

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY

Strategic policies/procedures provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of matters by Wimmera CMA. Strategic Policies / Procedures are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances individual circumstances may require a modified application.

BACKGROUND

The Wimmera CMA has met the Act's requirements that the Wimmera CMA establish a procedure to facilitate and encourage the making of Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs) and to provide protection for people connected with Public Interest Disclosures against detrimental action that might be taken against them in reprisal. The procedure can be found in the Wimmera CMAs record management EDMS Record system,.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline [Wimmera] Catchment Management Authority's (Wimmera CMA) responsibilities, as a public body, under the *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* ("Act"). The main responsibilities are:

- To encourage and facilitate the making of public interest disclosures (PIDs) of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC), and
- To protect people connected with protected disclosures against detrimental action that might be taken against them in reprisal for the making of such disclosures.

It is important to note the Wimmera CMA is not permitted to receive disclosures on behalf of an individual. All disclosures must be submitted direct to IBAC.

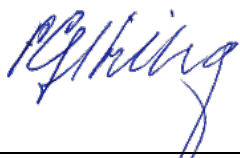
POLICY

At the Wimmera CMA, we are proud of our ethical standards, and we are committed to the highest standards of public service in managing land and water resources in the Wimmera region of Victoria. Every organisation, however, is susceptible to corrupt or improper conduct.

The CMA is therefore committed to the aims and objectives of the Act it encourages Wimmera CMA Directors, members of Board Committees, members of Advisory Groups, employees, contractors and community members to make a PID if they believe the Wimmera CMA or someone at the Wimmera CMA is engaged in improper conduct.

The Act provides protection to people making PIDs and sets out a system for the disclosed matters to be investigated and rectifying action to be taken.

The Wimmera CMA will work to ensure that any person connected with a PID is protected and will not tolerate any reprisals for making a PID.

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|---|-----------------------------|
| Approved by Board | |
| Chair Signature | Meeting Date: |
|  | 27 th April 2023 |

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Application of Policy

This policy applies to all Directors, members of Board Committees, members of Advisory Groups, employees of and contractors to the Wimmera CMA.

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What can Protected Interest Disclosures (PIDs) be made about?

PIDs may be made about:

- Improper conduct: which may be either criminal conduct or other conduct specified under the Act. Examples include serious professional misconduct, intentional or reckless breach of public trust and conduct adversely affecting the honest performance of a public officer.
- Detrimental action: which includes harassment or discrimination, or other adverse action taken against the discloser in reprisal for having reported the alleged improper conduct.

Who can make a disclosure?

Any individual person (i.e. not an organisation or company) may make a disclosure under the Act.

How to make a disclosure

The Wimmera CMA is not permitted to receive disclosures made under the Act. A disclosure must be made directly to the IBAC.

Role of the Authority

Any disclosure made to IBAC should not be discussed with the CMA unless permission has been obtained from IBAC.

The Wimmera CMA has established procedures to facilitate and encourage the making of disclosures under the Act, and how the Wimmera CMA will manage the welfare of persons connected with Public Interest Disclosures. For full details see the Wimmera CMA's Interest Disclosure Procedure which can be found in the Wimmera CMAs record management EDMS system, by inspection during normal office hours of the CMA at 24 Darlot Street HORSHAM VIC 3400, or by contacting the Wimmera CMA's Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator whose details appear below.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Wimmera CMA takes its obligations under the Act seriously. This includes the requirement to protect the identity of the discloser and the matters disclosed by a discloser. It is a criminal offence under the Act to disclose information connected with a disclosure made in accordance with the Act, including the identity of the discloser. The penalties for breaching confidentiality obligations include financial penalties and imprisonment.

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For More Information

The Wimmera CMA has appointed **Business Manager** as the organisations Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator. This person is responsible for handling enquiries about the Wimmera CMA's obligations under the Act.

If you wish to obtain further information about Wimmera CMA's public interest disclosures policy or procedures, or if you wish to arrange a confidential meeting to discuss any matters of concern contact the **Business Manager**.

Contact details are as follows:

Business Manager
Wimmera CMA
24 Darlot Street, Horsham Vic 3400
Phone: 0353 821544
Email: nicole.netherway@wcma.vic.gov.au

For more information about Public Interest Disclosures also see

<https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/reporting-corruption/public-interest-disclosures>

Related Policies and Procedures

[Fraud Policy](#)

[Privacy Victorian Policy](#)

Public Interest Disclosure Procedure

[Conflict of Interest](#)

Resolution of Grievances Guideline and Procedure

[Grievance Policy](#)

Equal Employment Opportunity, Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Guideline and Procedure

[EEO Anti-discrimination Harassment and Bullying Policy](#)

Performance & Discipline Procedure

[Discipline Policy](#)

Values and Behaviors Guidelines Health & Wellbeing Guideline

Related Resources:

Wimmera CMA's Employee Assistance Program

[Lifeworks EAP](#)

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012

[Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 \(legislation.vic.gov.au\)](http://legislation.vic.gov.au)

[DEECA – What is a public Interest Disclosure?](#)

[IBAC – Public Interest Disclosures](#)

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Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011

[Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2011](#)

IBAC Guidelines issued January 2020 under s 57 of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*:

[What is a public interest disclosure?](#)

[Guidelines for handling public interest disclosures.](#)

[Reporting corruption and misconduct – information sheet](#)

[Guidelines for Public Interest Disclosure Welfare Management:](#)

[Victorian Freedom of Information Act 1982](#)

- [Making a freedom of information request \(OVIC\)](#)

[Information Privacy Act 2000](#)

[Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)