



# PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE PROCEDURE

**This Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Procedure provides the procedure that Western Downs Regional Council will follow in managing PIDs and incorporates Council's Public Interest Disclosure Management Plan.**

This document is based on the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman *Model Public Interest Disclosure Procedure*

Section 28 of the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010](#) (the PID Act), requires:-

<b>28</b>	<b>Reasonable procedures to deal with public interest disclosures</b>
(1)	The chief executive officer of a public sector entity must establish reasonable procedures to ensure that— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) public officers of the entity who make public interest disclosures are given appropriate support; and</li> <li>b) public interest disclosures made to the entity are properly assessed and, when appropriate, properly investigated and dealt with; and</li> <li>c) appropriate action is taken in relation to any wrongdoing that is the subject of a public interest disclosure made to the entity; and</li> <li>d) a management program for public interest disclosures made to the entity, consistent with any standard made under section 60, is developed and implemented; and</li> <li>e) public officers of the entity are offered protection from reprisals by the entity or other public officers of the entity.</li> </ul>
(2)	The chief executive officer of a public sector entity must ensure the procedures are published, as soon as practicable after the procedures are made, on a website that is maintained by the public sector entity and readily accessible to the public.

<b>Department:</b>	Customer Support and Governance
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Customer Support and Governance Manager

Version	Approval Date	Adopted/Approved
1	15/05/2013	Ordinary Meeting of Council
2	02/09/2019	Executive Team Meeting
3	18/09/2019	Ordinary Meeting of Council
4	13/05/2021	Executive Team Meeting

*This policy may not be current as Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be found in the policies section of Council's intranet or Website. **A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled.***

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## 1. Introduction

Western Downs Regional Council is committed to fostering an ethical, transparent culture. In pursuit of this, Western Downs Regional Council values the disclosure of information about suspected wrongdoing in the public sector so that it can be properly assessed and, if necessary, appropriately investigated. Council will provide support to an **employee** or others who make disclosures about matters in the public interest. This Procedure demonstrates this commitment, and ensures that practical and effective procedures are implemented which comply with the requirements of the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010](#) (PID Act).

## 2. Objective/Purpose

By complying with the PID Act, Western Downs Regional Council will:

- promote the public interest by facilitating public interest disclosures (PIDs) of wrongdoing
- ensure that PIDs are properly assessed and, where appropriate, properly investigated and dealt with
- ensure appropriate consideration is given to the interests of persons who are the subject of a PID
- ensure protection from reprisal is afforded to persons making PIDs.

As required under the PID Act, the Chief Executive Officer will implement procedures to ensure that:

- any public officer who makes a PID is given appropriate support
- PIDs made to Western Downs Regional Council are properly assessed and, where appropriate, properly investigated and dealt with
- appropriate action is taken in relation to any wrongdoing which is the subject of a PID
- a management program for PIDs made to Council, consistent with the standards issued by the Queensland Ombudsman, is developed and implemented
- public officers who make PIDs are offered protection from reprisal by Council or other public officers of Council.

Council's Public Interest Disclosure Procedure is available for public viewing at [www.wdrc.qld.gov.au](http://www.wdrc.qld.gov.au) page. The Public Interest Disclosure Procedure will be reviewed annually and updated as required to ensure it meets the requirements of the PID Act and the standards issued by the Queensland Ombudsman.

### 3. **PID Management Program**

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that Western Downs Regional Council develops, implements and maintains a PID management program. Council's PID management program encompasses:

- a commitment to encouraging the internal reporting of wrongdoing
- senior management endorsement of the value to Council of PIDs and the proper management of PIDs
- a communication strategy to raise awareness among employees about PIDs and Council's PID procedure
- a training strategy to give employees access to training about how to make a PID, information on the support available to a discloser, and advice on how PIDs will be managed
- specialist training and awareness about PIDs for senior management and other staff who may receive or manage PIDs, disclosers or workplace issues relating to PIDs
- the appointment of a specialist officer/unit to be responsible for issues related to the management of PIDs
- ensuring effective systems and procedures are in place so that issues and outcomes from PIDs inform improvements to service delivery, business processes and internal controls
- regular review of the Public Interest Disclosure Procedure and evaluation of the effectiveness of the PID management program.

The Chief Executive Officer has designated the following roles and responsibilities for managing PIDs within Western Downs Regional Council:

<b>Role:</b>	<b>Responsibilities:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>
PID Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ principal contact for PID issues within Council</li> <li>▪ document and manage implementation of PID management program</li> <li>▪ review and update PID procedure annually</li> <li>▪ maintain and update internal records of PIDs received</li> <li>▪ report data on PIDs to Queensland Ombudsman</li> <li>▪ assess PIDs received</li> <li>▪ provide acknowledgment of receipt of PID to discloser</li> <li>▪ undertake risk assessments in consultation with disclosers and other relevant officers</li> <li>▪ liaise with other agencies about referral of PIDs</li> <li>▪ allocate Investigator and Support Officer to PID matter</li> </ul>	<p><i>Customer Support and Governance Manager</i></p> <p><i>Ph: 4679 4217</i></p> <p><i>Email: <a href="mailto:PIDCoordinator@wdrc.qld.gov.au">PIDCoordinator@wdrc.qld.gov.au</a></i></p>
PID Support Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide advice and information to discloser on Council's PID procedure</li> <li>▪ provide personal support and referral to other sources of advice or support as required</li> <li>▪ facilitate updates on progress of investigation</li> <li>▪ proactively contact discloser throughout PID management process</li> </ul>	<p>PID Coordinator will assign a PID Support Officer</p>
Investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ conduct investigation of information in PID in</li> </ul>	<p>An appropriate internal or external investigator will be appointed for each PID investigated depending upon the</p>

	<p>accordance with terms of reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ prepare report for delegated decision-maker</li> </ul>	type of disclosure and other relevant considerations.
Delegated decision-maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ review investigation report and determine whether alleged wrongdoing is substantiated</li> </ul>	An appropriate decision-maker will be appointed for each PID investigated.
General Managers, Manager, Coordinators and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ identifying, accepting and reporting to the PID Coordinator any possible PIDs reported to them</li> <li>▪ maintaining an ethical culture and leading by example</li> <li>▪ ensuring their staff and themselves are aware and adequately trained in respect to PIDs</li> <li>▪ maintain confidentiality and natural justice</li> <li>▪ assist in the management of PIDs where required</li> <li>▪ continually monitor the workplace for signs of reprisal and raise concerns before it escalates</li> <li>▪ notify the CEO or PID Coordinator of any detrimental actions and acts of reprisal</li> </ul>	All Officers in supervisory roles within the organisation.

#### 4. **Why make a PID?**

Employees who are prepared to speak up about public sector misconduct, wastage of public funds, suspected unlawful activity or danger to health, safety or the environment can be the most important sources of information to identify and address problems in public sector administration. Western Downs Regional Council supports the disclosure of information about wrongdoing because:

- implementing systems for reporting and dealing with wrongdoing contributes to the integrity of Council
- the outcomes of PIDs can include improvements to systems that prevent fraud and other economic loss to Council
- the community's trust in public administration is strengthened by having strong processes in place for reporting wrongdoing.

When making a PID the discloser receives the protections provided under the PID Act, including:

- confidentiality – the discloser's name and other identifying information will be protected to the extent possible
- protection against reprisal – the discloser is protected from unfair treatment by Council and employees of Council as a result of making the PID
- immunity from liability – the discloser cannot be prosecuted for disclosing the information but is not exempt from action if they have engaged in wrongdoing
- protection from defamation – the discloser has a defence against an accusation of defamation by any subject officer.

## 5. What is a Public Interest Disclosure?

Under the PID Act, any person can make a disclosure about a:

- **substantial** and **specific** danger to the health or safety of a person with a **disability**
- the commission of an offence, or contravention of a condition imposed under a provision of legislation mentioned in Schedule 2 of the PID Act, if the offence or contravention would be a **substantial** and **specific** danger to the environment
- **reprisal** because of a belief that a person has made, or intends to make a disclosure.

In addition, public sector officers (including the Mayor, Councillors and Employees) can make a disclosure about the following public interest matters:

- **corrupt conduct**
- **maladministration** that adversely affects a person's interests in a **substantial** and **specific** way
- a **substantial** misuse of public resources
- a **substantial** and **specific** danger to public health or safety
- **substantial** and **specific** danger to the environment.

A discloser can have either a '**reasonable belief**' that wrongdoing has occurred, or provide evidence which tends to show the wrongdoing has occurred.

A disclosure amounts to a PID and is covered by the PID Act even if the:

- discloser reports the information as part of their duties – such as an auditor reporting a fraud or an occupational health and safety officer reporting a safety breach
- disclosure is made anonymously – the discloser is not required to give their name or any identifying information
- discloser has not identified the material as a PID – it is up to Council to assess information received and decide if it is a PID
- disclosure is unsubstantiated following investigation – the discloser is protected when the information they provide is assessed as a PID, whether or not it is subsequently investigated or found to be not substantiated.

## 6. Who can a PID be disclosed to?

A PID must be made to the '**proper authority**' to receive disclosures of the type being made.

Disclosers are encouraged to make a disclosure to an appropriate officer of Western Downs Regional Council first. If the matter is not resolved, or the discloser is concerned about confidentiality, the disclosure may be made to another appropriate agency.

Who to contact within Western Downs Regional Council	Other agencies that can receive PIDs:
<p>Any person (including employees) can make a disclosure to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any person in a supervisory or management position</li> <li>• the human resources unit</li> <li>• via Council's Administrative Complaint Process</li> <li>• contacting Council's Governance team</li> <li>• the Chief Executive Officer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Customer Support and Governance Manager, Peter Greet</b></p> <p><b>Ph: 4679 4217</b> <b>Email: <a href="mailto:peter.greet@wdrc.qld.gov.au">peter.greet@wdrc.qld.gov.au</a></b></p>	<p>Disclosures can be made to an agency that has a responsibility for investigating the information disclosed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) for disclosures about corrupt conduct including reprisal</li> <li>• Queensland Ombudsman for disclosures about maladministration</li> <li>• Queensland Audit Office for disclosures about a substantial misuse of resources</li> <li>• Department of Child Safety, Youth and Multicultural Affairs for disclosures about danger to the health and safety of a child or young person with a disability</li> <li>• Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships for disclosures about danger to the health and safety of a person with a disability</li> </ul>

<p><b>Governance Coordinator, Karen Gillespie</b></p> <p><b>Ph: 4679 4064</b></p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:karen.gillespie@wdrc.qld.gov.au">karen.gillespie@wdrc.qld.gov.au</a></p> <p>Or Email:- PIDCoordinator@wdrc.qld.gov.au</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Office of the Public Guardian for disclosures about danger to the health and safety of a person with a disability</li><li>• Department of Environment and Science disclosures about danger to the environment</li><li>• A Member of the Legislative Assembly (MP) for any wrongdoing or danger</li><li>• The Chief Judicial Officer of a court or tribunal in relation to a disclosure about wrongdoing by a judicial officer.</li></ul>
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A disclosure can also be made to a **journalist** if the following conditions have been met:

- a valid PID was initially made to a proper authority, and
- the proper authority:
  - decided not to investigate or deal with the disclosure, or
  - investigated the disclosure but did not recommend taking any action, or
  - failed to notify the discloser within six months of making the disclosure whether or not the disclosure was to be investigated or otherwise dealt with.

A person who makes a disclosure to a journalist in these circumstances is protected under the PID Act. However, disclosers should be aware that journalists are not bound under the confidentiality provisions of section 65 of the PID Act.

## **7. How to make a PID**

A discloser can make a PID in any way, including anonymously, either verbally or in writing. To assist in the assessment, and any subsequent investigation of a PID, disclosers are requested to:

- provide contact details (this could be an email address that is created for the purpose of making the disclosure or a telephone number)
- provide as much information as possible about the suspected wrongdoing, including:
  - who was involved
  - what happened
  - when it happened
  - where it happened
  - whether there were any witnesses, and if so who they are
  - any evidence that supports the PID, and where the evidence is located
  - any further information that could help investigate the PID
- provide this information in writing.

## 8. ***Deciding whether a matter is a PID***

If there is any doubt as to whether a matter is a PID, further information may be obtained to inform the decision. If doubt still remains, the matter will be considered and managed as a PID.

Mere disagreements over policy do not meet the threshold for a PID under the PID Act.

It is an offence under the PID Act to intentionally give false or misleading information intending it be acted on as a PID. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for intentionally giving false or misleading information in a PID, or during an investigation into a PID.

Where a discloser states they are making a PID, but it is assessed that the matter is not a PID Council will advise the discloser:

- that their information has been received but was not assessed as a PID
- the reasons for the decision
- the review rights available if the discloser is dissatisfied with the decision and how to request review
- any action Council proposes to take in relation to the matter
- any other options the discloser has in relation to the matter.

Council's PID Assessment Checklist must be completed and appropriately recorded.  
{ECM Doc Set ID 2709779}

## 9. ***Assessing a PID***

The disclosure will be assessed in accordance with the PID Act, the PID standards Council's Public Interest Disclosure Procedure and any other relevant procedure(s).

Once the matter has been assessed as a PID, Council will advise the discloser:

- that their information has been received and assessed as a PID
- the action to be taken by Council in relation to the disclosure, which could include referring the matter to an external agency, or investigating
- the likely timeframe involved
- the name and contact details of the Council support officer they can contact for updates or advice
- of the discloser's obligations regarding confidentiality
- the protections the discloser has under the PID Act
- the commitment of Council to keep appropriate records and maintain confidentiality, except where permitted under the PID Act
- how updates regarding intended actions and outcomes will be provided to the discloser
- contact details for Council's Employee Assistance Program.

If the PID has been made anonymously and the discloser has not provided any contact details, Council will not be able to acknowledge the PID or provide any updates.

## 10. ***Referring a PID***

If Council decides there is another proper authority that is better able to deal with the PID, the PID may be referred to that agency. This may be because:

- the PID concerns wrongdoing by that agency or an employee of that agency
- that agency has the power to investigate or remedy the matter.

Before referring the PID to another agency, Council will conduct a risk assessment, and will not proceed with the referral if there is an unacceptable risk of reprisal.

It may also be necessary to refer the PID to another agency because of a legislative obligation, for example, refer a matter to the Crime and Corruption Commission where there is a reasonable suspicion that the matter involves or may involve corrupt conduct (as required by section 38 of the [Crime and Corruption Act 2001](#)).

The confidentiality obligations of the PID Act permit appropriate officers of Council to communicate with another agency about the referral of a PID. Officers will exercise discretion in their contacts with any other agency.

The discloser will be advised of the action taken by Council.

## **11. Risk assessment and protection from reprisal**

Disclosers should not suffer any form of detriment as a result of making a PID. Upon receiving a PID, Council will conduct a risk assessment to assess the likelihood of the discloser (or witnesses or affected third parties) suffering reprisal action as a result of having made the disclosure. This assessment will take into account the actual and reasonably perceived risk of the discloser (or witnesses or affected third parties) suffering **detriment** and will include consultation with the discloser.

A risk assessment will be undertaken if the discloser is anonymous on the basis of information available in the PID. The risk assessment will also take into account the risk to persons who may be suspected of making the PID.

Consistent with the assessed level of risk, Council will develop and implement a risk management plan and arrange any reasonably necessary support or protection for the discloser (or witnesses or affected third parties).

Council will regularly reassess the risk of reprisal while the PID is being managed, in consultation with the discloser, and review the risk management plan if required.

In the event of reprisal action being alleged or suspected, Council will:

- attend to the safety of the discloser (or witnesses or affected third parties) as a matter of priority
- review its risk assessment, risk management plan and any protective measures needed to mitigate any further risk of reprisal
- manage any allegation of a reprisal as a PID in its own right.

The [Queensland Ombudsman Public Interest Disclosure Risk Assessment and Risk Management Guide](#) must be completed and appropriately recorded.

## **12. Declining to take action on a PID**

Under the PID Act, Council may decide not to investigate or deal with a PID in various circumstances, including:

- the information disclosed has already been investigated or dealt with by another process
- the information disclosed should be dealt with by another process
- the age of the information makes it impractical to investigate
- the information disclosed is too trivial and dealing with it would substantially and unreasonably divert Council from the performance of its functions
- another agency with jurisdiction to investigate the information has informed Council that an investigation is not warranted.

If a decision is made not to investigate or deal with a PID Council will give the discloser written reasons for that decision.

If the discloser is dissatisfied with the decision, they can request a review by writing to the Chief Executive Officer within 28 days of receiving the written reasons for decision.

### **13. Communication with disclosers**

Under the PID Act, Council must give reasonable information to a discloser.

Council will acknowledge receipt of the PID in writing as soon as practicable. The discloser will be provided with information that meets the requirements of the PID Act and the standards issued by the Queensland Ombudsman, including:

- the action that will be taken in response to the PID
- the protections under the PID Act
- confidentiality obligations of the discloser and Council
- support arrangements.

Council will maintain contact with the discloser and provide regular updates during the management of the PID.

In accordance with the PID Act, after finalising action in response to the PID, Council will advise the discloser in writing of the action taken and the results of the action.

### **14. Confidentiality**

While Council will make every attempt to protect confidentiality, a discloser's identity may need to be disclosed to:

- provide natural justice to subject officers
- respond to a court order, legal directive or court proceedings.

Council will ensure that communication with all parties involved will be arranged discreetly to avoid identifying the discloser wherever possible.

Disclosers should be aware that while Council will make every attempt to keep their details confidential, it cannot guarantee that others will not try to deduce their identity.

### **15. Support for disclosers**

Council recognises that providing appropriate support to a discloser is an important feature of effective PID management.

An assessment will be undertaken to identify the support needs of the discloser. Where appropriate, a PID Support Officer will be assigned to the discloser. The PID Support Officer will assist the discloser to access information about PIDs, protections available under the PID Act and the PID management process. The PID Support Officer will proactively contact the discloser to offer support.

Information and support will be provided to the discloser until the matter is finalised.

Making a PID does not prevent **reasonable management action**. That means that the discloser will continue to be managed in accordance with normal, fair and reasonable management practices during and after the handling of the PID.

## 16. Investigating a PID

If a decision is made to investigate a PID, this will be done with consideration for the:

- principles of **natural justice**
- obligation under the PID Act to protect **confidential information**
- obligation under the PID Act to protect officers from reprisal
- interests of subject officers.

If as a result of investigation, the information about wrongdoing provided in the PID is substantiated, appropriate action will be taken.

Where the investigation does not substantiate wrongdoing, Council will review systems, policies and procedures to identify whether there are improvements that can be made and consider if staff training is required.

The investigation process followed by the investigator will vary depending on the nature of the disclosure. The table below provides guidance on the relevant investigation process for each type of disclosure:

Disclosure relates to:	Investigation Process:	Relevant References:
Corrupt conduct	Crime and Corruption Commission	<i>Crime and Corruption Act 2001</i> CCC Resource material including Corruption in Focus
Maladministration - Employees	Complaints Management Process / Disciplinary Process	Complaints Management Policy & Process
Maladministration - Councillors	Office of the Independent Assessor	<i>Local Government Act 2009</i> Investigations Policy
Substantial misuse of public resources - Employees	Complaints Management Process / Disciplinary Process	Relevant legislation Complaints Management Policy & Process
Substantial misuse of public resources - Councillors	Office of the Independent Assessor	<i>Local Government Act 2009</i> Investigations Policy
Substantial and specific danger to public health or safety	Refer to appropriate State Agency or Complaints Management Process / Disciplinary Process	Relevant legislation Complaints Management Policy & Process
Substantial and specific danger to a person with a disability	Refer to appropriate State Agency or Complaints Management Process / Disciplinary Process	Relevant legislation Complaints Management Policy & Process
Substantial and specific danger to the environment	Refer to appropriate State Agency or Complaints Management Process	Relevant legislation Complaints Management Policy & Process
Reprisal	Crime and Corruption Commission or Complaints Management Process / Disciplinary Process	Relevant legislation Complaints Management Policy & Process

## 17. Rights of subject officers

Council acknowledges that for officers who are the subject of a PID the experience may be stressful. Council will protect their rights by:

- assuring them that the PID will be dealt with impartially, fairly and reasonably in accordance with the principles of natural justice
- confirming that the PID is an allegation only until information or evidence obtained through an investigation substantiates the allegation
- providing them with information about their rights, and the progress and outcome of any investigation
- referring them to the Employee Assistance Program for support.

Information and support will be provided to a subject officer until the matter is finalised.

## 18. Record-keeping

In accordance with its obligations under the PID Act and the [Public Records Act 2002](#), Council will ensure that:

- accurate data is collected about the receipt and management of PIDs
- anonymised data is reported to the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman in their role as the oversight agency, through the PID reporting database.

Records about disclosures, investigations, and related decisions will be kept secure and accessible only to appropriately authorised people involved in the management of the PID.

## 19. Definitions (meanings of words and acronyms used in this Procedure)

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Administrative action	<p>(a) means any action about a matter of administration, including, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) a decision and an act; and</li> <li>(ii) a failure to make a decision or do an act, including a failure to provide a written statement of reasons for a decision; and</li> <li>(iii) the formulation of a proposal or intention; and</li> <li>(iv) the making of a recommendation, including a recommendation made to a Minister; and</li> <li>(v) an action taken because of a recommendation made to a Minister; and</li> </ul> <p>(b) does not include an operational action of a police officer or of an officer of the Crime and Corruption Commission.</p>
Confidential information	<p>(a) includes —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) information about the identity, occupation, residential or work address or whereabouts of a person —                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) who makes a public interest disclosure; or</li> <li>(B) against whom a public interest disclosure has been made; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>(ii) information disclosed by a public interest disclosure; and</li> <li>(iii) information about an individual's personal affairs; and</li> <li>(iv) information that, if disclosed, may cause detriment to a person; and</li> </ul> <p>(b) does not include information publicly disclosed in a public interest disclosure made to a court, tribunal or other entity that may receive evidence under oath, unless further disclosure of the information is prohibited by law.</p>
Corrupt conduct	<p>As defined in section 15 of the <a href="#">Crime and Corruption Act 2001</a></p> <p>(1) <b>Corrupt conduct</b> means conduct of a person, regardless of whether the person holds or held an appointment, that—</p> <p>(a) adversely affects, or could adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the performance of functions or the exercise of powers of—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) a unit of public administration; or</li> <li>(ii) a person holding an appointment; and</li> </ul> <p>(b) results, or could result, directly or indirectly, in the performance of functions or the exercise of powers mentioned in paragraph (a) in a way that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) is not honest or is not impartial; or</li> <li>(ii) involves a breach of the trust placed in a person holding an appointment, either knowingly or recklessly; or</li> <li>(iii) involves a misuse of information or material acquired in or in connection with the performance of functions or the exercise of powers of a person holding an appointment; and</li> </ul> <p>(c) would, if proved, be—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) a criminal offence; or</li> </ul>

	<p>(ii) a disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating the person’s services, if the person is or were the holder of an appointment.</p> <p>(2) <b>Corrupt conduct</b> also means conduct of a person, regardless of whether the person holds or held an appointment, that—</p> <p>(a) impairs, or could impair, public confidence in public administration; and</p> <p>(b) involves, or could involve, any of the following—</p> <p>(i) collusive tendering;</p> <p>(ii) fraud relating to an application for a licence, permit or other authority under an Act with a purpose or object of any of the following (however described)—</p> <p>(A) protecting health or safety of persons;</p> <p>(B) protecting the environment;</p> <p>(C) protecting or managing the use of the State’s natural, cultural, mining or energy resources;</p> <p>(iii) dishonestly obtaining, or helping someone to dishonestly obtain, a benefit from the payment or application of public funds or the disposition of State assets;</p> <p>(iv) evading a State tax, levy or duty or otherwise fraudulently causing a loss of State revenue;</p> <p>(v) fraudulently obtaining or retaining an appointment; and</p> <p>(c) would, if proved, be—</p> <p>(i) a criminal offence; or</p> <p>(ii) a disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating the person’s services, if the person is or were the holder of an appointment.</p>
Detriment	<p>includes –</p> <p>(a) personal injury or prejudice to safety; and</p> <p>(b) property damage or loss; and</p> <p>(c) intimidation or harassment; and</p> <p>(d) adverse discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment about career, profession, employment, trade or business; and</p> <p>(e) financial loss; and</p> <p>(f) damage to reputation, including, for example, personal, professional or business reputation.</p>
Disability	<p>As defined in section 11 of the <a href="#">Disability Services Act 2006</a>, for the purposes of this procedure:</p> <p>(1) A disability is a person’s condition that—</p> <p>(a) is attributable to—</p> <p>(i) an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment; or</p> <p>(ii) a combination of impairments mentioned in subparagraph (i);</p> <p>and</p> <p>(b) results in—</p> <p>(i) a substantial reduction of the person’s capacity for communication, social interaction, learning, mobility or self care or management; and</p> <p>(ii) the person needing support.</p> <p>(2) For subsection (1), the impairment may result from an acquired brain injury.</p> <p>(3) The disability must be permanent or likely to be permanent.</p> <p>(4) The disability may be, but need not be, of a chronic episodic nature.</p>
Discloser	<p>A person who makes a disclosure in accordance with the <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</a>.</p>
Employee	<p>of an entity, includes a person engaged by the entity under a contract of service.</p>

Investigation	For the purposes of this procedure, investigation includes any enquiry undertaken to establish whether the information provided in a PID can be substantiated, including a review or audit.
Journalist	a person engaged in the occupation of writing or editing material intended for publication in the print or electronic news media.
Maladministration	As defined in schedule 4 of the <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</a> , maladministration is administrative action that— (a) was taken contrary to law; or (b) was unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory; or (c) was in accordance with a rule of law or a provision of an Act or a practice that is or may be unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory in the particular circumstances; or (d) was taken— (i) for an improper purpose; or (ii) on irrelevant grounds; or (iii) having regard to irrelevant considerations; or (e) was an action for which reasons should have been given, but were not given; or (f) was based wholly or partly on a mistake of law or fact; or (g) was wrong.
Natural justice	Natural justice, also referred to as ‘procedural fairness’ applies to any decision that can affect the rights, interests or expectations of individuals in a direct or immediate way. Natural justice is at law a safeguard applying to an individual whose rights or interests are being affected.  The rules of natural justice, which have been developed to ensure that decision-making is fair and reasonable, are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoid bias; and</li> <li>• give a fair hearing.</li> <li>• act only on the basis of logically probative evidence.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Organisational support	For the purposes of this procedure, organisational support means actions such as, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing moral and emotional support</li> <li>• advising disclosers about agency resources available to handle any concerns they have as a result of making their disclosure</li> <li>• appointing a mentor, confidante or other support officer to assist the discloser through the process</li> <li>• referring the discloser to the agency’s Employee Assistance Program or arranging for other professional counselling</li> <li>• generating support for the discloser in their work unit where appropriate</li> <li>• ensuring that any suspicions of victimisation or harassment are dealt with</li> <li>• maintaining contact with the discloser</li> <li>• negotiating with the discloser and their support officer a formal end to their involvement with the support program when it is agreed that they no longer need assistance.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Proper authority	A person or organisation that is authorised under the <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</a> to receive disclosures.
Public officer	A public officer, of a public sector entity, is an employee, member or officer of the entity being the Mayor, Councillors and Employees.
Reasonable belief	A view which is objectively fair or sensible.

Reasonable management action	Action taken by a manager in relation to an employee, includes any of the following taken by the manager— (a) a reasonable appraisal of the employee’s work performance; (b) a reasonable requirement that the employee undertake counselling; (c) a reasonable suspension of the employee from the employment workplace; (d) a reasonable disciplinary action; (e) a reasonable action to transfer or deploy the employee; (f) a reasonable action to end the employee’s employment by way of redundancy or retrenchment; (g) a reasonable action in relation to an action mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (f); (h) a reasonable action in relation to the employee’s failure to obtain a promotion, reclassification, transfer or benefit, or to retain a benefit, in relation to the employee’s employment.
Reprisal	The term ‘reprisal’ is defined under the <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</a> as causing, attempting to cause or conspiring to cause detriment to another person in the belief that they or someone else: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has made or intends to make a disclosure; or</li> <li>• has been or intends to be involved in a proceeding under the disclosure Act against any person.</li> </ul> Reprisal under the <a href="#">Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</a> is a criminal offence and investigations may be undertaken by the Queensland Police Service.
Subject officer	An officer who is the subject of allegations of wrongdoing made in a disclosure.
Substantial and specific	Substantial means ‘of a significant or considerable degree’. It must be more than trivial or minimal and have some weight or importance.  Specific means “precise or particular”. This refers to conduct or detriment that is able to be identified or particularised as opposed to broad or general concerns or criticisms.

## 20. Relevant Legislation

[Crime and Corruption Act 2001](#)

[Local Government Act 2009](#)

[Ombudsman Act 2001](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010](#)

[Public Records Act 2002](#)

[Public Sector Ethics Act 1994](#)

## 21. Related Policies and Procedures

Public Interest Disclosure Policy  
 Administrative Action Complaints Policy and Process  
 Employee Code of Conduct and Standards of Conduct  
 Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland  
 Confidentiality Policy  
 Investigations Policy

## 22. Supporting information

- [Public Interest Disclosure Standard No. 1/2019](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Standard No. 2/2019](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Standard No. 3/2019](#)
- [Disclosure Fact sheet 1: What is a disclosure](#)
- [Disclosure Fact sheet 2: Checklist for making a disclosure](#)
- [Disclosure Fact sheet 3: Discloser information and support](#)