individual investigation.

Role

WIOs undertake investigations triggered by disclosures.

Current WIOs

The ACO currently has three WIOs, namely:

- Executive General Manager Finance & Corporate Services;
- Human Resources Specialist (outsourced);
- Business Improvement & Risk Manager .

3. Notifying the Whistleblower Protection Officer (WPO) of disclosable conduct

Any employee who becomes aware of disclosable conduct or receives a verbal or written report of disclosable conduct must promptly inform the WPO.

If the disclosure is about the conduct of the WPO, a report can be made to:

- ACO Council via the President, Vice President or Honorary Treasurer; or
- a member of the Senior Executive Team.

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4. Disclosures must be based on reasonable grounds

Because a report of disclosable conduct can result in serious consequences, such as damage to the reputation and career prospects of alleged perpetrator, a person should only report under this policy if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that disclosable conduct has occurred.

False reports may result in disciplinary action

Knowingly making a false report, or knowingly making a report without reasonable grounds, is a serious breach of this policy.

Anyone making such a report may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of their employment, appointment, or contractual relationship.

5. Anonymity and confidentiality

Whistleblowers are entitled to make anonymous reports, although need to be aware that this may affect the investigation.

A whistleblower who makes a report that is not anonymous, can request that:

- their identity be kept confidential
- the details of the disclosure are 'de-identified' so that other people cannot identify the whistleblower.

The WPO, any WIO and any Eligible Recipient who receives a disclosure must not provide the whistleblower's identity (including when sending the report to or discussing it with the WPO or WIO) unless:

- the whistleblower has given express consent
- revealing the whistleblower's identity is required or authorised by law (including that it can be disclosed to ASIC and/or the Australian Federal Police).

Confidentiality during an investigation

Although all reports made under this policy will be confidential, it may be necessary during an internal investigation to disclose the details of the allegations to others (e.g. key personnel at ACO, external parties involved in the investigation, law enforcement agencies, and others as otherwise required or authorised by law).

When this is required, the ACO will take all reasonable steps to keep the whistleblower unidentified.

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Corporations Law Disclosures

This section applies only to Corporations Law Disclosures under the Corporations Act (Cth) and the Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019 (Cth).

6. Disclosable conduct (Corporations Law Disclosures)

Disclosable conduct (Corporations Law Disclosures) is any matter or information that the whistleblower has reasonable grounds to suspect:

- constitutes misconduct, or an improper state of affairs or circumstances, in relation to ACO, or
- indicates that ACO, or any of its officers or employees, has engaged in conduct that:
 - constitutes an offence against:
 - the Corporations Act;
 - the ASIC Act
 - additional legislation described in the Corporations Act; and
 - regulations made under those laws
 - constitutes an offence against any other Commonwealth law that is punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months or more
 - is otherwise prescribed by regulation
 - represents a danger to the public or the financial system
- any conduct that, while not necessarily in contravention of these particular laws, may still be serious enough to warrant disclosure (e.g. conduct that, although not unlawful, may indicate a 'systemic issue').

Examples of disclosable conduct (Corporations Law Disclosures)

- a breach of any legislation relating to ACO's operations or activities
- unethical behaviour, including any breach of any of ACO's policies
- dishonest behaviour or fraudulent activity
- unlawful, corrupt or irregular practices
- unlawful, corrupt or irregular use of company funds
- illegal activities (including theft, dealing in or use of illicit drugs, violence or threatened violence and criminal damage against property)
- improper or misleading accounting or financial reporting practices
- behaviour that is oppressive, discriminatory or grossly negligent
- an unsafe work-practice or behaviour that poses a serious risk to the health and safety of anyone at the workplace
- behaviour that represents a danger to the public
- behaviour that represents a danger to the financial system
- systemic failures at ACO (e.g. in clinical governance)

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- any other conduct that may cause loss to ACO or be otherwise detrimental to ACO's interests.

What is not disclosable conduct (Corporations Law Disclosures)

Disclosable conduct under the Corporations Law does **not** include conduct that relates to:

- industrial relations
- trivial or vexatious claims
- personal work-related grievances of the whistleblower, such as:
 - interpersonal conflicts at work
 - decisions relating to the engagement, transfer or promotion of the Whistleblower, including terms and conditions of their employment, which are not related to a disclosure
 - decisions to discipline the Whistleblower, including to suspend or terminate their employment which are not related to a disclosure.

Other policies address these types of conduct.

7. Reporting disclosable conduct (Corporations Law Disclosures)

Written or verbal reporting

A report can be made in writing or verbally.

What the report must contain

Whether verbal or written, the report must include a description of the grounds for the report, with as much detail as possible.

If the report is made in writing, supporting documentation should be attached, where possible.

8. Who to report to (Corporations Law Disclosures)

A whistleblower can make an internal or an external report, or both.

Internal Reporting

If the whistleblower wishes to report the matter internally, they can report to one or more of the following:

- our Whistleblower Protection Officer
- ACO Council via the President, Vice President or Honorary Treasurer
- a member of the Senior Executive Team.
- ACO's auditor
- a member of an audit team conducting an audit of ACO.

External Reporting

If the whistleblower wishes to report the matter externally, they can report to any of the following:

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- ASIC (Australian Securities and Investments Commission)
- any State or Commonwealth authority prescribed by the Corporations Law in relation to ACO.

The investigation will then be handled by that entity according to their processes and procedures.

9. Preliminary review (Corporations Law Disclosures)

The WIO can promptly commence a formal investigation of the allegations made in the report but may elect to instead carry out a preliminary review of the allegations.

The WIO acts independently of the WPO and the responsibilities of these roles do not reside with one person.

The aim of preliminary review is to gather enough information for the WIO to decide if the allegations need to be formally investigated. The preliminary review can be conducted in collaboration with the CEO and other relevant officers or employees of ACO.

If the result of the preliminary review is that the report is baseless or unfounded and that no formal investigation is needed, the WIO must inform the whistleblower of this decision.

10. Investigating a report of disclosable conduct (Corporations Law Disclosures)

If an investigation is needed (as determined by the WPO or a preliminary review), a WIO will carry out (or supervise) an investigation.

The WIO may use one or both of the following:

- an external investigator who may conduct the investigation independently or in conjunction with the WIO
- external experts who may help with the investigation.

Ensuring fair and independent investigations

The ACO and the WIO will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the investigation is conducted fairly, independently, without bias, promptly, and according to the principles of natural justice.

All reasonable efforts will be made to preserve the confidentiality of the investigation and the identity of the parties involved, including the whistleblower and the alleged perpetrator/s.

Whistleblower's obligations

To avoid jeopardizing an investigation, a whistleblower must not reveal that they have made a report, except as required under law.

Protection of the alleged perpetrator

The ACO recognises that the alleged perpetrator/s must also be supported during the investigation. Therefore, ACO and the WIO will take all reasonable steps to treat the alleged perpetrator fairly. This includes:

- informing them of the substance of the allegation

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- inviting them to submit a response to the claim as part of the investigation
- informing them of any adverse finding that affects them.

11. Investigation's report (Corporations Law Disclosures)

At the end of the investigation, the WIO must provide the CEO (and the WPO if the WPO is not the CEO), with a written report containing the investigation's findings and a summary of the evidence.

The finding must be one of the following:

- The allegation is fully substantiated
- The allegation is partially substantiated
- The allegation is not able to be substantiated
- The allegation is disproven.

The WPO or WIO must inform the whistleblower of the findings but is not obliged to give the whistleblower a copy of the report.

Any findings that relate to criminal activity must be reported to the police and/or relevant regulators.

12. Responding to the findings (Corporations Law Disclosures)

The CEO (or their delegate) will take appropriate action based on the report. For example, the CEO may do one or more of the following:

- request further investigation
- recommend disciplinary action
- refer the matter to ACO's board of directors
- notify regulatory bodies
- notify legal authorities.

13. Filing records of an investigation (Corporations Law Disclosures)

All records created from an investigation must be retained in secure files that the WPO controls and manages. Any release of information to someone not involved in the investigation (other than on a need-to-know basis, or as required or allowed by law) is a breach of this policy that may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment or appointment.

14. Detrimental treatment of whistleblowers (Corporations Law Disclosures)

ACO is committed to protecting and respecting the rights of a whistleblower, and therefore does not tolerate any victimisation, detrimental treatment or retaliatory action against:

- a whistleblower
- a person who someone else believes has been or may in the future be a whistleblower
- the colleagues, associates, or family members of either of the above.

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Examples of detrimental treatment (Corporations Law Disclosures)

Examples of detrimental treatment include:

- dismissal from ACO
- injury of an employee in his or her employment
- alteration of an employee's position or duties to his or her disadvantage
- discrimination perpetrated by other employees
- harassment or intimidation
- harm or injury to a person, including psychological harm
- damage to their property
- damage to their reputation
- damage to their business or financial position
- any other damage.

Any such detrimental treatment will be treated as serious misconduct and will result in disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment or services.

Whistleblowers who are subjected to detrimental treatment (Corporations Law Disclosures)

Any person who feels they have been subjected to any behaviour that violates this policy should immediately report such behaviour to their manager or the WPO.

Compensation

A whistleblower who is subjected to detrimental treatment may be entitled to compensation for resulting loss, damage or injury.

Exceptions from protection (Corporations Law Disclosures)

An employee may not be eligible for protection under this policy if they have:

- engaged in disclosable conduct
- knowingly provided false or misleading information relating to this policy (e.g. made a false report, provided false information during an investigation).

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Victorian Public Interest Disclosures

This section applies only to Victorian Public Interest Disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (Vic).

15. Disclosable conduct (Victorian Public Interest Disclosures)

Disclosable conduct (Victorian Public Interest Disclosures) is conduct undertaken by ACO or an officer of ACO **relating to, or in the performance of a public function on behalf of the state**, that the Discloser reasonably believes shows or tends to show:

- corrupt conduct (within the meaning given by section 4 of the *Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011*, being an indictable offence or a common law offence of attempting to obstruct justice or pervert the course of justice, i.e. conduct that adversely affects the honest performance of official public functions);
- conduct of any person that:
 - adversely affects the honest performance by a public officer or public body of their functions as a public officer or public body; or
 - is intended to adversely affect the effective performance or exercise by a public officer or public body of the functions or powers of the public officer or public body and result in the person, or an associate of the person, obtaining—
 - a licence, permit, approval, authority or other entitlement;
 - an appointment to a statutory office or as a Board member of a public body;
 - a financial benefit or real or personal property; or
 - any other direct or indirect monetary or proprietary gain,that the person would otherwise not have obtained, or
 - conduct that would amount to a conspiracy or attempt to conspire.
- any matter/information that the Discloser has reasonable grounds to suspect indicates that ACO, or any of its officers or employees, has engaged in conduct that constitutes:
 - a criminal offence;
 - serious professional misconduct;
 - dishonest performance of public functions;
 - an intentional or reckless breach of public trust;
 - an intentional or reckless misuse of information or material acquired in the course of the performance of the functions of the public officer or public body;
 - a substantial mismanagement of public resources;
 - a substantial risk to health or safety of one or more persons; or
 - a substantial risk to the environment.

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16. Reporting disclosable conduct (Victorian Public Interest Disclosures)

The ACO recommends that a potential whistleblower should seek legal advice about whether the matter falls under the Victorian Public Interest Disclosure Act.

Who to report to?

If the matter relates conduct outlined above that is undertaken by ACO or an officer of ACO performing a public function on behalf of the State, make your report IBAC.

17. Investigations of disclosable conduct (Victorian Public Interest Disclosures)

IBAC will investigate the allegation in accordance with the Victorian Public Interest Disclosure Act and IBAC's internal processes and guidelines. IBAC will notify the whistleblower at each step of the investigation.

ACO will not be contacted by IBAC about the investigation, unless it is to ensure that ACO provides proper welfare and support to the Discloser. Disclosers should not contact ACO about a disclosure that is made directly to IBAC.

18. ACO's protection of whistleblower and alleged perpetrator (Victorian Public Interest Disclosures)

If the ACO is notified about an investigation, the WPO may appoint a welfare agent to the whistleblower and/or the alleged perpetrator to ensure each person's protection during the investigation.

19. Protection of whistleblowers under the Victorian Public Interest Disclosure Act

Under the Victorian Public Interest Disclosure Act, whistleblowers will:

- have their identity protected
- not be subject to any civil, criminal or administrative liability for making a disclosure, including under section 95 of the Constitution Act 1975
- not breach an obligation by way of oath or affirmation or rule of law or practice or under an agreement requiring them to maintain confidentiality
- have no contractual or other remedy enforced or sanction imposed because of the disclosure
- have absolute privilege for the purposes of defamation proceedings related to the disclosure
- not have a contract terminated on the basis of their disclosure.

ACO will use best endeavours to assist IBAC in these protections, if they are informed of the Disclosure.

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20. Detrimental treatment of whistleblowers (Victorian Public Interest Disclosures)

Under the Victorian Public Interest Disclosure Act, it is an offence to cause or undertake detrimental treatment in reprisal for a disclosure, and ACO does not tolerate such treatment.

Examples of detrimental treatment (Victorian Public Interest Disclosures)

Detrimental treatment includes:

- any action causing injury, loss or damage to the whistleblower
- intimidation or harassment of the whistleblower
- discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to the whistleblower's employment, career, profession, trade or business, including disciplinary action (apart from reasonable management action allowed under employment law).

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Federal Public Interest Disclosures

This section applies only to Federal Public Interest Disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (Cth).

21. Disclosable conduct (Federal Public Interest Disclosures)

Disclosable conduct (Federal Public Interest Disclosure) is conduct **relating to the provision of goods or services to or on behalf of the Commonwealth** that:

- contravenes a law
- is corrupt
- abuses public trust or an official's position
- prevents justice
- is a waste of federal public funds
- endangers lives or health and safety
- could give rise to disciplinary action against a public official.

22. Eligibility to make a Federal Public Interest Disclosure

A person can make a Federal Public Interest Disclosure if they are, or were a public official within the meaning of the Federal Public Interest Disclosure Act, which includes as:

- an officer of ACO as defined by the Corporations Law (including a director or secretary of ACO)
- an employee of ACO
- an individual who supplies services or goods to ACO (whether paid or unpaid)
- an employee of a person that supplies services or goods to ACO (whether paid or unpaid)

23. Reporting disclosable conduct (Federal Public Interest Disclosures)

ACO recommends that a potential whistleblower seeks legal advice about whether the matter relates to Federal Public Interest Disclosures, and who to report the conduct to.

You can make an internal or external report of disclosable conduct.

Internal Reporting

If you wish to report internally, make your report to any of the following:

- ACO's Whistleblower Protection Officer
- your supervisor
- any other person appointed by ACO for this purpose.

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External reporting

External reports must be made with due consideration of the following requirements:

- The disclosure must not be contrary to the public interest
- For security reasons, the disclosure must not reveal more information than is reasonably necessary to identify the disclosable conduct
- The disclosure must have been previously made as an internal report, and the whistleblower believes that the investigation was inadequate or not performed within the legal time limit.

External disclosures are made to:

- the Ombudsman, if the whistleblower believes that it would be appropriate for the disclosure to be investigated by the Ombudsman
See <https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/Disclosures/Making-a-disclosure>
- an investigative agency that has the power to investigate the disclosure (e.g. relevant Commonwealth Department, Federal Police or other agency as specified in the Public Interest Disclosure Act)
- any person other than a foreign public official.

Additional types of reporting of Federal Public Interest disclosures

Disclosure (Federal Public Interest)	Reported to
Emergency Disclosure. The whistleblower reasonably believes there is a substantial and imminent danger to the health and safety of at least one person, or the environment	Any person other than a foreign public official.
Legal Practitioner Disclosure The whistleblower is seeking legal advice about reporting Disclosable Conduct (Public Interest).	A legal practitioner.

24. Internal investigation of disclosable conduct (Federal Public Interest Disclosures)

The WPO will assess the report, and obtain any further information, to determine whether the conduct is Disclosable Conduct (Federal Public Interest) according to legislation.

If the WPO determines that Disclosable Conduct (Federal Public Interest) has occurred, ACO will notify an appropriate agency, which may include the relevant Commonwealth Department, Federal Police or other agency in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

The whistleblower will be kept informed at every stage of this process.

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25. External investigation of disclosable conduct (Federal Public Interest Disclosures)

The agency that has been notified will make inquiries to determine:

- if an investigation is required
- the likelihood of detrimental treatment being taken against the whistleblower.

The agency will then investigate, if required, and keep the whistleblower informed at every stage of this process.

26. Protection of whistleblowers under the Federal Public Interest Disclosure Act

Under the Federal Public Interest Disclosure Act, whistleblowers will:

- have their identity protected
- not be subject to any civil, criminal or administrative liability for making a disclosure
- have no contractual or other remedy enforced or sanction imposed because of the disclosure
- have absolute privilege for the purposes of defamation proceedings related to the disclosure; and
- not have a contract terminated on the basis of the disclosure.

27. Detrimental treatment of whistleblowers (Federal Public Interest Disclosures)

Under the Federal Public Interest Disclosure Act, it is an offence to cause or undertake detrimental treatment in reprisal for a disclosure, and ACO does not tolerate such treatment.

Examples of detrimental treatment (Federal Public Interest Disclosures)

Detrimental treatment includes:

- any disadvantage
- dismissal from employment
- injury to the employee in their employment
- alteration of an employee's position to their detriment
- discrimination perpetrated by other employees.

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28. Court protection against detrimental treatment (Federal Public Interest Disclosures)

It is an offence for a person or organisation to take a reprisal against a person which results in detrimental treatment under the Federal Public Interest Disclosure Act.

If a whistleblower believes that they have been subjected to or threatened with detrimental treatment because of their disclosure, they may apply to the Federal Court or Federal Circuit Court for:

- compensation
- injunction
- an apology
- reinstatement if they were dismissed or their position changed.

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Responsibilities

WPO Whistleblower Protection Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring disclosures are taken seriously and investigated• Safeguarding the interests of whistleblowers• Ensuring the integrity of the reporting process• Reviewing reports relating to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Corporations Law Disclosures▪ Federal Public Interest Disclosures
WIO Whistleblower Investigations Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducting or supervising internal investigations triggered by disclosures• Conducting preliminary reviews of reports of Corporations Law Disclosures• Maintaining the confidentiality of the whistleblower's and alleged perpetrator's identity• Informing the whistleblower of the findings of an internal investigation• Preparing a report of any investigation, including findings and evidence.
Employee or officer of ACO	Reporting suspected disclosable conduct to the WPO or an eligible recipient (e.g. a Board member, a member of ELT).
Recipient of disclosure	Informing the WPO of any report of disclosable conduct.

Management of this policy

Human Resources is accountable for managing and maintaining this policy, which includes:

- monitoring and reviewing this policy in line with the process stated in the Documentation Governance Framework
- simultaneously reviewing all documents directly relating to this policy.

Any major changes to this policy must be:

- approved by the Chief Executive Office
- endorsed by ACO Council

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years to ensure it remains consistent with all relevant legislative requirements and accommodates changes within ACO.

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Procedures/Forms/Templates/Checklists

- Whistleblower Policy Flowchart

Legislative Frameworks and Standards

- The Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)
- The Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019 (Cth)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 (Vic) (in effect as of 1 January 2020)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (Cth)
- Public Interest Disclosure Regulations – [refer to legislation.vic.gov.au](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)

References

Appendices

- Appendix A: Definitions
- Appendix B: Quick Reference Guide

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Appendix A: Definitions

Term	Definition
Alleged perpetrator	A person named in a disclosure as a perpetrator of the disclosable conduct. They may or may not have undertaken the alleged conduct.
Corporations Law Disclosures	A collective term for disclosures covered by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), and• Treasury Law Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019 (Cth)
Detrimental Treatment	Actual or threatened action taken against an actual, perceived, or potential whistleblower because of their disclosure, which is detrimental to the whistleblower's wellbeing, reputation, career, business. Examples include discrimination, disadvantage, intimidation, harassment, injury, loss.
Disclosable Conduct	Misconduct that is covered by one or more of the Commonwealth or Victorian laws that this policy addresses.
Disclosure	A report of disclosable conduct.
Eligible Recipient	Someone who is able to accept reports of disclosable conduct. This includes the WPO, WIOs, Board members, members of the ELT, managers.
Federal Public Interest Disclosures	Disclosures covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (Cth).
IBAC	Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission. Victoria's anti-corruption agency that receives, investigates, and exposes corruption and police misconduct, and informs the public sector and the community about the risks and impacts of corruption and police misconduct and how it can be prevented.
Ombudsman Victoria	The Victorian government's agency that manages and investigates complaints and disclosures relating to administrative actions taken by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victorian Government departments• public statutory authorities• officers of municipal councils.
Victorian Public Interest Disclosures	Disclosures covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 (Vic) (in effect as of 1 January 2020).
Whistleblower	Someone who reports disclosable conduct. Also referred to in some documents as a 'discloser'.
WIO	Whistleblower Investigations Officer
WPO	Whistleblower Protection Officer

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Appendix B: Quick Reference Guide to different types of disclosures

This quick reference guide summarises the main differences between the different types of disclosures. It is not comprehensive and should be used as a guide only.

Area of distinction	Corporations Law Disclosures	Victorian Public Interest Disclosures	Federal Public Interest Disclosures
Definition of disclosable conduct	Serious misconduct Offences against specified acts and regulations Offences punishable by imprisonment of 12 months or more Conduct that represents a danger to the public or the financial system	Conduct undertaken by ACO or a ACO officer relating to, or in the performance of a public function on behalf of the state , that affects the performance of those public functions, is corrupt, a substantial mismanagement of state public resources, puts at risk public health or safety or the environment, or is criminal.	Conduct relating to the provision of goods or services to or on behalf of the Commonwealth that contravenes a law, is corrupt, abuses public trust or an official's position, prevents justice, is a waste of federal public funds, endangers lives or health and safety, is a disciplinary matter,
Reporting options	Internal and/or external. Internal to eligible recipient. External to ASIC or other relevant government authority.	External only. Whistleblower should seek legal advice. Report to IBAC.	Internal or external. Internal to supervisor or WPO. External to Ombudsman, investigative agency with power to investigate (e.g. relevant Commonwealth department, Federal Police).
Investigation conducted by	Internal by WIO (may conduct a preliminary review first), with or without external help. External by recipient of disclosure.	External investigation undertaken by IBAC.	Internal: WPO assesses disclosure and notifies relevant agency. External by recipient of disclosure.