

QP-CP-07 Whistleblower Procedure

Purpose: The Whistleblower procedure has been created to ensure that people can outline their concerns about actual or genuinely suspected breaches of Vicdeaf's ethical and legal standards without fear of punishment or feeling threatened by doing so.

Scope: This procedure applies to all employees/volunteers of Vicdeaf, whether full time, part time or casual at any level of the organisation. The procedure also applies to members of the public and community.

Legislative Context:

- Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001
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Statement of Procedure: Vicdeaf's Code of Conduct and our policies have been created to ensure high standards of conduct and ethical behavior in all our undertakings as an organisation.

The Whistleblower Procedure has been adopted to ensure that people can raise concerns raising actual or suspected contravention of our ethical and legal standards without fear of reprisal or feeling threatened in the process.

The procedure aims to:

- Encourage people to report and issue if they genuinely believe someone has contravened our Code of Conduct, policies or the law;
- Outline how Vicdeaf will properly deal with all reported serious misconduct or unethical behaviour; and
- Assist in ensuring that serious misconduct or unethical behaviour is identified and dealt with appropriately.

This procedure is also in a Plain English Version – to access please click on this link.

Actions: All employees/volunteers are encouraged to report any genuine matters or behaviour that they honestly believe contravene Vicdeaf's Code of Conduct, policies, procedures or the law.

What sort of concerns should be reported?

For the purpose of making a report under this policy, matters may include any actual or genuinely suspected:

- Conduct or practices which are illegal or breach any law;
- Corrupt activities;
- Theft, fraud or misappropriation of funds;
- Significant mismanagement or unlawful waste of funds and resources;
- Abuse of authority;
- Serious harm to public health, safety or environment or the health and safety of any Vicdeaf employee; or
- Any action taken against, or harm suffered by an employee as a result of making a report under this policy.

Who can make a report?

Any person i.e. a staff member, member of the public/community can make a report.

If any of these people believe, on reasonable grounds, that Vicdeaf, a staff member or volunteer, or a contractor of Vicdeaf, is involved in or proposes to be involved in corrupt or detrimental behaviour can make a report.

A person who is thinking about making a report must be convinced of the truth of their concerns, have reasonable grounds for believing that the alleged conduct has occurred, and will be required to substantiate any allegations.

A report can be made in Auslan, verbally or in writing and can also be made anonymously.

Who can you talk to?

If you become aware of any matter or behaviour you think breaches Vicdeaf's Code of Conduct, policies or the law then you should:

- Take the matter up with your immediate supervisor or manager
- Report the matter to your Human Resources Manager or a more Senior Manager.
- Report the matter to the CEO.
- If you do not feel comfortable reporting the matter to any internal person then you can report the matter to the Ombudsman of Victoria. For further information go to www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

What happens after a report is made?

Vicdeaf will investigate all reported concerns appropriately and will, where applicable, provide feedback regarding the investigation's outcome. Vicdeaf will take the necessary course of action in response to a report and if no action is taken we will give you an explanation.

Your identity and the fact you have made a report and the contents of the report will be kept confidential and no details of your participation in the process will be included in your personnel file or performance review. The report will not be disclosed to anyone except those who are actively involved in investigating the matters raised in the report.

What happens to you as a whistleblower?

You will not be discriminated against or disadvantaged in your employment with Vicdeaf for making a report in accordance with this policy, nor will you receive reprisals due to your actions in making a report. Vicdeaf will take all reasonable steps to ensure that adequate and appropriate protection is being provided for those who, in good faith, make a report. This protection applies if the matter is proven or not, regardless of whether it is reported to an external authority.

Whistleblowing is not about airing a grievance. It's about reporting real or perceived malpractice. A report may damage the career prospects and reputation of people who are the subject of serious allegation and therefore if your report is not made in good faith or found to be malicious, deliberately misleading or frivolous, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

Responsibilities of the Procedure

The CEO has overall responsibility for this procedure.

Work Documentation:

Whistleblower Policy	PL.CP.2.24
Grievance Procedure for Staff	QP-HR-09
Whistleblower Guidelines (Plain English Version)	DOC-CP-37

Definitions:

Whistleblower: The term for an employee who "blows the whistle" on an employer. In other words, an employee who reports to the authorities an employer's illegal action or practice. Whistleblowers are entitled to a number of protections under state and federal law.

Disclosure: The act or process of revealing or uncovering.