

Whistleblower Guidelines (Plain English Version)

What is a whistleblower?

A whistleblower is someone who sees an organisation doing something against the law or corrupt (not honest, or a bribe, etc.) and tells the authorities. The authorities can mean the state ombudsman, the police or the government department that funds the organisation. Authorities can also mean a manager or CEO in the organisation.

Why does Vicdeaf have a whistleblower procedure?

Vicdeaf has many policies about how it should work. These policies include legal and ethical standards that must be followed. It is wrong if someone who works at Vicdeaf breaks the legal and ethical standards.

You may see someone at Vicdeaf breaking the standards. Or you may suspect that the standards are broken. You can feel afraid to tell.

The reason Vicdeaf has the “Whistleblower Procedure” is to let you know that you do not have to be afraid to tell. This procedure tells you how you can tell. Also, the Victorian government has a law that will protect you or anyone who tells. This law is called the Whistleblowers Protection Act (2001).

Vicdeaf wants you to tell if you truly believe that anyone at Vicdeaf has broken our policies about legal and ethical standards. We want to make sure that we act on what you say we are doing wrong.

What are some of the wrong things that a whistleblower tells about?

A whistleblower tells about very serious and bad behaviours. Examples of this means:

- Vicdeaf gets money from the government to run case management services, but uses it to pay for fixing up the building;
- Vicdeaf refuses to buy good, healthy food for the Luckie Street residents and this means the Deaf people living there are always hungry and sick;

This is a few examples. There are many other examples of the type of wrong things that a whistleblower should tell about. Other examples are:

- anything that is illegal or against the law

- stealing or fraud
- corrupt (dishonest) activity
- wasting funds or resources
- abuse of authority (e.g. employee keeps money Vicdeaf has raised through fundraising activities)

It is important to understand that being a whistleblower is not when you are unhappy or have a grievance about Vicdeaf. There is a different policy and procedure for how to improve things when you are unhappy about Vicdeaf. It is called Grievance Procedure for Staff (QP-HR-09).

To be a whistleblower means you need to report something that is very seriously wrong. This means something that is illegal or against the law.

If you need help understanding the difference with a grievance or a Whistleblowing incident then you can come to human resources or the CEO for help.

Who is protected by Vicdeaf's whistleblower procedure?

Everyone is:

- all people who work at Vicdeaf (full time, part time, casual, etc.)
- people from the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community, and
- people from the hearing community.

Who can you tell about what you see or what you think is wrong?

At Vicdeaf you can tell:

- your supervisor or manager
- the Human Resources (HR) manager
- any senior manager
- the CEO

You may not feel you can talk to anyone at Vicdeaf about what is wrong. Then you should go to the Ombudsman of Victoria for help. To find out more about the Ombudsman, go to www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

How do you tell someone about what you see or what you think is wrong?

You have can write down your concerns in a letter. You can sign your name or leave it blank (this is called anonymous).

You can ring by voice or by TTY (direct or through the relay service). You can say your name or not – so this also means you can be anonymous.

You can meet with either staff from Vicdeaf or someone at the Ombudsman and tell the person face-to-face. This way, you can tell in English or Auslan, but it will mean the person you tell knows who you are.

After you make your report, what will happen?

If you tell Vicdeaf, we will investigate (look into) what you have told us. We promise that we will do this completely and honestly. Then we will tell you what we found out. We will not tell anyone your name or exactly what you have said. And if you work at Vicdeaf, we will not put any information on your file about what you have told us.

If you tell the Ombudsman or the police or government department, they will do their own investigation to look into what you have told them.

How will this procedure help you if you become a whistleblower?

For people who work at Vicdeaf, this procedure means that we cannot punish you or discriminate against you. It also means that we will do all we can to protect you from being harmed because you told.

For clients of Vicdeaf, this procedure means that we cannot punish you or stop giving you services because you told.

Who is responsible for this procedure?

Vicdeaf's CEO.

Other documents from the Vicdeaf Quality System that are linked to this procedure:

Whistleblower Policy (2.24)

Whistleblower Procedure (QP-HR-07)

Grievance Procedure for Staff (QP-HR-09)