

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Encouraging reporting of wrongdoing

1. Why we need this policy

Launch Housing recognises that any genuine commitment to detecting and preventing illegal and other undesirable conduct must include a mechanism for employees and others to report wrongdoing and concerns freely, safely, securely and without fear of repercussions. This Whistleblower Policy provides this mechanism and encourages and enables disclosures of such conduct.

2. Who this policy applies to

This Policy applies to an individual who is:

- a) A current or former Launch Housing employee, including permanent, full time, fixed term or temporary roles, interns, and managers;
- b) A current or former officer or associate of Launch Housing, for example a director or company secretary;
- c) A service provider or contractor who is providing, or has provided goods or services to Launch Housing, whether paid or unpaid, including their employees;
- d) A relative, dependant or spouse of an individuals listed in (a)-(c); and
- e) Any other person eligible for protection as a whistleblower under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) (**Corporations Act**).

These are 'Eligible Whistleblowers'. They can make a disclosure that may qualify for protection under relevant legislation.

3. What is whistleblowing?

3.1 Disclosable Matters

To be protected under the legislation, a disclosure must be made by an Eligible Whistleblower to an Eligible Recipient about a Disclosable Matter. This is known as a protected disclosure and the act of whistleblowing is referred to in this policy as Speaking Up.

Launch Housing encourages Eligible Whistleblowers to Speak Up. It is in Launch Housing's interests to hear of conduct at the earliest possible opportunity.

When Speaking Up, you must have reasonable grounds to suspect the information you are disclosing is true and accurate and concerns misconduct or an improper state of affairs or circumstances relating to Launch Housing. This includes where there are reasonable grounds to suspect engagement in conduct that is unlawful or represents a danger to the public or financial system, for example, money laundering, insider trading, or fraud. Please see the definition of Disclosable Matter at 'Clause 7 – Definitions'. You will not be penalised if the information turns out to be incorrect as long as you had reasonable grounds for believing it to be true.

You must not make a report that you know is untrue or misleading. Deliberate false reporting will not be covered by this Policy and will not be a protected disclosure. Where it is found that the person Speaking Up has knowingly made a false report, this may result in disciplinary action.

Examples of Disclosable Matters include but are not limited to:

- failure to comply with, or breach of legal or regulatory requirements;
- breach of Launch Housing's Code of Conduct or other Launch Housing policies, standards or codes;
- engaging in or threatening to engage in detrimental conduct against a person who has made a disclosure, or is believed or suspected to have made, or be planning to make a disclosure of a Disclosable Matter;
- criminal activity;
- bribery or corruption;
- conduct endangering health and safety or causing damage to the environment;
- dishonest, unethical or irresponsible behaviour;
- conflicts of interest, including those relating to outside business interests, relationships, improper payments and donations;
- victimisation or harassment;

- modern slavery, which exists if a person is not working of their own free will, is treated like property, or is seriously exploited or abused. Examples of modern slavery are human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices, forced labour, servitude, early and forced marriage, debt bondage and forms of child labour;
- misleading or deceptive conduct, including conduct or representations which amount to improper or misleading accounting, taxation or financial reporting practices;
- conduct endangering the health and safety of any person or persons;
- breaches of privacy;
- unauthorised use of Launch Housing's confidential information;
- concerns that pose a danger to the public or financial system (even if it does not involve a breach of law); and
- deliberate concealment of any of the above.

Personal work-related grievances:

Disclosures that relate solely to personal work grievances, and do not relate to prohibited victimisation that involves detriment or threat of detriment to the person Speaking Up, are not covered by this Policy.

Personal work-related grievances are those that relate to current or former employment and has or tends to have implications for an Eligible Whistleblower personally, but do not have significant implications for Launch Housing (or another entity), or relate to any conduct, or alleged conduct, about the Disclosable Matter or other matters of misconduct beyond personal circumstances.

Examples of personal work-related grievances include:

- an interpersonal conflict between you and another employee;
- a decision about your engagement, transfer, promotion or termination;
- a decision relating to the terms and conditions of your engagement; or
- a decision to suspend or terminate your engagement, or otherwise to discipline you.

However, disclosures about personal work-related grievances may qualify for whistleblower protections in certain circumstances. Examples of this include:

- the disclosure includes information about misconduct, or information about misconduct includes or is accompanied by a personal work-related grievance (i.e., a mixed report);
- the disclosure includes information about a breach of employment or other laws punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months or more or relates to information that suggests misconduct beyond your personal circumstances;
- the disclosure includes information about engaging in conduct that represents a danger to the public; or
- you suffer from or are threatened with detriment for making a disclosure.

3.2 How disclosures can be made – Eligible Recipients

Launch Housing has engaged an independent whistleblowing service provider, Stopleveline, to receive whistleblowing disclosures. Stopleveline is the preferred first port of call for Eligible Whistleblowers.

You can make a confidential report of a Disclosable Matter to Stopleveline, including an anonymous report, at:

Phone: 1300 30 45 50

Email: makeareport@stopleveline.com.au

Website: <https://launchhousing.stoplevelinereport.com/>

Post: Attention: Launch Housing, c/o Stopleveline, PO Box 403, Diamond Creek, VIC 3089

Alternatively, you can contact:

- Launch Housing's Whistleblower Protection Officers (WPO);
- the Chair of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee (AFRC) or any other Director; or
- an internal or external auditor.

Launch Housing's Whistleblower Protection Officers

Company Secretary: Harriet.Simpson@launchhousing.org.au

Group Manager, People: Danielle.Leigh@launchhousing.org.au

You can Speak Up to a legal practitioner for the purposes of obtaining legal advice or legal representation about the whistleblower requirements.

You can also Speak Up to regulatory bodies (such as Australian Securities and Investments Commission (**ASIC**), Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (**APRA**), the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (**ACNC**)) and in certain circumstances, public interest disclosures or emergency disclosures can be made to a journalist or parliamentarian. There are additional criteria for making public interest disclosures or emergency disclosures in order for them to qualify for protection. For example, a disclosure must have previously been made pursuant to a written notice provided to ASIC, APRA or a prescribed body. In addition, in the case of a public interest disclosure, at least 90 days must have passed since the previous disclosure. It is strongly recommended that you contact Stopline, or a Whistleblower Protection Officer (WPO), or obtain independent legal advice in the first instance, to ensure you understand the criteria for making a public interest or emergency disclosure that qualifies for whistleblower protection under law.

4. Protections for Speaking Up

4.1 Speaking up anonymously

You can choose to Speak Up in a confidential manner, anonymously or in a partially anonymous manner. Stopline enables completely anonymous disclosures. Remaining partially anonymous or completely anonymous may create limitations to the investigation process, including in the level of practical support Launch Housing can provide to you.

4.2 Protecting your identity

Launch Housing will work to protect the identity of people who Speak Up. Your identity (and any information Launch Housing has because of your report that someone could likely use to work out your identity) will only be disclosed if you give your consent to Launch Housing to disclose that information or in exceptional circumstances where the disclosure is allowed or required by law.

All information, documents, records and reports relating to the investigation of a Disclosable Matter will be confidentially stored and retained in an appropriate and secure manner. Access to all information relating to the disclosure will be limited to those directly involved in managing and investigating the disclosure. Only a restricted number of people who are directly involved in handling and investigating the disclosure will be made aware of your identity (subject to your consent) or information that is likely to lead to the identification of your identity.

You can lodge a complaint with the Whistleblower Protection Officer (WPO), or a regulator for investigation if you believe that is a breach of confidentiality under this Policy.

4.3 Protection from detriment

You will not be penalised or subject to any detriment for Speaking Up. It is unlawful to cause detriment to you or another person on the belief or suspicion that a report has been, or will be, made, regardless of whether the report was made. Launch Housing will not tolerate such unlawful behaviour.

Examples of detrimental conduct include (but is not limited to):

- a) Dismissal, injury to employment, alteration of position or duties to your disadvantage
- b) Discrimination between employees
- c) Harassment or intimidation
- d) Harm or injury to a person, including psychological harm
- e) Damage to property or reputation
- f) Damage to a person's business or financial position
- g) Any other damage.

Detrimental conduct does not include:

- Administrative action which is reasonable to protect the discloser from detriment;
- Management action to manage a discloser's unsatisfactory work performance.

If a discloser is subject to administrative or management action, they will be informed of the reasons for taking this action.

If you believe you have been subjected to a detriment because of the actual or intended disclosure, you should immediately report the matter to the WPO so prompt action can be taken to protect against further detrimental acts or omissions. Reports of detrimental conduct will be treated confidentially. You may also seek independent legal advice or contact regulatory bodies if you believe you have suffered a detriment.

Anyone engaging in unlawful detrimental conduct may be subject to disciplinary action. The action taken will depend on the severity of the breach, and may include a reprimand, formal warning, demotion, and/or termination of employment in the case of employees, or termination of contract in the case of suppliers or agents.

4.4 Protection from civil, criminal and administrative liability

You may be entitled to protection from civil liability, criminal liability and administrative liability (including disciplinary action) in respect of the disclosure. Note that the whistleblower protections do not grant immunity for any potential misconduct you have engaged in that is revealed in the report.

4.5 Compensation and other remedies

You (and other Launch Housing employees) can seek compensation and other remedies through the courts if:

- you suffer loss, damage or injury because of a disclosure, although the making of a disclosure does not protect you from the consequences of being involved in Disclosable Matter yourself; and
- Launch Housing has failed to take reasonable precautions and exercise due diligence to prevent the detrimental conduct arising from a disclosure.

A person who is unsure of the protections or rights to compensation under the whistleblower laws should seek independent legal advice from a legal practitioner.

5. Investigation process

5.1 Investigating the procedure

All reports of misconduct under this Policy will be dealt with promptly, fairly and objectively. Launch Housing's response to a report will vary depending on the nature of the report and the amount of information provided. Your report may be addressed and resolved informally or through formal investigation.

All reports made under this Policy will be assessed to determine if the matter qualifies for protection and whether a formal investigation is required.

While Speaking Up does not guarantee a formal investigation, all reports will be properly assessed and considered and a decision made as to whether it should be investigated.

Launch Housing may not be able to undertake an investigation if it is not able to contact you (for example, if the report is made anonymously and you have refused to provide, or have not provided, a means of contact).

If the WPO determines that an investigation is required, the WPO will brief a Whistleblower Investigation Officer (**WIO**) to undertake an investigation. The WIO will be responsible for collecting all available and relevant evidence that may substantiate or refute the claim of potential misconduct. The WIO may engage external professionals to assist in any investigation. The WPO will monitor the WIO's investigation to ensure the confidentiality of the investigation is maintained.

The process and timing of the investigation will vary depending on the nature of the disclosure. The WIO will endeavour to conduct the investigation in a timely manner and will be fair and independent from any persons to whom the report relates. All employees and contractors must cooperate fully with any investigation.

Where an investigation is required, typically an investigation will:

- include interviews with you (if you have identified yourself and can be contacted) and all other witnesses; and
- provide all persons against whom allegation/s of a Disclosable Matter has been made with an opportunity to respond to the allegation/s.

During the investigation, the WIO will gather documents, information and evidence relating to the report including ensuring that all documentations and information relating to the report is kept secure and protected.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the WIO will draw objective conclusions based on the evidence gathered during the investigation and present findings and recommendations to the WPO. The WPO will determine appropriate response and necessary action to remediate, or act on the investigation findings.

Launch Housing is committed to implementing the findings and recommendations of any investigation with a view to rectifying any wrongdoing as far as is practicable in the circumstances.

5.2 Keeping you informed

Assuming your identity is known and where appropriate, you will be kept informed and updated during the following key stages of the investigation:

- when the investigation process has begun;
- while the investigation is in progress; and
- after the investigation has been finalised.

To the extent possible within commercial, legal and confidentiality constraints, the outcome of the disclosure will be provided to you and any persons against whom allegation/s of Disclosable Matters were made. However, there may be some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to provide details of the outcome to you. You will not be provided with a copy of the investigation report.

5.3 Reporting

The WPO will report the findings and actions directly to the Board Chair and the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee (AFRC).

In cases where the CEO, or a member of the Board or AFRC has been accused of reportable conduct, or where they have a close personal relationship with the person against whom the accusation is made, they will be excluded from the reporting process.

6. Who is responsible for this policy

Role	Responsibilities
CEO & Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain oversight of whistleblower reports and investigations and guide or determine the appropriate response in each case.
Whistleblower Protection Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive reports of misconduct and unethical behaviour and investigate reports in confidence without prejudice to the reporting employee. • Take steps to correct any misconduct or unethical behaviour. • Contact the police about conduct that is, or likely to be, illegal. • Ensure that all complaints about unethical or illegal conduct are investigated and resolved. • Advise the CEO and/or the Board of Directors of all complaints and their resolution. • Report at least annually to the Chair of the of Audit & Finance Committee on compliance activity relating to accounting or alleged financial improprieties.
All Launch Housing employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report suspected misconduct or unethical behaviour. • Respect the confidentiality of those concerned in the report and investigation.

APPENDIX: ADMINISTRATION

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Disclosable Matter	<p>Information that the Whistleblower has reasonable grounds to suspect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) concerns misconduct, or an improper state of affairs or circumstances, in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Housing; or • a 'related body corporate' (as that term is defined in the Corporations Act) of Launch Housing; or (b) indicates that Launch Housing or a related body corporate of Launch Housing (including their employees or officers) have engaged in conduct that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constitutes an offence against, or a contravention of, a provision of any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Corporations Act; 2. the <i>Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001</i>; 3. the <i>Banking Act 1959</i>; 4. the <i>Financial Sector (Collection of Data) Act 2001</i>; 5. the <i>Insurance Act 1973</i>; 6. the <i>Life Insurance Act 1995</i>; 7. the <i>National Consumer Credit Protection Act 2009</i>; 8. the <i>Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993</i>; 9. an instrument made under an Act referred to above • constitutes an offence against any other law of the Commonwealth that is punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months or more; • represents a danger to the public or the financial system; or • is otherwise prescribed by regulation. <p>Examples of a 'Disclosable Matter' may include conduct that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is corrupt, illegal, fraudulent or dishonest; • indicates financial irregularities e.g. altering company records or adopting illegal or irregular accounting practices • indicates significant mismanagement of Launch Housing's resources or might cause financial loss to Launch Housing; • is an unsafe work-practice; and/or • may cause financial or non-financial loss to Launch Housing or be otherwise detrimental to the interests of Launch Housing. <p>A Disclosable Matter includes conduct that may not involve a contravention of a particular law.</p>
Personal work-related grievances	<p>Any type of problem, concern, dispute or complaint related to work, the working environment or working relationships which cannot be resolved through normal employee/employee or employee/management communication.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflict between a whistleblower and another employer; • a decision that doesn't involve a breach of workplace laws; • a decision about a Workers employment status, transfer or promotion; • a decision about the terms of a Workers engagement or contract; • a decision to suspend, terminate or discipline a Worker. <p>Personal work grievances do not relate to detriment or threat of detriment to the discloser and do not qualify as a disclosable matter.</p>

NB how whistleblower and grievance differ: A whistleblower raises a concern about an issue that affects the organisation. A grievance is raised when there is a need to resolve an issue between two or more parties; the person who raises the grievance and the other party against whom they have the grievance.

Speaking Up	Informing (verbally and/or in writing) the appropriate person identified in this Policy if you have reasonable grounds to suspect that potential wrongdoing has occurred or is occurring in relation to Launch Housing.
Whistleblower Investigation Officer (WIO)	The person who has responsibility for investigating the report of Potential Misconduct.

8. Supporting documents

Document name	Description	Type
Launch Housing Code of Conduct	Outlines expectations of behaviour at Launch Housing.	Policy

9. Amendments to this Policy

This policy may be amended, terminated or replaced at Launch Housing's discretion. This policy will be reviewed, and updated as required, on a periodic basis.

In the event any related State or Commonwealth legislation changes, the legislation/directions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency with this policy.

Amendments			
Date last approved:	05 JULY 2023	Date of effect:	05 JULY 2023
Date last amended:	19 JUNE 2023	Date of next review:	19 APRIL 2025
Owner:	Company Secretary	Approver:	Board
Portfolio:	All		

10. Version Control

Version	Effective Date	Amended by	Approved By	Amendment
V1.0	01 JUNE 2015	General Manager, Corporate Services	Board	First version.
V3.0	05 JULY 2023	Company Secretary	Board	Significant amendments to update the policy in line with legislative requirements.