

PROTECTED DISCLOSURE

Statement of Policy

For disclosure to be effective in ending wrongdoing and protecting the whistleblower, it has to be viewed not as betrayal or disloyalty to an organisation, but as a service to society.

Eastcoast Housing has robust internal disclosure processes. Employees must feel that they can come forward and report any suspected wrongdoing without fear of retribution or retaliation.

If Eastcoast Housing is unresponsive or the process is unsatisfactory, whistleblowers must then have a clear channel for reporting wrongdoing to regulators or law enforcement.

NB: The following information is taken from the DFFHS website.

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1. What is a protected disclosure?

Protected disclosures used to be known as whistleblowing.

A protected disclosure is a disclosure made in line with the **Protected Disclosures Act 2012** (this act replaced the **Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001**).

2. Purpose of the Protected Disclosure Act

The purpose of the Protected Disclosure Act is to:

- Encourage and facilitate disclosures of improper conduct and detrimental action made in reprisal by public officers and public bodies
- Provide protection for people who make disclosures or who may suffer detrimental action in reprisal for those disclosures
- Provide confidentiality of the content of disclosures and the identity of people who make them.

3. What kind of protections do protected disclosures have?

Once an allegation has been formally assessed as a protected disclosure, the discloser receives:

- Immunity from civil and criminal liability and disciplinary action for making the disclosure
- Immunity from liability for breaching confidentiality provisions
- Protection from actions in defamation for making the disclosure
- The right to sue for damages or to seek an injunction to stop actions in reprisal
- Protection of your identity and any information that would lead to your identification.

4. Who can make a disclosure?

Any individual or group of individuals may make a disclosure.

5. What can I make a disclosure about?

You may make a disclosure about the improper conduct of and detrimental action taken by public bodies or public officers performing public functions. This includes the department, its offices and agencies as well as statutory authorities in the portfolio of the department.

Improper conduct is defined as:

- Corrupt conduct or

- Specified conduct that is not corrupt conduct but that, if proved, would constitute:
 - a criminal offence
 - reasonable grounds for dismissing, dispensing with or otherwise terminating the services of the officer engaged in the conduct.

6. How do I make a disclosure?

6.1 Protected Disclosures (formerly Whistleblowers)

- Email protected.disclosure@dhhs.vic.gov.au
- Call the Protected Disclosure Hotline on 1300 131 431
- Write to DHHS Protected Disclosures, GPO Box 4057, Melbourne VIC 3001.

6.2 Management

- Your manager, team leader, Director or Deputy Secretary
- Any manager, Director or Deputy Secretary
- The Secretary.

6.3 Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC)

- Use the [IBAC online complaint form](#)
- Call 1300 735 135
- In person: level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne.

If your disclosure is about a ministerial officer or a statutory entity or office within the department's portfolio, you should contact IBAC.

7. More information

You can contact the department's Protected Disclosure Coordinator or visit the [IBAC](#) website for more information on protected disclosures.