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# Cessnock City Council Internal Reporting – Public Interest Disclosures Guideline

Date Adopted 18/09/2019 Revision: 1

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## 1. GUIDELINE OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To outline the assessment responsibilities Council has when a report of wrongdoing is received.
- 1.2. To assist Council with assessing whether reports of wrongdoing are public interest disclosures under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* (NSW) (**PID Act**).
- 1.3. To assist Council in investigating public interest disclosures once an assessment has been made that an investigation is warranted.
- 1.4. To assist Council to make an appropriate referral of a report of wrongdoing if it is not equipped to handle the matter internally.
- 1.5. To provide guidance to relevant Council Officials on how reports should be progressed and appropriate action initiated, regardless of whether they are public interest disclosures or not.

## 2. GUIDELINE SCOPE

- 2.1. This guideline supports and complements Council's Internal Reporting – Public Interest Disclosures Policy (**Policy**). Both documents apply to:
  - 2.1.1. Council staff and Councillors,
  - 2.1.2. permanent employees, whether full-time or part-time,
  - 2.1.3. temporary or casual employees,
  - 2.1.4. consultants,
  - 2.1.5. individual contractors working for Council,
  - 2.1.6. employees of contractors providing services to Council,
  - 2.1.7. other people who perform Council official functions whose conduct and activities could be investigated by an investigating authority, including volunteers, and
  - 2.1.8. public officials of another council or public authority who report wrongdoing relating to Council.
- 2.2. The intention of this guideline is not to contradict Council's Code of Conduct or other Council policies and procedures.

### 3. GUIDELINE STATEMENT

- 3.1. Council values are embedded in the development, review and implementation of this Guideline and its supporting documents to achieve consistent decision-making and appropriate resolution of ethical dilemmas even when there are no rules to follow.

### 4. MAKING A REPORT OF WRONGDOING

- 4.1. Reports of wrongdoing can be made in writing or verbally. Reporters are encouraged to make a report in writing as this can help avoid any confusion or misinterpretation, using Council's Internal Reporting Form.
- 4.1.1. It is important to realise that an anonymous disclosure may not prevent reporters from being identified by the subjects of the report or their colleagues. If Council does not know who made the report, it is very difficult to prevent any reprisal should others identify the reporter.<sup>1</sup>

### 5. RECEIVING REPORTS OF WRONGDOING

- 5.1. When receiving a report of wrongdoing, the General Manager, Mayor, Disclosures Coordinator and Disclosures Officers have a responsibility to:
- 5.1.1. make comprehensive record of the report for any reports received verbally, and have the document signed and dated by the reporter,
  - 5.1.2. give the reporter a copy of the comprehensive record of the report, where practical,
  - 5.1.3. complete the Checklist of Internal Report Form,
  - 5.1.4. complete the Initial Assessment of Internal Report Form, and
  - 5.1.5. provide feedback to reporters in response to their reporting.
- 5.2. Disclosures Officers, the General Manager and Mayor are responsible for sending reports to the Disclosures Coordinator for assessment.
- 5.3. **Acknowledgement of receipt of report**
- 5.3.1. Within five working days of the report being received, The Disclosures Coordinator is responsible for ensuring a Council Acknowledgment Letter is sent to the reporter acknowledging the receipt of the report and to advise:
- a) the timeframe within which they will receive further updates,
  - b) the name and contact details of the people who can update the reporter on what is happening or that can address any concerns the reporters may have,
  - c) they are to keep the matter confidential, and only discuss the matter with authorised people within the organisation, or their legal advisor and anyone providing them with support,

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<sup>1</sup> Where Council receives an anonymous report of wrongdoing which contains sufficient information to warrant conducting an investigation, it should be investigated in any event.

- d) to notify their manager if they suffer any detrimental action as a result of being the subject of a report, and
- e) if necessary, seek support from their manager or supervisor or any available external support organisations or services.

#### **5.4. Outcome of receipt of report letter**

5.4.1. Within 10 working days of the report being received, the Disclosures Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that a second letter is sent to the reporter by Council:

- a) advising whether the report of wrongdoing received will be treated as a public interest disclosure or not,
- b) advising what action will be taken in response to the report,
- c) enclosing a copy of the Policy at that time, as required by the PID Act
- d) advising of the likely timeframes for any investigation or other action, and
- e) providing information about the internal and external resources or services available that you can access for support.

5.4.2. The Disclosures Coordinator is not required to ensure an outcome of receipt of report letter is sent to the reporter where the report was made under a statutory or legal obligation or incidental to the performance of the reporter's day to day functions. For example, if Council's Finance Manager comes across information that implicates allegations of corrupt conduct or any other suspected wrongdoing, and reports it, the Disclosures Coordinator is not required to ensure an outcome of receipt of report letter is sent to Council's Finance Manager.

#### **5.5. Maintaining Confidentiality**

5.5.1. To ensure that confidentiality is maintained, the following traps are to be avoided:

- i. Putting information on an unsecured computer or in an unsecured electronic file.
- ii. Leaving documents on a photocopier.
- iii. Leaving incoming or outgoing faxes on a fax machine.
- iv. Interviewing people where they can be seen or heard.
- v. Causing suspicion by not interviewing the internal reporter if it is expected that everyone in the workplace be interviewed.
- vi. Giving confidential information to others to copy, type, address or send.
- vii. Not blacking out names, addresses or phone numbers on documents that you refer to when interviewing parties to the report.
- viii. Leaving messages on desks or phone services that could be read or listened to by third parties.
- ix. Sending sensitive material by mail that reveals the identity of the internal reporter.

- x. Saving electronic records into an electronic records management system in a non-secure way.
  - xi. Emailing or sending confidential information by mail to the wrong recipient.
  - xii. The following circumstances are an exception to the requirement to maintain confidentiality, and the following circumstances are an example of when it would be appropriate for the reporter's identity to be disclosed if need be:
    - xiii. The person consents in writing to the disclosure of the information.
- 5.5.2. It is 'generally known' to the 'relevant public' that the person has made the public interest disclosure as they have voluntarily identified themselves as the person who made it. This includes people within their workplace and, in particular, a person who might have a motive to take reprisals against them. Some examples where a person's identity could be generally known are:
- i. They have identified themselves to colleagues as the person who made the public interest disclosure.
  - ii. They identify themselves to the media as the person who made the public interest disclosure.
  - iii. It is essential for the identifying information to be disclosed to a person to satisfy the principles of Natural Justice.
  - iv. It is necessary for the information to be disclosed for the effective investigation of the matter.
  - v. It is otherwise in the public interest to do so.

## **6. ASSESSMENT OF REPORTS OF WRONGDOING**

### **6.1. The Disclosures Coordinator is required to:**

- 6.1.1. conduct a Risk Assessment in relation to the reporter,
- 6.1.2. conduct a Risk Assessment in relation to the people subject to the report,
- 6.1.3. assess the report of wrongdoing and determine whether or not it is a public interest disclosure, and
- 6.1.4. notify the reporter of any action taken or proposed within six months of their public interest disclosure being made.

### **6.2. When assessing a report of wrongdoing made by a Council Official, the Disclosures Coordinators need to consider:**

- 6.2.1. Does the report warrant action or investigation and, if so, who are the appropriate staff to do this?
- 6.2.2. Should the report be referred to an external investigation or review authority?
- 6.2.3. Should the report be referred to another authority if it concerns them or their staff?

- 6.2.4. Must the report be referred to the ICAC under section 11 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 (NSW) or the NSW Ombudsman under Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)?
- 6.2.5. What is the likelihood of maintaining confidentiality? See Guideline C7: Confidentiality.
- 6.2.6. What are the risks of reprisals to the reporter? See Guideline C4: Assessing risk of reprisals and conflict.
- 6.3.** To assist with their determination, the Disclosures Coordinator is required to conduct a risk assessment in accordance with Guideline C4: Assessing risk of reprisals and conflict and complete the Assessment of an Internal Report Form.
- 6.4.** A report of wrongdoing does not have to be true for the PID Act to apply as long as it meets the requirements of it. The PID Act applies even if neither the reporter nor Council initially recognises the report as a public interest disclosure, provided the report meets the requirements of the PID Act. The exception is if a report of wrongdoing is made to a Member of Parliament (MP) or journalist, it must be substantially true for the PID Act to apply.
- 6.5.** If a report of wrongdoing is made in accordance with the PID Act, the reporter can seek the statutory protections of the PID Act at any time in the future. This applies no matter what action is then taken in relation to the public interest disclosure - for example, if no action is taken or an investigation discontinued. The PID Act also continues to apply if a public interest disclosure is referred to another public authority, investigating authority or public official. The only exceptions are if:
- 6.5.1. during the course of an investigation, it is proved to the required standard that the reporter willingly provided false or misleading information or made the report substantially with the motive of avoiding dismissal or other disciplinary action, or
- 6.5.2. A report that was initially made to a public authority or investigating authority – and met the requirements of the PID Act – is then made to an MP or journalist, but the reporter is unable to prove that their report is substantially true.
- 6.6.** When there is a real doubt about whether or not a report is a public interest disclosure, it is best to err on the side of caution and interpret the PID Act broadly, i.e. assume that the PID Act applies and proceed accordingly.
- 6.7.** The reporter may need to be interviewed to further clarify issues about their allegations and the evidence they have or can provide to support their report. The purpose of this would be to determine a course of action, not whether the matter is a public interest disclosure. At this point, the Disclosures Coordinator should have already formed a view about whether the report is a public interest disclosure. It is important that the person that received the report and/or the Disclosures Coordinator:
- 6.7.1. be discreet in all communications and when arranging and holding meetings,
- 6.7.2. make the process as least threatening as possible,
- 6.7.3. explain why the process is necessary and how it may benefit them,
- 6.7.4. avoid creating the perception that there is scepticism or doubt about their truthfulness,

- 6.7.5. keep contemporaneous records and, if possible, get a signed record of any additional information obtained, and
  - 6.7.6. assess the likelihood of confidentiality being maintained and the risk of reprisals.
- 6.8.** Depending on the circumstances, the options for action in response to a report available to the Disclosures Coordinator could include:
- 6.8.1. no action or a decision to decline to take action,
  - 6.8.2. resolving the issue by involving the relevant manager,
  - 6.8.3. an internal audit of an issue or the operation of a particular unit,
  - 6.8.4. implementing or changing policies, procedures or practices,
  - 6.8.5. a preliminary or informal investigation,
  - 6.8.6. a full or formal investigation by or on behalf of the authority, and
  - 6.8.7. a referral to an investigating authority or the police if it is a criminal matter.
- 6.9.** In assessing what action to be taken in response to a report, the Disclosures Coordinator must comply with Council's policies and procedures for investigative or disciplinary processes, and are to identify the following, but not limited to:
- 6.9.1. the nature, scope and seriousness of the allegations,
  - 6.9.2. whether the allegations can be effectively investigated, given the likelihood of evidence being obtained or the length of time since the alleged conduct occurred,
  - 6.9.3. the likelihood that the alleged wrongdoing could have occurred even if little supporting evidence is currently available,
  - 6.9.4. whether it is more appropriate for the report to be referred to an investigating authority for action, or an investigating authority is, or has, already properly investigated the matter, and/or
  - 6.9.5. whether the concerns can be appropriately dealt with by involving the relevant manager without an investigation.
- 6.10.** In making a determination of what actually occurred in relation to the report of wrongdoing, the Disclosures Coordinator is to have regard to the 'on the balance of probabilities' as the relevant burden of proof. In other words, the question that needs to be asked is whether the alleged report of wrongdoing is a matter of "more probable than not" or is there a 51 percent, or greater, chance for the alleged report of wrongdoing to have occurred.
- 6.10.1. The Disclosures Coordinator has the discretion to refer reports to external investigating authorities and it would be appropriate to do so only in certain circumstances. The following are examples of when it may not be appropriate for Council to deal with a report if:
  - 6.10.2. the report relates to the head of the authority or in local government the General Manager or Mayor,
  - 6.10.3. there is a good reason why it would be appropriate for the investigating authority to deal with it – for example, it is already under investigation by an investigating authority,

- 6.10.4. it relates to more than one agency and they are not able to properly investigate the allegations,
  - 6.10.5. the matter is highly sensitive, and/or
  - 6.10.6. there is a considerable actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- 6.11.** Even if a matter is referred to an investigating authority, Council:
- 6.11.1. remains responsible for supporting the reporter,
  - 6.11.2. is to notify the reporter that their report has been referred to an investigating authority, and
  - 6.11.3. is to consult with the investigating authority about their respective responsibilities for implementing strategies to minimise any risk of reprisal that the reporter faces, keeping the reporter appropriately informed during the process, and providing them with any final report.
- 6.12.** Any referral to an investigating authority needs to occur in consultation with the NSW Ombudsman's Guideline C6: Managing interaction with investigating authorities.
- 6.13. Where the report is not a public interest disclosure**
- 6.13.1. The PID Act will not apply to reports whose content makes only minor allegations but the resulting investigation identifies significant and serious issues. This is so because the PID Act only applies to corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, government information contravention and local government Pecuniary Interest contravention.
  - 6.13.2. If it is determined that a report by a Council Official is not a public interest disclosure, Council still has an obligation to ensure that all internal reports, as with complaints and suggestions from the public, are properly addressed, and that the reporter is appropriately supported.

## **7. INVESTIGATING PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

- 7.1.** The PID Act does not give Council investigative powers that it does not otherwise have. Council's Code of Conduct however gives Council the power to investigate complaints made about breaches of the Code. Ultimately, the General Manager must limit any investigations undertaken within the range of investigative powers conferred on either them or Council as a whole. This includes any ability to:
- 7.1.1. require witnesses to provide evidence,
  - 7.1.2. obtain relevant documentation, and
  - 7.1.3. obtain information from people about relevant policies, procedures and practices.
- 7.2.** If Council does not have the necessary experience, resources or expertise to conduct an 'in-house' investigation at a particular point in time for a particular matter, or the necessary powers, then the General Manager may have to contract an appropriately qualified and experienced investigator. Such an engagement should be done in accordance with clause 6.10 and the NSW Ombudsman's Discussion Paper: The use of external investigators by NSW Government Agencies, July 2016.

- 7.3.** Where reports are to be investigated internally, it is preferable to select an internal investigator with experience in conducting public interest disclosures investigations or, at a minimum, someone with relevant investigative experience. If possible, the internal investigator should not be the Disclosures Coordinator or one of the nominated Disclosures Officers so that the outcome of the investigation does not affect the reporter's perception of your organisation's internal reporting processes.
- 7.4.** When conducting an investigation, Procedural Fairness is to be the guiding principle and depending on the circumstances, Procedural Fairness may require an investigator to:
- 7.4.1. inform people against whose interests a decision may be made of the substance of any allegations against them or grounds for proposed adverse comment about them,
  - 7.4.2. provide people with a reasonable opportunity to put their case – in writing, at a hearing or otherwise,
  - 7.4.3. make reasonable inquiries or investigations before making a decision,
  - 7.4.4. ensure that no person decides a case in which they have a direct interest,
  - 7.4.5. act fairly and without bias, and
  - 7.4.6. conduct the investigation without undue delay.
- 7.5.** One of the exceptions to the confidentiality requirements of the PID Act (s.22(1)(b)) is where it is essential, having regard to the principles of Natural Justice or Procedural Fairness, to disclose information that might identify or tend to identify a person who made a public interest disclosure.
- 7.6.** In some cases, there may be an overriding public interest in not adhering to certain Procedural Fairness requirements. This will only be in limited situations that involve serious risks to personal safety or where substantial amounts of public funds may be at risk. In these cases, expert external advice should always be sought and documented. Reasons for any decisions involving Procedural Fairness considerations should always be recorded.
- 7.7.** At the end of the investigation, a report evidencing the following is to be prepared:
- 7.7.1. a covering memo or executive summary explaining how the investigation was instigated, how it was conducted, who by, the timeframes involved, the process of investigation, the findings of the investigation and any recommendations made,
  - 7.7.2. any decisions made to maintain confidentiality, as well as any strategies adopted and whether they appear to have been effective,
  - 7.7.3. a statement of all relevant facts and the evidence relied on in reaching any conclusions,
  - 7.7.4. the conclusions reached and the basis for these conclusions,
  - 7.7.5. how Procedural Fairness was implemented so that the report does not give rise to a legal challenge because it contains adverse comments or recommendations for disciplinary or other action against persons involved, and
  - 7.7.6. any recommendations to overcome or address any wrongdoing or actual or potential problems identified.

- 7.8.** In compiling the investigation report, the report author should also keep in mind that it will be subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (**GIPA Act**). Under the GIPA Act, there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of information that would identify or tend to identify a person who made a public interest disclosure. However, it may be that some information in the report and/or associated documentation must be released to a person making an access application under the GIPA Act.

## **8. FEEDBACK TO STAFF WHO REPORT WRONGDOING**

### **8.1. Progress updates**

8.1.1. While the report of wrongdoing is being dealt with, such as by investigation or making other enquiries, the Disclosures Coordinator is responsible for the reporter to be given:

- a) information about the progress of the investigation or other enquiries and reasons for any delay,
- b) advise of any decision by Council not to proceed with the matter, and
- c) advice if the reporter's identity needs to be disclosed for the purposes of investigating the matter or making enquiries, and an opportunity to talk about this beforehand.

### **8.2. Feedback**

8.2.1. Once the matter has been finalised, the Disclosures Coordinator is responsible for giving the reporter:

- a) enough information to show that adequate and appropriate action was taken and/or is proposed to be taken in response to their disclosure and any problem that was identified, and
- b) advice about whether the reporter are likely to be called as a witness in any further matters, such as disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

## **9. PEOPLE THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT**

**9.1.** Before any final determination is made, a person who is the subject of a report has a right to be:

9.1.1. told the substance of the allegation to the extent that it does not hinder an investigation and place the person who made the report at unnecessary risk of reprisals,

9.1.2. told the substance of any adverse comment arising out of an investigation that may be included in a report, memo or letter, and

9.1.3. given a reasonable opportunity to answer any allegation and respond to any negative findings.

## 10. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 10.1. Council's responsibilities

10.1.1. Where practical and appropriate, Council is required to maintain the confidentiality of people who are the subjects of reports.

10.1.2. Where there are concerns about the reporter's safety or wellbeing, or other factors that would make it impossible for all of the parties involved to remain in the workplace, Council is required to address such concerns and may make appropriate and necessary changes to the employment arrangements of the reporter or the people which are subjects of a report. The following are, but not limited to, examples of such changes Council may take, where appropriate:

- a) assign a project that results in them not being present in the workplace during the ongoing investigation – this also allows for the underlying explanation of the person's removal from the workplace to be kept confidential,
- b) implement a new workplace reporting or supervisory arrangements,
- c) relocate their workstation to another part of the premises or to separate premises,
- d) relocate a manager or supervisor into the workplace for a period to help manage relationships and interactions,
- e) relocate, transfer or second them to another part of the organisation,
- f) relocate, transfer or second them to an equivalent position in another organisation,
- g) grant them a leave of absence during any investigation and re-introduce them to the workplace in stages,
- h) help them to obtain alternative employment , and/or
- i) negotiate a voluntary redundancy package in accordance with the relevant Award and/or Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

10.1.3. Any necessary and appropriate actions Council takes concerning changes to the employment arrangements of the reporter or the people which are subjects of a report will be taken in consultation with such individuals. In doing so, Council should be able to clearly demonstrate that:

- a) The action is reasonable, proportionate and, if relevant, consistent with action taken in similar circumstances in relation to staff who were not the subject of a report.
- b) The particular circumstances of the person have been taken into account.
- c) The action complies with Council's policies and procedures.

10.1.4. Where an allegation is widely known within Council, a clear statement from senior management stating that the allegation is without foundation (once it is determined so) is to be sent to provide support to the person who was subject of the allegation

## 10.2. The defendant's responsibilities

10.2.1. Once a person has demonstrated that they have made a PID and were subjected to detrimental action, it then lies on the defendant to prove that the detrimental action was not taken substantially in reprisal for the person making a public interest disclosure.

## 10.3. Council reporting on its obligations under the PID Act

10.3.1. Council's Disclosures Coordinator is responsible for reporting on, and completing, statistical information about public interest disclosures in Council's annual report and to the NSW Ombudsman every six months via the PID online reporting tool.

10.3.2. Council's Disclosures Coordinator is responsible to report on Council's obligations under the PID Act in accordance with *Guideline C2: Reporting to the NSW Ombudsman*.

## 10.4. Records management

10.4.1. Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this guideline in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy.

10.4.2. Any files associated with public interest disclosures must:

10.4.3. not indicate, either on the cover of the file or that it involves public interest disclosure or the name of the internal reporter, and

10.4.4. contain the following notice placed on the inside cover:

### CONFIDENTIAL

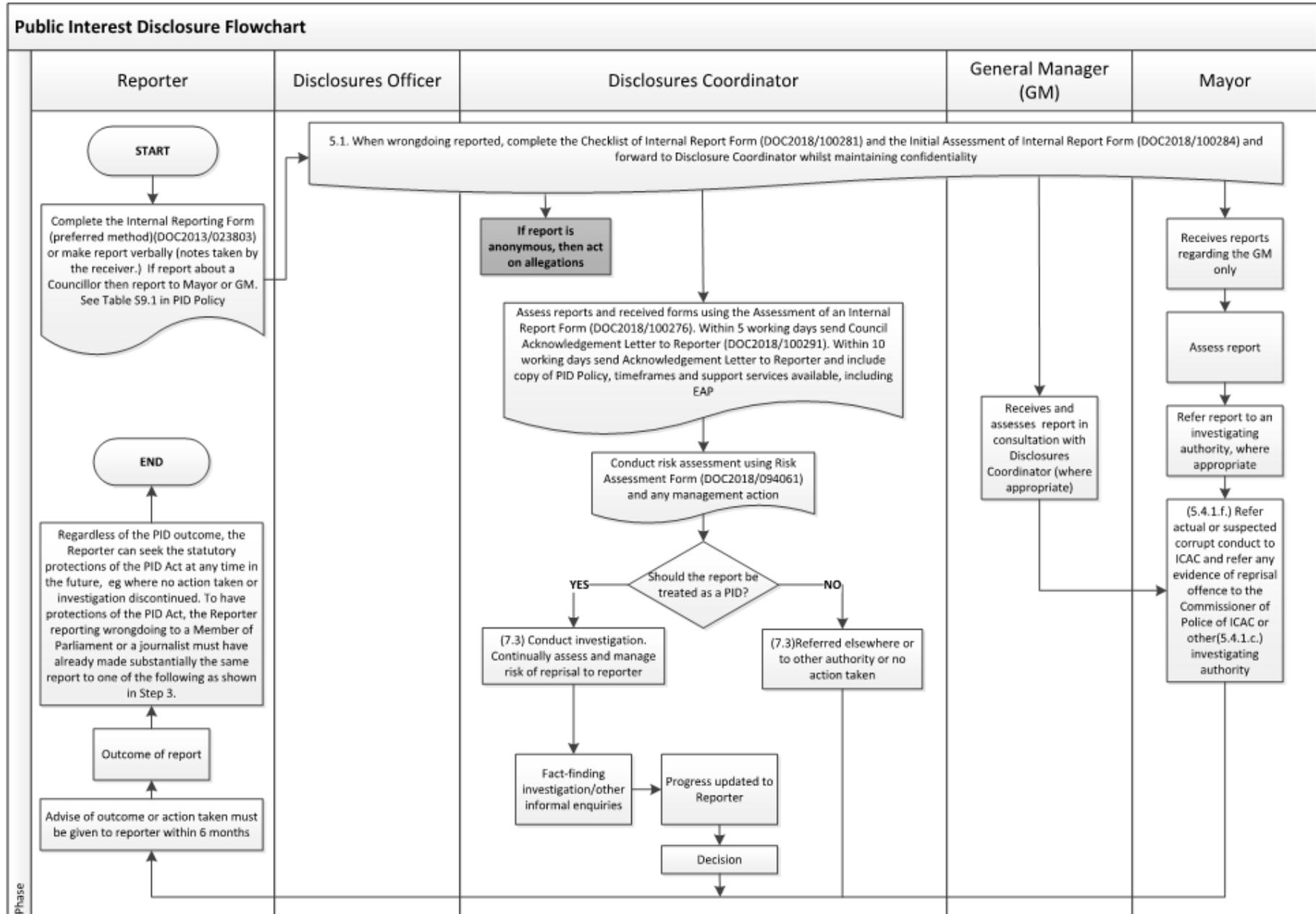
The material in this file relates to a public interest disclosure made under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (NSW) (**PID Act**).

You must not disclose information that might identify the person who has made the public interest disclosure, unless in accordance with the PID Act.

The reporter must be provided with a written acknowledgement and a copy of the Policy as soon as possible but by no later than [include date 45 days after the public interest disclosure was made].

The reporter must be notified of the action taken or proposed to be taken in relation to their public interest disclosure as soon as a decision has been made but by no later than [include date six months after the public interest disclosure was made].

# 11. FLOW CHART OF INTERNAL REPORTING PROCESS



## 12. GUIDELINE DEFINITIONS

<b>Council</b>	means Cessnock City Council.
<b>Council Officials</b>	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council staff and Councillors,</li> <li>▪ permanent employees, whether full-time or part-time,</li> <li>▪ temporary or casual employees,</li> <li>▪ consultants,</li> <li>▪ individual contractors working for Council,</li> <li>▪ employees of contractors providing services to Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Justice</b>	Generally speaking, when a decision is made which will deprive a person of some right or interest or the legitimate expectation of a benefit, they are entitled to know the case sought to be made against them and to be given an opportunity of replying to it: <i>Kioa v West</i> (1985) 159 CLR 550, 582.
<b>Pecuniary Interests</b>	Means interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person.
<b>Procedural Fairness</b>	Means acting fairly in administrative decision making. It relates to the fairness of the procedure by which a decision is made, and not the fairness in a substantive sense of that decision.

### 13. GUIDELINE ADMINISTRATION

<b>Business Group</b>	Corporate and Community Services
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	General Manager
<b>Responsible author</b>	Governance Officer
<b>Associated Policy</b>	Internal reporting – Public Interest Disclosure Policy
<b>Guideline Review Date</b>	Three years from date of adoption unless legislated otherwise
<b>Doc. Number</b>	DOC2019/036684
<b>Relevant Legislation (reference specific sections)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ S. 11, <i>Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988</i> (NSW)</li> <li>▪ Ss 6CA, 6E, 20, and Part 2, <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994</i> (NSW)</li> <li>▪ S. 3A, <i>Ombudsman Act 1974</i> (NSW).</li> <li>▪ S. 120, <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> (NSW).</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant desired outcome or objectives</b>	<p><i>Civic leadership and effective governance</i></p> <p>Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community</p>
<b>Related Policies / Protocols / Procedures / Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Code of Conduct (DOC2018/086716)</li> <li>▪ Procedures for the Administration of Code of Conduct (DOC2018/086682)</li> <li>▪ Workplace Grievance Notification Form (DOC2013/046519)</li> <li>▪ Internal Reporting Form (DOC2018/100287)</li> <li>▪ Checklist of Internal Report Form (DOC2018/100281)</li> <li>▪ Initial Assessment of Internal Report Form (DOC2018/100284)</li> <li>▪ Acknowledgment letter template (DOC2018/100290)</li> <li>▪ Risk Assessment (DOC2018/094061)</li> <li>▪ Assessment of an Internal Report Form (DOC2018/100276)</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Records Management Policy</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">NSW Ombudsman's Discussion Paper: The use of external investigators by NSW Government Agencies, July 2016</a></li> <li>▪ NSW Ombudsman's publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Supporting and protecting reporters - Guidelines D1 to D6</li> <li>○ Templates</li> <li>○ Model internal reporting policies</li> <li>○ Organisational commitment - Guidelines A1 to A4</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Related Policies / Protocols / Procedures / Documents (continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitating reporting - Guidelines B1 to B6</li> <li>○ Assessing and investigating disclosures - Guidelines C1 to C7</li> <li>○ Implementation - Guidelines E1 to E2</li> <li>○ Online reporting tool: Public Interest disclosures user manual</li> </ul>

## 14. GUIDELINE AUTHORISATIONS

No.	Authorised Function	Authorised Business Unit / Role(s)
TBA	Receive reports of suspected wrongdoing that may or may not be public interest disclosures in accordance with the Policy and this Guideline	Roles nominated in Appendix A of the Guideline and in accordance with clause 9 of the Policy
TBA	Accept reports of suspected wrongdoing as public interest disclosures in accordance with the Policy and this Guideline	Mayor (only if the report is about the General Manager)  General Manager (if the report is about the Mayor, Councillors or Council officer)  Disclosures Coordinator
TBA	Deal with and handle public interest disclosures in accordance with the Policy and this Guideline	Mayor (only if the report is about the General Manager)  General Manager (if the report is about the Mayor, Councillors or Council officer)  Disclosures Coordinator

## 15. GUIDELINE HISTORY

Revision	Date Approved / Authority	Description Of Changes
1	18 September 2019 CC79/2019-994	New guideline adopted

## 16. APPENDIX A

The General Manager of Cessnock City Council has approved the following:

Position title	Role
Director Corporate and Community Services	Disclosures Coordinator
Remaining Executive Leadership Team Members	Disclosures Officers
Managers at Level 3 RAA	Disclosures Officers
Governance and Council Support Coordinator	Disclosures Officer
Governance Officer	Disclosures Officer
Waste Services Coordinator	Disclosures Officer
Human Resources Operations Coordinator	Disclosures Officer
Risk and Safety Coordinator	Disclosures Officer
HR Advisor – Learning and Development	Disclosures Officer