

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management  
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Governance Policy  
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Public Interest Disclosures Policy

# Public Interest Disclosures Policy

<b>Date Created:</b>	June 2013
<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	August 2023
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Corporate Governance Coordinator
<b>Edits/Amendments:</b>	Updated to new Policy format Updated document links
<b>Version Number:</b>	6.0
<b>Date Approved:</b>	29 August 2023
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	August 2026

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) responsibilities, as a public body, under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* ("Act").

The main responsibilities are:

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

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

## 2. Scope

Employees referred to in this policy applies to employees under categories A, B and C including CMA Board members.

## 3. Definitions

**CEO** – Chief Executive Officer

**Employee** – any person directly engaged by GB CMA;

Category A – under an employment contract,

Category B – as a GB CMA volunteer,

Category C – under a GB CMA student placement contract

**IBAC** – Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission

## 4. Policy

At the CMA we are proud of our ethical standard. We are committed to the highest standards of public service in managing land and water resources in the Goulburn Broken region of Victoria, however, every organization is susceptible to corrupt or improper conduct or detrimental action.

The CMA encourages CMA Directors, members of Board Committees, members of Advisory Groups, employees, and community members to make a PID if they believe the CMA or someone at the CMA is engaged in improper conduct.

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

The CMA will not tolerate any reprisals to any person for making a PID.

**What is improper conduct and detrimental action?**

*What can public interest disclosures (PIDs) be made about?*

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

**Who can make a disclosure?**

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

**Making a disclosure**

The CMA is not permitted to receive disclosures made under the Act. A disclosure must be made directly to the IBAC, as per the GOV 011 Public Interest Disclosures Procedure.

A PID should not be discussed with the CMA unless permission has been obtained from IBAC.

The CMA has appointed a Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator. This person is responsible for handling enquiries about the CMA's obligations under the Act, who can be contacted using the following details:

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES COORDINATOR

GOULBURN BROKEN CMA

168 Welsford Street SHEPPARTON

Phone: 03 5822 7700

Email: [reception@gbcma.vic.gov.au](mailto:reception@gbcma.vic.gov.au)

For more information about Public Interest Disclosures see:

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

## 5. Standards (or References)

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012

Public Interest Disclosure Regulations 2019

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011

IBAC Reporting Corruption webpage:

a) <https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/reporting-corruption>

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

a) Guidelines for handling public interest disclosures –

<https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/guidelines-for-making-and-handling-protected-disclosures>

b) Guidelines for public interest disclosure welfare management

<https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/guidelines-for-protected-disclosure-welfare-management>

Freedom of Information Act 1982

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

GB CMA's Employment Assistance Program

## Confidentiality

The Goulburn Broken CMA takes its obligations under the Act seriously. This includes the requirement to protect the identity and the matters disclosed under the Act.

It is a criminal offence under the Act to disclose information connected with a disclosure, made in accordance with the Act, including the identity of the discloser. Breaching confidentiality obligations can result in financial penalties and imprisonment. Maintaining confidentiality in relation to protected disclosure matters is crucial, among other things, in ensuring reprisals are not made against a disclosure.

## 6. Relates to

GOV 011 Public Interest Disclosures Procedure

Code of conduct for Victorian public sector employees

## 7. Replaces

GOV 010 Protected Disclosures Policy version 5.

## 8. Communication of the Policy

All employees will receive information about the policy at induction and will be provided with electronic access or a written copy of the policy after any revisions.

The approved policy will be available to all staff on the Goulburn Broken CMA portal site.

## 9. Review

The Corporate Program Manager will review this policy every three years and forward to the Audit Risk and Compliance Committee for endorsement.

## 10. Consultation

The Goulburn Broken CMA is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Goulburn Broken CMA will involve employees both formally and informally in workplace change that would impact on its employees.

### **Authorisation and Endorsement**

Final Version 6.0 endorsed at Audit Risk and Compliance Committee Meeting Number ARCC 144 held on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

Approved at Board Meeting GBB287 on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023.