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### Scope

This Policy will apply to:

- Councillors;
- Council staff:
  - permanent employees, whether full-time or part-time;
  - temporary or casual employees;
  - consultants;
  - individual contractors working for City of Parramatta Council;
- employees of contractors providing services to City of Parramatta Council; and
- other people who perform Council official functions whose conduct and activities could be investigated by an investigating authority, including volunteers, the Parramatta Local Planning Panel, the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and all other advisory Committees.

The Policy also applies to public officials of another Council or public authority who report wrongdoing relating to City of Parramatta Council.

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### Purpose

Council does not tolerate corrupt conduct, maladministration or serious waste of public money. The purpose of this Policy is to establish an internal reporting system for staff and Councillors to report wrongdoing without fear of reprisal. The Policy sets out who you can report wrongdoing to in City of Parramatta Council, what can be reported and how reports of wrongdoing will be dealt with by City of Parramatta Council.

This Policy is designed to compliment normal communication channels between supervisors and staff. Staff are encouraged to raise matters of concern at any time

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with their supervisors, but also have the option of making a report about a public interest issue in accordance with this Policy and the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID Act).

This Policy is just one in the suite of Council’s complaint handling policies. Further relevant polices are:

- Complaints Handling Policy;
- Code of Conduct; and
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy.

The internal reporting system established under this Policy is not intended to be used for staff grievances, which should be raised through the Grievance and Dispute Handling Policy. If a staff member makes a report under this Policy which is substantially a grievance, the matter will be referred to Human Resources to be dealt with in accordance with the Grievance and Dispute Handling Policy.

## Policy

You should report any suspected wrongdoing within City of Parramatta Council, or any activities or incidents you see within Council that you believe are wrong. Council is committed to encouraging and supporting the reporting of wrongdoing and to protect those who make public interest disclosures from any adverse action as a result of their report and keeping confidential their identity where possible.

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

The PID Act protects reporters from detrimental action being taken against them because they have made, or are believed to have made, a public interest disclosure. It does not protect reporters from disciplinary or other management action where Council has reasonable grounds to take such action.

## What can be reported?

Reports about five categories of serious misconduct:

- corrupt conduct;
- maladministration;

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- serious and substantial waste of public money;
- government information contravention (a breach of the GIPA Act); and
- Local Government pecuniary interest contravention,

which otherwise meet the criteria of a public interest disclosure, will be dealt with under the PID Act and according to this Policy. Details about these types of conduct are outlined below. More information about what can be reported under the PID Act can be found in the NSW Ombudsman’s Guideline B2 “What should be reported?”.

All other wrongdoing or suspected wrongdoing should be reported and dealt with in line with the relevant policies. This might include:

- harassment or unlawful discrimination;
- practices that endanger the health or safety of staff or the public.

Even if these reports are not dealt with as public interest disclosures, City of Parramatta Council recognises such reports may raise important issues. We will respond to all reports and make every attempt to protect the staff member making the report from reprisal. For further information, see:

- Code of Conduct;
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention Po
- Grievance and Dispute Handling Policy;
- Complaints Handling Policy;
- Workplace Bullying & Harassment Policy;
- Work Health Safety Policy, Procedure and Statement;
- Drug and Alcohol Policy;
- Smoke Free Workplace Policy;
- Interaction Between Councillors And Staff; and
- Statement of Business Ethics.

### 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 Council official being influenced by a member of public to use their position in a way that is dishonest, biased or breaches public trust.

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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 an approval for reasons that are not related to the merits of their application.

Serious and substantial waste of public money

Serious and substantial waste is the uneconomical, inefficient or ineffective use of resources that could result in losing or wasting public money.

For example, this could include:

- not following a competitive tendering process for a large scale contract
- having inadequate or no processes in place for a system involving large amounts of public funds.

Government information contravention (Breach of the GIPA Act)

A breach of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) is a failure to properly fulfil functions under that Act.

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;
- intentionally overlooking documents that are clearly covered by an access application;
- directing another person to make a decision that is contrary to the legislation.

Local Government pecuniary interest contravention

A Local Government pecuniary interest contravention is a failure to comply with requirements under the *Local Government Act 1993* relating to the management of pecuniary interests. These include obligations to lodge disclosure of interests returns, disclose pecuniary interests at Council and Council committee meetings and leave the meeting while the matter is being discussed. A pecuniary interest is an interest

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that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person.

For example, this could include:

- a senior Council staff member recommending a family member for a Council contract and not declaring the relationship
- a Councillor participating in consideration of a DA for a property they or their family have an interest in.

## Procedure

### The role of Council Staff and Councillors

Staff and Councillors play an important role in contributing to a workplace where known or suspected wrongdoing is reported and dealt with appropriately. All Council staff and Councillors are obliged to:

- report all known or suspected wrongdoing and support those who have made reports of wrongdoing;
- if requested, assist those dealing with the report, including supplying information on request, cooperating with any investigation and maintaining confidentiality;
- treat any staff member or person dealing with a report of wrongdoing with courtesy and respect; and
- respect the rights of any person the subject of reports.

Staff and Councillors must not:

- make false or misleading reports of wrongdoing; and/or
- victimise or harass anyone who has made a report.

Additionally, the behaviour of all Council staff and Councillors involved in the internal reporting process must adhere to the City of Parramatta Council's Code of Conduct. A breach of the Code could result in disciplinary action.

Those persons who make disclosures in accordance with the PID Act will be protected from adverse actions as a result of their report.

### The role of Council

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City of Parramatta Council has a responsibility to establish and maintain a working environment that encourages staff and Councillors to report wrongdoing and supports them when they do. This includes keeping the identity of reporters confidential where practical and appropriate, and taking steps to protect reporters from reprisal and manage workplace conflict.

Council will assess all reports of wrongdoing it receives from staff and Councillors and deal with them appropriately. Once wrongdoing has been reported, Council takes 'ownership' of the matter. This means it is up to us to decide whether a report should be investigated, and if so, how it should be investigated and by whom. Council will deal with all reports of wrongdoing fairly and reasonably, and respect the rights of any person the subject of a report.

City of Parramatta Council must report on our obligations under the PID Act and statistical information about public interest disclosures in our annual report and to the NSW Ombudsman every six months.

To ensure Council complies with the PID Act and deals with all reports of wrongdoing properly, all staff and Councillors with roles outlined below and elsewhere in this Policy will receive training on their responsibilities.

### Roles of key positions

#### 1. Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has ultimate responsibility for maintaining the internal reporting system and workplace reporting culture, and ensuring that City of Parramatta Council complies with the PID Act. The CEO can receive reports from staff and Councillors and has a responsibility to:

- assess reports received by or referred to them, to determine whether or not the report should be treated as a public interest disclosure, and to decide how the report will be dealt with;
- deal with reports made under the Council's code of conduct in accordance with Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW;
- ensure there are strategies in place to support reporters, protect reporters from reprisal and manage workplace conflict that may arise in relation to a report;
- make decisions following any investigation or appoint an appropriate decision-maker;
- take appropriate remedial action where wrongdoing is substantiated or systemic problems are identified;

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- refer actual or suspected corrupt conduct to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC);
- refer any evidence of a reprisal offence under section 20 of the PID Act to the Commissioner of Police or the ICAC; and
- attend relevant training, maintain an awareness of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* and promote the PID Policy within Council to create an environment where staff are comfortable and confident to report wrongdoing.

## 2. Lord Mayor

### The Lord Mayor can receive reports from staff and Councillors about the CEO.

Where the Lord Mayor receives such reports, the Lord Mayor has a responsibility to:

- assess the reports to determine whether or not they should be treated as a public interest disclosure, and to decide how they will be dealt with;
- deal with reports made under the Council's Code of Conduct in accordance with the Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW;
- refer reports to an investigating authority, where appropriate;
- liaise with the Disclosures Coordinator to ensure there are strategies in place to support reporters, protect reporters from reprisal and manage workplace conflict that may arise in relation to a report;
- refer actual or suspected corrupt conduct to the ICAC;
- refer any evidence of a reprisal offence under section 20 of the PID Act to the Commissioner of Police or the ICAC; and
- attend relevant training, maintain an awareness of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* and promote the PID Policy within Council to create an environment where staff are comfortable and confident to report wrongdoing.

## 3. Disclosures Coordinator

The Disclosures Coordinator has a central role in Council's internal reporting system. The Disclosures Coordinator can receive and assess reports, and is the primary point of contact in Council for the reporter. The Disclosures Coordinator has a responsibility to:

- assess reports to determine whether or not a report should be treated as a public interest disclosure, and to decide how each report will be dealt with (either under delegation or in consultation with the CEO);

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- deal with reports made under the Council's code of conduct in accordance with Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW;
- attend relevant training, maintain an awareness of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* and promote the PID Policy within Council to create an environment where staff are comfortable and confident to report wrongdoing;
- coordinate Council's response to a report;
- acknowledge reports and provide updates and feedback to the reporter;
- assess whether it is possible and appropriate to keep the reporter's identity confidential;
- assess the risk of reprisal and workplace conflict related to or likely to arise out of a report, and develop strategies to manage any risk identified;
- where required, provide or coordinate support to staff involved in the reporting or investigation process, including protecting the interests of any officer the subject of a report;
- ensure Council complies with the PID Act; and
- provide six-monthly reports to the NSW Ombudsman in accordance with section 6CA of the PID Act.

#### 4. Disclosures Officers

Disclosures Officers are additional points of contact within the internal reporting system. They can provide advice about the system and the internal reporting Policy, receive reports of wrongdoing and assist staff and Councillors to make reports.

Disclosures Officers have a responsibility to:

- document in writing any reports received verbally, and have the document signed and dated by the reporter;
- make arrangements to ensure reporters can make reports privately and discreetly when requested, if necessary away from the workplace;
- discuss with the reporter any concerns they may have about reprisal or workplace conflict;
- carry out preliminary assessment and forward reports to the disclosures coordinator or CEO for full assessment; and
- attend/deliver relevant training, maintain an awareness of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* and promote the PID Policy within Council to create an environment where staff are comfortable and confident to report wrongdoing.

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## 5. Supervisors and Line Managers

Supervisors and Line Managers play an important role in managing the immediate workplace of those involved in or affected by the internal reporting process.

Supervisors and Line Managers should be aware of the internal reporting process (contained within this Policy) and are responsible for creating a local work environment where staff are comfortable and confident about reporting wrongdoing. They have a responsibility to:

- encourage staff to report known or suspected wrongdoing within the organisation and support staff when they do;
- identify reports made to them in the course of their work which could be public interest disclosures, and assist the staff member to make the report to an officer authorised to receive public interest disclosures under this Policy;
- implement local management strategies, in consultation with the disclosures coordinator, to minimise the risk of reprisal or workplace conflict in relation to a report; and
- notify the Disclosures Coordinator or CEO immediately if they believe a staff member is being subjected to reprisal as a result of reporting wrongdoing, or in the case of suspected reprisal by the CEO, notify the Lord Mayor.

### Assessment of Reports

All reports will be promptly and thoroughly assessed to determine what action will be taken to deal with the report and whether or not the report will be treated as a public interest disclosure.

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act* requires that the disclosure is acknowledged within 45 days of its receipt and including providing a copy of this Policy. Council aims to acknowledge disclosures more promptly than is required in the legislation.

Furthermore, the person who made the disclosure must be advised within six (6) months of the disclosure having been made of what action has been taken or is proposed to be taken in respect of the disclosure.

All disclosures must be referred by the CEO (or Lord Mayor if the disclosure is about the CEO) to the Disclosures Coordinator. The Disclosures Coordinator is responsible for assessing reports, in consultation with the CEO where appropriate. All reports will be assessed on the information available to the Disclosures Coordinator at the time. It is up to Disclosures Coordinator to decide whether an investigation should be carried out and how that investigation should be carried out. In assessing a report,

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Disclosures Coordinator may decide that the report should be referred elsewhere or that no action should be taken on the report.

All matters referred as a PID or assessed as a possible PID, including matters where no action has been taken, will be securely and confidentiality stored in the event of further reporting.

When will a report be treated as a Public Interest Disclosure?

Council will treat a report as a public interest disclosure if it meets the relevant criteria under the PID Act. These criteria are:

- the report must be about one of the following five categories of serious wrongdoing – corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, breach of the GIPA Act, or local government pecuniary interest contravention;
- the person making the disclosure must honestly believe on reasonable grounds that the information shows or tends to show wrongdoing;
- the report has to be made to either the CEO or, for reports about the CEO, the Lord Mayor, a position nominated in this Policy, an investigating authority or in limited circumstances to a Member of Parliament or journalist.

Reports by staff are not public interest disclosures if they:

- mostly question the merits of government policy;
- are made with the sole or substantial motive of avoiding dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Who can receive a report within Council?

Staff are encouraged to report general wrongdoing to their supervisor. However, the PID Act requires that for a report to be a public interest disclosure, it must be made to certain public officials defined in this Policy or any supporting procedures.

The following positions are the only people within Council who are authorised to receive a public interest disclosure. Any supervisor who receives a report that they believe may be a public interest disclosure is obliged to assist the staff member to make the report to one of the positions listed below. The broader responsibilities of these positions are outlined under Roles and Responsibilities.

If your report involves a Councillor, you should make it to the CEO. If your report relates to the CEO, you should make it to the Lord Mayor.

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Contact List – please refer to Council's intranet site, Insite, for individual contact details.

Disclosures Coordinator:  
Internal Ombudsman

Disclosures Officers

- Chief Executive Officer
  - Chief Executive Officer
  - Chief of Staff
- Executive Director Corporate Services
  - Chief of People & Culture Officer
  - Group Manager Legal Services
  - Chief Financial Officer
  - Head of IT
- Executive Director City Engagement & Experience
  - Group Manager City Identity
  - Group Manager City Engagement
  - Group Manager City Experience
- Executive Director City Assets & Operations
  - Group Manager City Operations
  - Group Manager City Assets & Environment
  - Group Manager Regulatory Services
- Executive Director City Planning & Design
  - Group Manager City Design
  - Group Manager City Planning
  - Group Manager Development & Traffic Services
- Executive Director Community Services
  - Group Manager Cultural Strategy
  - Group Manager City Assets Parramatta Square
  - Group Manager Social & Community Services
  - Riverside Theatre Director
- Executive Director Property Development
  - Group Manager Place Services
  - Group Manager Property Development
  - Group Manager Property, Security, Assets & Services
  - Group Manager, Project Delivery
- Group Manager City Strategy

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Who can receive a report outside of the City of Parramatta Council?

Staff and Councillors are encouraged to report wrongdoing within Council, but internal reporting is not your only option. In certain circumstances, you can also make a public interest disclosure to some external parties, as outlined below in Investigating Authorities and Members of Parliament and Journalists.

Investigating Authorities

The PID Act lists a number of investigating authorities in NSW that staff and Councillors can report wrongdoing to and the type of wrongdoing each authority can deal with. In certain circumstances, it may be preferable to make a report of wrongdoing to an investigating authority, for example a report about either the CEO or the Lord Mayor.

The relevant investigating authorities are the:

- Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) – for reports about corrupt conduct;
- NSW Ombudsman – for reports about maladministration
- Information Commissioner – for disclosures about a breach of the GIPA Act
- Office of Local Government – for disclosures about local Councils
- Auditor-General of the NSW Audit Office – to report serious and substantial waste.

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

You should be aware that the investigating authority may well discuss any such reports with 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, protections and assistance to staff or Councillors who report wrongdoing to an investigating authority, if we are made aware that this has occurred.

Members of Parliament or Journalists

There are only limited circumstances where reports to a Member of Parliament or a Journalist will have protections of the PID Act. To be covered under the PID Act,

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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 CEO;
- a person nominated in this Policy, including the Lord Mayor for reports about the CEO; and
- an investigating authority.

Also, Council or the investigating authority that received your initial 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; or
- 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 PID 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.

### Other external reporting

If you report wrongdoing to a person or authority that is not listed above, or make a report to an MP or journalist without following the steps outlined above, you will not be protected under the PID Act. This may mean you will be in breach of legal obligations or our Code of Conduct – by, for example, disclosing confidential information.

For more information about reporting wrongdoing outside Council, contact the Disclosures Coordinator or the NSW Ombudsman’s Public Interest Disclosures Unit. Their contact details are provided at the end of this Policy.

### How to make a Report

You can report wrongdoing in writing or verbally. You are encouraged to make a report in writing as this can help to avoid any confusion or misinterpretation. Council’s Public Interest Disclosure Internal Reporting Form (available on Insite) is also available for staff or Councillors to use to make a report.

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

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 the 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 what action is to be taken or has been taken to deal with the issues raised in the report, or the outcome of any investigation. It is important to realise that an anonymous disclosure may not prevent you from being identified by the subjects of the report or your colleagues. If we do not know who made the report, it is very difficult for us to prevent any reprisal should others identify you.

Feedback to staff who report wrongdoing

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

1. Acknowledgement

When you make a report, Council will contact you to confirm that your report has been received and to advise:

- the timeframe within which you will receive further updates; and
- the name and contact details of the people who can tell you what is happening or handle any concerns you may have.

After a decision is made about how your report will be dealt with, Council will send you an acknowledgment letter, providing:

- information about the action that will be taken in response to your report;
- the likely timeframes for any investigation or other action; and
- information about the internal and external resources or services available that you can access for support.

You will receive an acknowledgement within ten (10) working days from the date you make your report. We will also advise you if we decide to treat your report as a public interest disclosure and provide you with a copy of this Policy at that time, as required by the PID Act.

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NB: If you make a report which meets the requirements of the PID Act but the report was made under a statutory or legal obligation or incidental to the performance of your day to day functions, you will not receive an acknowledgement letter or a copy of this Policy.

## 2. Progress updates

While your report is being dealt with, such as by investigation or making other enquiries, you will be given:

- information about the progress of the investigation or other enquiries and reasons for any delay
- advice of any decision by the Council not to proceed with the matter
- information about whether your identity needs to be disclosed for the purposes of investigating the matter or making enquiries, and an opportunity to talk about this beforehand.

## 3. Feedback

Once the matter has been finalised 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 are likely to be called as a witness in any further matters, such as disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

### Maintaining Confidentiality

Council realises reporters may want their identity, and the fact they have made a report, to remain confidential. This can help to prevent any action being taken against them for reporting wrongdoing, such as the release of confidential information.

Where possible and appropriate we will take steps to keep your identity, and the fact you have reported wrongdoing, confidential. We will discuss with you whether it is possible to keep your identity confidential.

If confidentiality cannot be maintained, we will develop a plan to support and protect you from reprisal in consultation with you.

If you report wrongdoing, it is important that you only discuss your report with those responsible for dealing with it. This will include the Disclosures Coordinator and the

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CEO, or in the case of a report about the CEO, the Disclosures Coordinator and the Lord Mayor. The fewer people who know about your report, before and after you make it, the more likely it will be that we can protect you from any reprisal.

Any staff or Councillors involved in the investigation or handling of a report, including witnesses, are also required to maintain confidentiality and not disclose information about the process or allegations to any person except for those people responsible for handling the report.

### Managing the risk of reprisal and workplace conflict

When a staff member or Councillor reports wrongdoing, Council will undertake a thorough risk assessment to identify the risk to you of detrimental action in reprisal for reporting, as well as indirect but related risks of workplace conflict or difficulties. The risk assessment will also identify strategies to deal with those risks and determine the level of protection and support that is appropriate.

Depending on the circumstances, Council may:

- relocate the reporter or the staff member who is the subject of the allegation within the current workplace
- transfer the reporter or the staff member who is the subject of the allegation to another position for which they are qualified
- grant the reporter or the staff member who is the subject of the allegation leave of absence during the investigation of the disclosure.

These courses of action are not punishment and will only be taken in consultation with the reporter. Council uses the NSW Ombudsman's Public Interest Disclosures Guideline C4 – Assessing Risk of Reprisals and Conflict as the basis of its risk assessment.

### Protection against reprisals

Council will not tolerate any reprisal against staff or Councillors who report wrongdoing or are believed to have reported wrongdoing.

The PID Act provides protection for staff and Councillors who have made a public interest disclosure by imposing penalties on anyone who takes detrimental action against another person substantially in reprisal for that person making a public interest disclosure. These penalties also apply to cases where a person takes

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detrimental action against another because they believe or suspect the other person has made or may have made a public interest disclosure, even if they did not.

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; and
- disciplinary proceedings.

A person who is found to have committed a reprisal offence may face criminal penalties such as imprisonment and/or fines, and may be required to pay the victim damages for any loss suffered as a result of the detrimental action. Taking detrimental action in reprisal is also a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct which may result in disciplinary action. In the case of Councillors, such disciplinary action may be taken under the misconduct provisions of the Local Government Act 1993.

It is important for staff and Councillors to understand the nature and limitations of the protection provided by the PID Act.

### Responding to allegations of reprisal

If you believe that detrimental action has been or is being taken against you or someone else in reprisal for reporting wrongdoing, you should tell your supervisor, the Disclosures Coordinator or the CEO immediately. In the case of an allegation of reprisal by the CEO, you can report this to the Lord Mayor.

All supervisors and Disclosure Officers must notify the Disclosures Coordinator or the CEO if they suspect that reprisal against a staff member is occurring or has occurred, or if any such allegations are made to them. In the case of an allegation of reprisal by the CEO, the Lord Mayor can be notified.

If the City of Parramatta Council becomes aware of or suspects that reprisal is being, or has been taken, against a person who has made a disclosure, Council will:

- assess the allegation of reprisal to decide whether the report should be treated as a public interest disclosure and whether the matter warrants investigation or if other action should be taken to resolve the issue;

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- if the reprisal allegation warrants investigation, ensure this is conducted by a senior and experienced member of staff;
- if it is established that reprisal is occurring against someone who has made a report, take all steps possible to stop that activity and protect the reporter;
- take appropriate disciplinary action against anyone proven to have taken or threatened any action in reprisal for making a disclosure;
- refer any breach of Council's Code of Conduct (reprisal action) by a Councillor or the CEO to the Code of Conduct Complaints Coordinator (the Internal Ombudsman Shared Service) and depending on the nature of the complaint, to the Office of Local Government, and
- refer any evidence of an offence under section 20 of the PID Act to the ICAC or NSW Police Force.

If you allege reprisal, you will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation or other action taken in response to your allegation.

If you have reported wrongdoing and are experiencing reprisal which you believe is not being dealt with effectively, contact the Disclosures Coordinator (IOSS), the Office of Local Government, the Ombudsman or the ICAC (depending on the type of wrongdoing you reported). Contact details for these investigating authorities are included at the end of this Policy.

## Protection against legal action

If you make a public interest disclosure in accordance with the PID Act, you will not be subject to any liability, and no action, claim or demand can be taken against you for having made the public interest 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

Council will make sure that staff who have reported wrongdoing, regardless of whether their report is treated as a public interest disclosure, are provided with access to any professional support they may need as a result of the reporting process – such as stress management or counselling services.

Access to support may also be available for other staff involved in the internal reporting process where appropriate. Reporters and other staff involved in the process can discuss their support options with the Disclosures Coordinator.

Name of Policy		
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Council's Employee Assistance Policy can be found here:

<http://pccinsite/people/Human%20Resources/HR/EAP/Employee%20Assistance%20Program.tr5>

Details of Council's confidential employee assistance provider can be found here:

<https://accesseap.com.au/services/individuals-in-focus/counselling-services-eap>

#### Sanctions for making false or misleading statements

It is important all staff and Councillors are aware that it is a criminal offence under the PID Act to wilfully make a false or misleading statement when reporting wrongdoing. The City of Parramatta Council will not support staff or Councillors who wilfully make false or misleading reports. Such conduct may also be a breach of the Code of Conduct resulting in disciplinary action. In the case of Councillors, disciplinary action may be taken under the misconduct provisions of the Local Government Act 1993.

#### The rights of persons the subject of a report

Council is committed to ensuring staff or Councillors who are the subject of a report of wrongdoing are treated fairly and reasonably. This includes keeping the identity of any person the subject of a report confidential, where this is practical and appropriate.

If you are the subject of the report, you will be advised of the allegations made against you at an appropriate time and before any adverse findings. At this time, you will be:

- advised of the details of the allegation
- advised of your rights and obligations under the relevant related policies and procedures
- kept informed about the progress of any investigation
- given a reasonable opportunity to respond to any allegation made against you
- told the outcome of any investigation, including any decision made about whether or not further action will be taken against you.

Where the reported allegations against the subject officer are clearly wrong, or have been investigated and unsubstantiated, the subject officer will be supported by Council. The fact of the allegations and any investigation will be kept confidential unless otherwise agreed to by the subject officer.

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More information

Staff can seek advice and guidance from the Disclosures Coordinator (the IOSS on (02) 8757 9617) or at [internalombudsman@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au](mailto:internalombudsman@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au) and the NSW Ombudsman's website at [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au).

## Definitions

<i>Corrupt Conduct</i>	deliberate or intentional wrongdoing, not negligence or a mistake
<i>Disclosures Coordinator</i>	Council Officer responsible for managing Council's response to Public Interest Disclosures
<i>Disclosures Officers</i>	Council Officers trained to receive Public Interest Disclosures (ie, Any Level 2 or Level 3 Manager)
<i>ICAC</i>	Independent Commission Against Corruption
<i>Local Government Authority</i>	(a) A Council (b) A county Council within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1993
<i>Maladministration</i>	irregular and unauthorised use of public money or substantial mismanagement of public resources
<i>Pecuniary Interest</i>	private interests conflict with the duty to act in the public interest
<i>PID Act</i>	Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994
<i>Public Authority</i>	<i>Any public authority whose conduct or activities may be investigated by an investigating authority, and includes (without limitation) each of the following:</i>  (a) a public service agency; (b) a state owned corporation and any subsidiary of a state owned corporation (c) a local government authority (d) the NSW Police Force and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (e) the Department of Parliamentary Services, the Department of Legislative Assembly and the Department of the Legislative Council
<i>Public interest disclosure</i>	<i>That is, a disclosure of information that the person making the disclosure honestly believes, on reasonable grounds, shows or tends to show corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, government information contravention or local government pecuniary interest contravention, by Council, Councillors or staff or by another public authority or any of its officers. 'Public Interest Disclosure' is the new term for a protected disclosure.</i>
<i>Public official</i>	<i>An individual who is an employee of or otherwise in the service of a public authority</i>

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

**Internal Ombudsman Share Service**  
Phone: (02) 8757 9617

**Auditor General of New South Wales**  
Phone: (02) 9275 7100

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Email: [internalombudsman@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au](mailto:internalombudsman@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au)  
Web: [there needs to be a page for CoP]  
Address: 11 Northumberland Road  
Auburn NSW 2144

### 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](mailto:icac@icac.nsw.gov.au)  
Web: [www.icac.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au)  
Address: Level 21, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000

### Breaches of the GIPA Act:

Information Commissioner  
Toll free: 1800 472 679  
Facsimile: 02 8114 3756  
Email: [ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au)  
Web: [www.ipc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au)  
Address: Level 11, 1 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Email: [mail@audit.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@audit.nsw.gov.au)  
Web: [www.audito.nsw.gov.au](http://www.audito.nsw.gov.au)  
Address: GPO Box 12  
Sydney NSW 2001

### Maladministration:

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](mailto:nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au)  
Web: [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au)  
Address: Level 24, 580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

### Local Councils:

Office of Local Government  
Phone: 02 4428 4100  
Tel. typewriter (TTY): 02 4428 4209  
Facsimile: 02 4428 4199  
Email: [dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au)  
Web: [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au)  
Address: 5 O'Keefe Ave, Nowra, NSW 2541

## Associated documents

- Complaints Handling Policy
- Code of Conduct and Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for NSW Councils
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
- Grievance and Dispute Handling Policy
- Grievance and Dispute Handling Policy
- Workplace Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Work Health Safety Policy, Procedure and Statement
- Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Smoke Free Workplace Policy
- Interaction Between Councillors And Staff
- Statement of Business Ethics

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## Public Interest Disclosure Internal Report Form

To be completed by an internal reporter and submitted to a nominated Disclosures Officer  
(Refer to Council's Public Interest Disclosures Policy for further details)

Details of reporter (You can make an anonymous report by leaving this section blank)										
Name:										
Position:		Preferred Contact method <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Post								
Division/Unit:										
Telephone:										
Email:										
Postal address:										
Details of the wrongdoing being reported										
Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What happened?</li> <li>Where did this happen?</li> <li>When did this happen?</li> <li>Is it still happening?</li> </ul> <small>[Attach an additional page if required]</small>										
How did you become aware of this?										
Name and position of people involved in the wrongdoing: <small>[Attach an additional page if required]</small>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>Position</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Name	Position						
Name	Position									
Attach any additional relevant information or indicate where supporting evidence may be found:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Supporting evidence</th> <th>Attached</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Supporting evidence	Attached		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting evidence	Attached									
	<input type="checkbox"/>									
	<input type="checkbox"/>									
	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Name and position of other people who may have additional information:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>Position</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Name	Position						
Name	Position									
Statement										
I honestly believe that the above information shows or tends to show wrongdoing.										
<hr/>										
Signature of reporter <small>(Do not sign if you want to make an anonymous report)</small>	Date report submitted <small>(Essential information)</small>									

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