Introduction

Council recognises the need to have a relevant internal reporting procedure to encourage and facilitate the disclosure, in the public interest, of cases where corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of resources, and government information contravention occurs within Council.

Council welcomes the updating of the legislative framework though the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (the Act) and has adopted these procedures to ensure the full protection and maintenance of confidentiality to staff and Councillors who wish to make a disclosure. Staff or Councillors who take detrimental action, as defined in the Act, against another person in reprisal for a public interest disclosure will face disciplinary action, as per procedure 5.04.10 Disciplinary Action.

Council further recognises that disclosed information can lead to organisational improvement and commits to thoroughly investigating all disclosures for the primary purpose of gaining increased efficiency and eliminating any impediments to Council achieving its overall objectives.

Finally Council commits to providing adequate training to ensure all staff (and Councillors) are acquainted with the provisions of the Act including the reporting mechanisms.

Purpose and context of the procedure under Council’s behaviour of Councillors and staff policy

The object of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (previously called the Protected Disclosures Act) is to encourage and facilitate the disclosure, in the public interest, of corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of Council resources, and government information contravention in the public sector by:

a. enhancing and augmenting established procedures for making disclosures concerning such matters
b. protecting persons from reprisals that might otherwise be inflicted on them because of those disclosures
c. providing for those disclosures to be properly investigated and dealt with.

In addition, the Act requires that:

a. detrimental action is not to be taken against a person if to do so would be in contravention of this Act, and
b. beneficial treatment is not to be given in favour of a person if the purpose (or one of the purposes) for doing so is to influence the person to make, to refrain from making, or to withdraw a disclosure.

Under the recent amendments to the Act, Council has increased reporting obligations and a much stronger role in protecting those who help to expose corrupt practices, serious or substantial waste, maladministration or breaches of the Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Act 2009.

Council has strong policies and procedures committing all Councillors, staff and volunteers to high ethical standards and to work efficiently and effectively for the benefit of the community. The Act requirements tie in with, and strengthen, these existing policies and procedures.
Staff and others coming forward to report wrongdoing helps to promote integrity, accountability and good management within Bega Valley Shire Council and to promote a positive image of the Council in the eyes of the community. This benefits the community, and it also benefits Councillors and Council staff as they are able to show they work in an ethical efficient and effective organisation that does not tolerate corruption or waste and is devoted to the best interests of the Bega Valley community.

Organisational commitment

Councillors and staff will carry out their various duties in accordance with all relevant legislation, policies, guidelines, professional standards and Bega Valley Shire Council’s own adopted Codes of Meeting Practice and Conduct.

The behaviour of both Councillors and staff must enhance the community’s perception and reputation of local government at all times.

Any recognition or reimbursement to Councillors or staff by way of certificate, gift or financial payment will be subject to adopted procedures, be transparent in nature and on the public record.

Guidelines for the provision of facilities for Councillors and the Mayor to assist them in discharging the duties and functions of their civic office are clearly identified and available to Councillors, staff and the public.

Under the Act, Councillors and staff are encouraged to facilitate the disclosure, in the public interest, of corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of Council resources, and government information contravention by the public sector by:

- Enhancing and augmenting established procedures for making disclosures concerning such matters, and
- Protecting persons from reprisals that might otherwise be inflicted on them because of those disclosures, and
- Providing for those disclosures to be properly investigated and dealt with.
- Ensuring no detrimental action is taken against a person if to do so would be in contravention of the Act, and
- Ensuring beneficial treatment is not given in favour of a person if the purpose (or one of the purposes) for doing so is to influence the person to make, to refrain from making or to withdraw a disclosure.

All reported breaches of this procedure will be subject to the relevant assessment and conduct management procedures.

All complaints will be dealt with expeditiously and in accordance with the relevant procedure.

Bega Valley Shire Council is strongly committed to:

- maintaining a climate of trust so that staff, Councillors and other Council officers are comfortable about reporting corruption and other inappropriate behaviour
- encouraging staff, Councillors and those working with Council as volunteers or contractors to come forward if they witness any corrupt or other behaviour that they consider to be wrongdoing
- not disclosing the identity of any informant, where appropriate and legally possible
- protecting staff and others who make disclosures from any adverse retaliation resulting from the disclosure
- addressing with protected disclosure reports fairly and promptly, and where wrongdoing is found, taking prompt action to rectify the matter
- keeping informants up to date on progress
• encouraging internal reporting of wrongdoing, but also ensuring staff know they may also report to the relevant external agency such as the ICAC or the Ombudsman

• ensuring via training and through the Council’s intranet site that all managers, supervisors, and other staff are aware of the Act, Council’s policy and procedures and the advantages that come from the community knowing that Council is strongly committed to combating corruption and providing an efficient and effective delivery of services to the community

• providing appropriate human and other resources to ensure the Council’s objectives in combating fraud, corruption and other wrongdoing are met

• reviewing this policy each 18 months or more frequently if appropriate.

Councillors, staff and others performing work for Council are strongly encouraged to report all forms of wrongdoing and the Mayor and General Manager will fully support any Councillor, employee or volunteer who wishes to utilise the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 to make disclosures within the parameters of the Act.

Roles and responsibilities of staff

Council’s Behaviour of Councillors and Staff Policy and this Public Interest disclosures internal reporting system procedure under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 applies to all Council officers and those performing work on behalf of Council. Thus the Policy applies to:

• Councillors
• permanent employees, whether full-time or part-time
• fixed term, temporary or casual employees
• consultants
• individual contractors working for Council
• members of management committees and other committees of Bega Valley Shire Council
• Volunteers performing services on behalf of Council
• Any other people who perform public official functions and whose conduct and activities could be investigated by an investigating authority

Any of the above categories of people doing work for or on behalf of Council are encouraged to report any of the following:

• corrupt behaviour, including theft and fraud
• maladministration
• serious and substantial waste of Council resources
• inappropriate use of government information

In making such disclosures, the persons will be protected by Council under the provisions of the may avail themselves of the protections provided by the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994.
Staff are encouraged to report known and suspected wrongdoing within the Council under the relevant policy, including:

- behaviour of Councillors and staff policy, Code of Conduct, payment of expenses and Provision of Facilities to Councillors Procedure
- corrupt behaviour, maladministration, serious and substantial waste and inappropriate use of government information – this Public Interest Disclosures Reporting Procedure
- Access to information policy and procedures
- bullying and harassment – the Preventing Workplace Harassment and Bullying Procedure
- grievances/disputes – the Grievance Resolution Procedure

The General Manager has also stated she expects all staff to encourage and support those who have made disclosures, and to protect and maintain their confidentiality. They must not victimise or harass anyone who has made a disclosure. The latter is a serious offence under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 and can involve criminal and civil penalties in addition to employment related Council disciplinary measures.

What should be reported?

You should report any wrongdoing you see within the Bega Valley Shire Council.

Reports about the four categories of serious wrongdoing – corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, and government information contravention – will be dealt with under the Act as protected disclosures and according to this procedure.

**Corrupt conduct**

Corrupt conduct is the dishonest or partial exercise of official functions by a public official.

For example, this could include:

- the improper use of knowledge, power or position for personal gain or the advantage of others
- acting dishonestly or unfairly, or breaching public trust
- a member of the public influencing or trying to influence a public official to use their position in a way that is dishonest, biased or breaches public trust.

For more information about corrupt conduct, see the NSW Ombudsman’s guideline on what can be reported.

**Maladministration**

Maladministration is conduct that involves action or inaction of a serious nature that is contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory or based wholly or partly on improper motives.

For example, this could include:

- making a decision and/or taking action that is unlawful
- refusing to grant someone a licence for reasons not related to the merits of their application.

For more information about maladministration, see the NSW Ombudsman’s guideline on what can be reported.

**Serious and substantial waste in local government**

Serious and substantial waste is the uneconomical, inefficient or ineffective use of resources that could result in the loss or wastage of local government money. This includes all revenue, loans and other money collected, received or held by, for or on account of the Council.
For example, this could include:
- poor project management practices leading to projects running over time
- having poor or no processes in place for a system involving large amounts of public funds.

For more information about serious and substantial waste, see the NSW Ombudsman’s guideline on what can be reported.

**Government information contravention**

A government information contravention is a failure to properly fulfil functions under the *Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Act 2009*.

For example, this could include:
- destroying, concealing or altering records to prevent them from being released
- knowingly making decisions that are contrary to the legislation
- directing another person to make a decision that is contrary to the legislation.

For more information about government information contravention, see the NSW Ombudsman’s guideline on what can be reported.

**Other wrongdoing**

Although reports about the previous four categories of conduct can attract the specific protections of the Act, you should report all activities or incidents you believe are wrong.

For example, these could include:
- harassment or unlawful discrimination
- reprisal action against a person who has reported wrongdoing
- practices that endanger the health or safety of staff or the public.

These types of issues should be reported to a supervisor, in line with the Bega Valley Shire Council’s policies.

- Council’s policies and procedures are available on the intranet and the Council’s web page

Even if these reports are not dealt with as protected disclosures, the Bega Valley Shire Council will consider each matter and make every attempt to protect the staff member making the report from any form of reprisal.

**When will a report be protected?**

Bega Valley Shire Council will support any staff who report wrongdoing. For a report to be considered a protected disclosure, it has to meet all of the requirements under the Act. These requirements are:

- The person making the disclosure must honestly believe on reasonable grounds the information shows or tends to show wrongdoing.

Note – to believe on reasonable grounds you need more than mere suspicion or just be repeating some hearsay. Reasonable grounds could be that you have observed actual inappropriate behaviour, or you have seen documents that do not reconcile with observations (e.g. a stock record says 20 items were received but only 10 can be accounted for).

- The report has to be made to one or more of the following:
- a position nominated in this procedure
• the General Manager
• one of the investigating authorities nominated in the Act – see section below

Reports by staff and Councillors will not be considered to be protected disclosures if they:
• mostly question the merits of government policy, including the policy of the governing body of the Council.
• are made with the sole or substantial motive of avoiding dismissal or other disciplinary action.

How to make a report

You can report wrongdoing in writing, including by email, or verbally, in person or by telephone. You are encouraged to make a report in writing as this can help to avoid any confusion or misinterpretation. A report template/form is available on Council’s intranet for use by Council staff and on Council’s web site under this procedure for use by those external to the Council such as volunteers, contractors etc.

If a report is made verbally, the person receiving the report must make a comprehensive record of the disclosure and ask the person making the disclosure to sign this record. The staff member should keep a copy of this record.

If you are concerned about being seen making a report, ask to meet in a discreet location away from the workplace.

Can a report be anonymous?

There will be some situations where you may not want to identify yourself when you make a report. Although these reports will still be dealt with by Bega Valley Shire Council, it is best if you identify yourself. This allows us to provide you with any necessary protection and support, as well as feedback about the outcome of any investigation into the allegations. It also enables us to contact you for further information or clarification, if required.

It is important to realise that an anonymous disclosure may not prevent you from being identified. If we do not know who made the report, it is very difficult for us to prevent any reprisal action.

Maintaining confidentiality

Bega Valley Shire Council realises many staff, contractors or volunteers will want their report to remain confidential. This can help to prevent any action being taken against you for reporting wrongdoing.

We are committed to keeping your identity, and the fact you have reported wrongdoing, confidential. However there may be situations where this may not be possible or appropriate. We will discuss with you whether it is possible to keep your report confidential.

If confidentiality cannot be maintained, we will develop a plan to support and protect you from risks of reprisal. You will be involved in developing this plan. You will also be told if your report will be dealt with under the Council’s Code of Conduct, as this may mean certain information will have to be tabled at a Council meeting.

If you report wrongdoing, you should only discuss your report with those dealing with it. This will include the Public Officer and the General Manager. If you discuss your report more broadly, you may affect the outcome of any investigation.

Who can receive a report within Bega Valley Shire Council?

You are encouraged to report general wrongdoing to your supervisor. However the Act requires that – for a report to be a protected disclosure – it must be made to a public official in accordance with the Council’s disclosure procedures. For Bega Valley Shire Council, this means the behaviour of Councillors and staff policy and any supporting procedures.
Any supervisor who receives a report they believe may be a protected disclosure must refer the staff member making the report to one of the positions listed below. The broader responsibilities of these positions are outlined below.

If you are Council staff member and your report involves a Councillor, you should make it to the General Manager or the Public Officer. If you are a Councillor and your report is about another Councillor, you should make it to the General Manager or the Mayor.

The following positions are the only staff within Bega Valley Shire Council who can receive a protected disclosure.

**General Manager**

You can report wrongdoing directly to the General Manager. The General Manager is responsible for:

- deciding if a report is a protected disclosure
- determining what needs to be done next, including referring it to other authorities
- deciding what needs to be done to correct the problem that has been identified.

The General Manager must make sure there are systems in place in Bega Valley Shire Council to support and protect staff who report wrongdoing. They are also responsible for referring actual or suspected corrupt conduct to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The General Manager is located in the Executive area of the Zingel Place, Bega Council administration building, telephone 6499 2222.

**Mayor**

If you are making a report about the General Manager, you should make your report to the Mayor. The Mayor is responsible for:

- deciding if a report is a protected disclosure
- determining what needs to be done next, including referring it to other authorities
- deciding what needs to be done to correct the problem that has been identified.

The Mayor must make sure there are systems in place in Bega Valley Shire Council to support and protect staff who report wrongdoing.

If the report is about the General Manager, the Mayor is also responsible for referring actual or suspected corrupt conduct to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Bega Valley Shire Council’s Mayor is located in the Executive area of the Zingel Place Bega Council administration building, telephone 6499 2222 - mobile listed on the Council’s website

**Public Officer**

The Public Officer has a central role in dealing with reports made by staff. The Public Officer receives them, assesses them, and refers them to the people within Council who can deal with them appropriately. This position also has the responsibility for collating statistics on protected disclosures and regularly reporting on them to the Ombudsman and annually in the Annual Report as required by the Legislation.

Council’s Public Officer, is located in the Bega Zingel Place administration centre on the ground floor; telephone 6499 2197 mobile 0419 000 987
Disclosures officers

Disclosures officers work with the Public Officer, and are responsible for receiving, forwarding and/or dealing with reports made in accordance with this policy in their areas if appropriate.

The disclosures officers at Bega Valley Shire Council are:

- Group Manager Planning and Environment Group (PEG)
- Group Manager Transport and Utilities Group (TUG), and
- Group Manager Community Relations and Leisure (CRL)

Who can receive a report outside of Bega Valley Shire Council?

Staff are encouraged to report wrongdoing within Bega Valley Shire Council, but internal reporting is not your only option. If you follow the guidance below, your report can still be a protected disclosure.

You can choose to make your report to an investigating authority. You can do this first, or at any stage after your initial report to the Bega Valley Shire Council. If your report is about the General Manager or the Mayor, you should consider making it to an investigating authority.

You can also choose to make a report to a Member of Parliament or a journalist, but only in limited circumstances.

Investigating authorities

The Act lists a number of investigating authorities in NSW that staff can report wrongdoing to and the categories of wrongdoing each authority can deal with.

In relation to Council, these authorities are:

- the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) — for corrupt conduct
- the Ombudsman — for maladministration
- the Police Integrity Commission (PIC) — for police misconduct
- the PIC Inspector — for disclosures about the PIC or its staff
- the Office of Local Government (OLG), Department of Premier and Cabinet — for serious and substantial waste in local government (reports about serious and substantial waste in State government agencies should be made to the Auditor General)
- the ICAC Inspector — for disclosures about the ICAC or its staff
- the Information Commissioner — for disclosures about a government information contravention.

You should contact the relevant authority for advice about how to make a disclosure to them. Contact details for each investigating authority are provided at the end of this procedure.

You should be aware it is very likely the investigating authority will discuss the case with Bega Valley Shire Council. We will make every effort to assist and cooperate with the investigating authority to ensure the matter is dealt with appropriately and there is a satisfactory outcome. We will also provide appropriate support and assistance to staff who report wrongdoing to an investigating authority.
Members of Parliament or journalists

To have the protections of the Act, staff reporting wrongdoing to a Member of Parliament (MP) or a journalist must have already made substantially the same report to one of the following:

- the General Manager
- a person nominated in this procedure
- an investigating authority in accordance with the Act.

Also, the Bega Valley Shire Council or investigating authority that received the report must have either:

- decided not to investigate the matter
- decided to investigate the matter, but not completed the investigation within six months of the original report
- investigated the matter but not recommended any action as a result
- not told the person who made the report, within six months of the report being made, whether the matter will be investigated.

Most importantly – to be protected under the Act – if you report wrongdoing to an MP or a journalist you will need to be able to prove that you have reasonable grounds for believing that the disclosure is substantially true and that it is in fact substantially true.

If you report wrongdoing to a person or an organisation not listed above, you will not be protected under the Act. This may mean you will be in breach of legal obligations or the Bega Valley Shire Council Code of Conduct – by, for example, disclosing confidential information.

For more information about reporting wrongdoing outside the Bega Valley Shire Council, contact the disclosures coordinator or the NSW Ombudsman’s Public Interest Disclosures Unit. Their contact details are provided at the end of this procedure.

Feedback to staff who report wrongdoing

Staff who report wrongdoing will be told what is happening in response to their report.

When you make a report, you will be given:

- an acknowledgement that your disclosure has been received
- the timeframe for when you will receive further updates
- the name and contact details of the people who can tell you what is happening.

This information will be given to you within two working days from the date you make your report.

After a decision is made about how your report will be dealt with, you will be given:

- information about the action that will be taken in response to your report
- likely timeframes for any investigation
- information about the resources available within Bega Valley Shire Council to handle any concerns you may have
- information about external agencies and services you can access for support
- a copy of this procedure and an acknowledgement of the receipt of your disclosure.
This information will be given to you within 10 working days from the date you make your report.

During any investigation, you will be given:

- information on the ongoing nature of the investigation
- information about the progress of the investigation and reasons for any delay
- advice if your identity needs to be disclosed for the purposes of investigating the matter, and an opportunity to talk about this.

At the end of any investigation, you will be given:

- enough information to show that adequate and appropriate action was taken and/or is proposed to be taken in response to your disclosure and any problem that was identified
- advice about whether you will be involved as a witness in any further matters, such as disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

Protection against reprisals

The Act provides protection for people reporting wrongdoing by imposing penalties on anyone who takes detrimental action substantially in reprisal for them making the protected disclosure.

Bega Valley Shire Council will not tolerate any reprisal action against staff who report wrongdoing. The criminal penalties that can be imposed include imprisonment or fines. Detrimental action is also misconduct that justifies disciplinary action, which can include termination of employment. People who take detrimental action against someone who have made a disclosure can also be required to pay damages for any loss suffered by that person.

Detrimental action means action causing, comprising or involving any of the following:

- injury, damage or loss
- intimidation or harassment
- discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to employment
- dismissal from, or prejudice in, employment
- disciplinary proceedings.

Responding to reprisals

Bega Valley Shire Council will act to protect staff who report wrongdoing from reprisals.

When a report is received, we will ensure a thorough risk assessment is conducted. This will identify any risks to the member of staff who reported the wrongdoing, as well as strategies to deal with those risks.

If you believe that detrimental action has been or is being taken against you or someone else who has reported wrongdoing in reprisal for making a report, you should tell your supervisor, the disclosures coordinator or the General Manager immediately.

All supervisors must report any suspicions they have that reprisal action against a staff member is occurring, or any reports that are made to them, to the Public Officer or the General Manager.

If the Public Officer becomes aware of reprisal action against a person who has made a disclosure, they will:

- ensure a senior and experienced member of staff, who has not been involved in dealing with the initial disclosure, will investigate the suspected reprisal
- give the results of that investigation to the General Manager for a decision
• give the results of that investigation to the Mayor for a decision if the allegation of reprisal action is about the General Manager

• if it has been established that reprisal action is occurring against someone who has made a disclosure, take all steps possible to stop that activity and protect the member of staff who made the disclosure

• take appropriate disciplinary or criminal action against anyone proven to have taken or threatened any action in reprisal for making a disclosure.

If you report reprisal action, you will be kept informed of the progress of any investigation and the outcome.

The General Manager may issue specific directions to help protect against reprisals. If the allegation of reprisal action is about the General Manager, the Mayor may issue similar directions. These may include:

• issuing warnings to those alleged to have taken reprisal action against the member of staff who made the disclosure

• relocating the member of staff who made the disclosure or the subject officer within the current workplace

• transferring the member of staff who made the disclosure or the staff member who is the subject of the allegation to another position for which they are qualified

• granting the member of staff who made the disclosure or the subject officer leave of absence during the investigation of the disclosure.

These directions will only be taken if the member of staff who made the disclosure agrees to it. The Public Officer will make it clear to other staff that this action was taken in consultation with the staff member and with management support – and it is not a punishment.

If you have reported wrongdoing and feel any reprisal action is not being dealt with effectively, contact the Ombudsman or the ICAC – depending on the type of wrongdoing you reported. Contact details for all these investigating authorities are included at the end of this policy.

Protection against legal action

If you make a disclosure in accordance with the Act, you will not be subject to any liability and no action, claim or demand can be taken against you for making the disclosure. You will not have breached any confidentiality or secrecy obligations and you will have the defence of absolute privilege in defamation.

Support for those reporting wrongdoing

Bega Valley Shire Council will make sure staff who have reported wrongdoing, regardless of whether they have made a protected disclosure, are provided with access to any professional support they may need as a result of the reporting process – such as stress management, counselling services, legal or career advice.

We also have Workforce and Administration staff who will support those who report wrongdoing. They are responsible for initiating and coordinating support, particularly to those who are suffering any form of reprisal.

To access such support staff, persons making a protected disclosure should contact:

• Executive Manager | Organisational Development and Governance 6499 2197

• Work Health and Safety Coordinator 6499 2258

All supervisors must notify Council’s Public Officer if they believe a staff member is suffering any detrimental action as a result of disclosing wrongdoing.
Sanctions for making false or misleading disclosures

It is important all staff are aware that it is a criminal offence under the Act to wilfully make a false or misleading statement when reporting wrongdoing.

Support for the subject of a report

Bega Valley Shire Council is committed to ensuring staff who are the subject of a report of wrongdoing are treated fairly and reasonably. If you are the subject of a report, you will be:

- treated fairly and impartially
- told your rights and obligations under our policies and procedures
- kept informed during any investigation
- given the opportunity to respond to any allegation made against you
- told the result of any investigation.

Review

This procedure will be reviewed by Council every twelve months. For any advice or guidance about this review, the Council officer doing the review may contact the NSW Ombudsman’s Public Interest Disclosures Unit.

More information

A flowchart of the procedures at Bega Valley Shire Council is attached. A template showing the information needed in relation to any Public Interest Disclosure is also attached and is available on Council’s intranet and website.

References for this Procedure include, but are not limited to:

- Bega Valley Shire Council Policies and procedures:
  - Code of Conduct
  - Code of Meeting Practice
  - Child Services and Protection Policies and procedures
  - Conditions of employment policy and procedures
  - Grievance Resolution Procedure
  - Information Technology - Acceptable Use Policy
  - Private works policy
  - Work Health & Safety Policy and procedures particularly preventing workplace harassment and bullying
  - Procurement of assets and services policy and procedures

- External References:
  - *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*
  - NSW Ombudsman: Public Interest Disclosures Guidelines 2011
  - NSW Ombudsman: Model Internal Reporting Policy 2011
  - Ombudsman’s fact Sheet: Thinking about reporting serious wrongdoing?
More information around protected disclosures is available on Council’s intranet. Staff can also access advice and guidance from Bega Valley Shire Council’s Public Officer and the NSW Ombudsman's website at [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au).

**Resources**

The contact details for external investigating authorities that staff can make a protected disclosure to or seek advice from are listed below.

**For disclosures about corrupt conduct:**

- **Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)**
  
  Phone: 02 8281 5999  
  Toll free: 1800 463 909  
  Tel. typewriter (TTY): 02 8281 5773  
  Facsimile: 02 9264 5364  
  Email: icac@icac.nsw.gov.au  
  Address: Level 21, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000

- **NSW Ombudsman**
  
  Phone: 02 9286 1000  
  Toll free (outside Sydney metro): 1800 451 524  
  Tel. typewriter (TTY): 02 9264 8050  
  Facsimile: 02 9283 2911  
  Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au  
  Address: Level 24, 580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

**For disclosures about maladministration:**

- **Information Commissioner**
  
  Toll free: 1800 463 626  
  Facsimile: 02 8114 3756  
  Email: oicinfo@oic.nsw.gov.au  
  Address: Level 11, 1 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000

**For disclosures about breaches of the GIPA Act:**

- **Division of Local Government in the Department of Premier and Cabinet**
  
  Phone: 02 4428 4100  
  Tel. typewriter (TTY): 02 4428 4209  
  Facsimile: 02 4428 4199  
  Email: dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au  
  Address: 5 O’Keefe Avenue, Nowra, NSW 2541
If a Group Manager, Executive Manager, manager or supervisor receives a disclosure or complaint by a staff member, volunteer, or contractor in relation to a council official’s behaviour that involves or appears to involve:

- corrupt behaviour, including theft and fraud
- maladministration
- serious and substantial waste of Council resources
- inappropriate use of government information

If a disclosure appears to be in the nature of a protected disclosure, they should tell the person making the disclosure that it appears to be a protected disclosure and promptly refer the person to one of the following:

- General Manager
- Public Officer

In addition, the Group Manager, Executive Manager, manager or supervisor receiving the complaint must keep the matter confidential and only discuss it with persons authorised to receive and investigate such protected disclosures (namely, the General Manager, or Public Officer).