



Public Interest Disclosure Procedure

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| Classification | Procedure |
| Strategic reference | Goal 4 :Governance and Organisational Culture |
| Relevant legislation | <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018</i> <i>Public Interest Disclosure Regulations 2019</i> <i>Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012</i> |
| Relevant documents | <i>Public Interest Disclosure Policy</i> |
| Responsible officer | Chief Executive Officer |
| Version | 1.1 |
| Date adopted | 20 December 2023 |
| Date of effect | 30 January 2024 |
| Next review date | December 2027 |

1. Principal Officer – Statement of Intent

This Procedure has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of sections 12(4) and (5) of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* (the “PID Act”).

As Chief Executive Officer of Southern Mallee District Council, and designated Principal Officer for the purposes of the PID Act, I expect that the implementation and operation of the PID Act will encourage and facilitate:

- further transparency and accountability in the Council's administrative and management practices; and
- the Disclosure, in the public interest, of information about substantial risks to public health or safety, or to the environment, and about corruption, misconduct and maladministration in public administration.

This Procedure, and the Council's *Public Interest Disclosure Policy* (the “PID Policy”), are designed to enable that to occur, by ensuring that proper procedures are in place for the making of such Disclosures and for dealing with such Disclosures, and by providing appropriate protections for those who make such Disclosures.

I, and the other staff, officers and Council Members at Southern Mallee District Council remain deeply committed to the protection of informants who make public interest Disclosures in accordance with the objectives of the PID Act, and to the genuine and efficient consideration and action in relation to information provided to the Council via a public interest Disclosure, as contemplated and demonstrated by this Procedure.

Any questions about this Procedure or the Council's PID Policy should be directed in the first instance to the Responsible Officer, whose details are at Part 4 of this Procedure.

**Principal Officer and Chief Executive Officer
Southern Mallee District Council**



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2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Southern Mallee District Council (the “Council”) is committed to:

- upholding the principles of transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices;
- the protection of informants who make Public Interest Disclosures; and
- the genuine and efficient consideration and action in relation to information provided in a Public Interest Disclosure

and, therefore, encourages the making of appropriate Disclosures that reveal public interest information in accordance with this Procedure.

2.2. Council is also committed to:

- referring, as necessary, appropriate Disclosures to another Relevant Authority;
- where the Disclosure relates to Corruption, or serious or systemic Misconduct or Maladministration in public administration, reporting the Disclosure directly to the Office of Public Integrity (the “OPI”) in accordance with the Guidelines and the requirements of the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012* (the ICAC Act);
- otherwise facilitating the investigation of appropriate Disclosures in a manner which promotes fair and objective treatment of those involved; and
- Rectifying any substantiated wrongdoing to the extent practicable in all the circumstances.

2.3. This document explains the applicable procedures and processes that the Southern Mallee District Council has in place for making and dealing with appropriate Disclosures of public interest information, to ensure that the Southern Mallee District Council:

- properly fulfils its responsibilities under the PID Act and the ICAC Act;
- appropriately encourages and facilitates Disclosures of Public Interest Information, including environmental and health information regarding a location within the area of the Southern Mallee District Council;
- provides a process by which Disclosures may be made so that they are properly investigated;
- provides appropriate protection for those who make Disclosures in accordance with the Act; and
- recognises the need to appropriately support Informants, the Responsible Officer and, as appropriate, those Public Officers affected by any appropriate Disclosure.



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3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Procedure applies to appropriate Disclosures of Public Interest Information that are made in accordance with the PID Act, by public officers including Council Members, Officers and Employees of the Council, and by members of the public.
- 3.2. This Procedure is intended to complement the reporting framework under the ICAC Act, and designed to complement the existing communication channels within Council and to operate in conjunction with other existing policies (or their successors), including the:
- *Public Interest Disclosure Policy;*
 - *Fraud & Corruption Prevention Policy;*
 - *Employee Conduct Policy*
 - *Behavioural Management Policy (Council Members)*
 - *Behavioural Standards Policy (Council Members); and*
 - *Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy*

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Procedure all of the definitions provided in Council's PID Policy apply to this Procedure.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. The Principal Officer is responsible for:
- 5.1.1. ensuring that one or more appropriately qualified officers or employees of the Council are designated as responsible officers of the Council for the purposes of the PID Act and undertake any training required by the Public Interest Disclosure Regulations; and
 - 5.1.2. ensuring that the name and contact details of each responsible officer of the Council are made available to officers and employees of the Council; and
 - 5.1.3. the preparation and maintenance of this Procedure in accordance with the requirements of the PID Act and the Directions and Guidelines, in particular the Public Interest Disclosure Guidelines as provided by the Independent Commission Against Corruption SA
- 5.2. A person designated as a Responsible Officer for the Council:
- 5.2.1. must:
 - 5.2.1.1. receive appropriate Disclosures relating to the Council and ensure compliance with the PID Act and this Procedure in relation to any such Disclosures;



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- 5.2.1.2. make appropriate recommendations to the Principal Officer of the Council in relation to dealing with Disclosures, including any suggested changes to this Procedure or the *Public Interest Disclosure Policy*; and
 - 5.2.1.3. provide advice to officers and employees of the Council in relation to the administration of the PID Act; and
 - 5.2.1.4. complete any training courses approved by the Commissioner for the purposes of the *Public Interest Disclosure Regulations 2019* (the “PID Regulations”); and
- 5.2.2. may carry out any other functions relating to the PID Act.
- 5.3. A Council member, employee or officer of the Council is responsible for:
 - 5.3.1. ensuring they comply with this Procedure and the PID Policy when dealing with any Disclosure; and
 - 5.3.2. immediately referring any Disclosure of environmental and health information made to them by a member of the public, or any Disclosure of public interest information made to them by a public officer, to the Responsible Officer.
- 5.4. Upon receipt of a Disclosure, the Responsible Officer will deal with the Disclosure in accordance with the processes described in this Procedure, and within the authority granted by the PID Policy and the PID Act.
- 5.5. If an Informant believes that their Disclosure is not being dealt with appropriately or in accordance with this Procedure or the PID Policy, they should contact the Responsible Officer in the first instance.
- 5.6. The Responsible Officer may be contacted in person, by telephone or in writing. The relevant contact details are:
 - Telephone 08 8577 8002
 - Email council@southernmallee.sa.gov.au
 - Address

Confidential - Responsible Officer, Public Interest Disclosure
PO Box 49
PINNAROO SA 5304

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6.1. The identity of an Informant will be maintained as confidential in accordance with the PID Act.

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- 6.2. A recipient of an appropriate Disclosure may only divulge the identity of an Informant where:
- 6.2.1. the recipient believes on reasonable grounds that it is necessary to divulge the identity of the Informant in order to prevent or minimise an imminent risk of serious physical injury or death to any person, **and** the identity of the Informant is then divulged to a person or authority that the recipient believes on reasonable grounds is the most appropriate authority or person to be able to take action to prevent or minimise the imminent risk of serious physical injury or death to any person;
 - 6.2.2. the recipient has been issued with a notice from the OPI advising that the identity of the Informant is required by the OPI, in which case the recipient **must** disclose the identity of the Informant to the OPI;
 - 6.2.3. doing so is necessary for the matter to be properly investigated (but only to the extent necessary to ensure proper investigation); or
 - 6.2.4. the Informant consents to their identity being disclosed.
- 6.3. The PID Act does not expressly require any other information relating to a Disclosure (including, for example, the nature of the allegations) to be maintained as confidential, but in considering whether to further disclose other information provided as part of an appropriate Disclosure the Council should be mindful of the prohibition against Victimisation in the PID Act.
- 6.4. An Informant may wish to remain anonymous, but in that event must ensure that the allegation is sufficiently supported by the provision of necessary details and evidence to enable the matter to be properly investigated.

7. DISCLOSURE PROCESS

- 7.1. For the purposes of this Procedure, the PID Act provides for protection for Informants where Public Interest Disclosures are made:
- 7.1.1. by a member of the public or a public officer about environmental and health information which the Informant reasonably believes to be true or which the Informant believes may be true and is of sufficient significance to warrant Disclosure, regarding a location within the Council area of a particular council; and/or
 - 7.1.2. by a public officer with a reasonable suspicion about public administration information regarding either a location within a Council area or a public officer who is a member, officer or employee of the Council.
- 7.2. Disclosures should generally, and wherever possible, be directed in the first instance to the Responsible Officer, who has the responsibility for receiving appropriate Disclosures relating to the Council.
- 7.3. However, nothing in this Procedure prevents a person from making a Disclosure to another Relevant Authority (see **Appendix A**), including a Relevant Authority external to the Council. This is a choice to be made by the Informant at their discretion.

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- 7.4. The following are relevant considerations for an Informant in determining where to direct a Disclosure:
- 7.4.1. when choosing to make a Disclosure internally, Disclosures relating to an elected member or a member of council staff, including the Chief Executive Officer (or person acting in that position), should be made to a Responsible Officer;
 - 7.4.2. any Disclosure relating to a person appointed as a Responsible Officer should be made to the other person appointed as a Responsible Officer or failing this, to a Relevant Authority external to the Council (such as the OPI);
 - 7.4.3. any Disclosure relating to public administration information about a public officer who is a member, officer or employee of the Council may be made to a Responsible Officer, or to the person responsible (either in fact, or as may be designated by the PID Act) for the management or supervision of the public officer the subject of the Disclosure;
 - 7.4.4. any Disclosure relating to Maladministration or Misconduct in public administration may be reported to OPI in accordance with the ICAC Act;
 - 7.4.5. if there is a reasonable suspicion of Corruption, or of Maladministration or Misconduct that is serious or systemic, it must be reported to the OPI in accordance with the Directions and Guidelines;
 - 7.4.6. if a Disclosure contains allegations of Fraud or Corruption, the Informant should report the matter in accordance with the Council's Fraud and Corruption Policy, which provides that:
 - 7.4.6.1. if the Disclosure relates to Corruption in public administration, it will be reported to the OPI; and
 - 7.4.6.2. if the Disclosure relates to Fraud, it may be reported to the Responsible Officer or direct to SAPOL.
- 7.5. A Disclosure may be made in person, by telephone or in writing (either by post or email). Where a Disclosure is made by telephone, the recipient must take notes of the conversation and, where possible, should ask the Informant to verify and sign the notes.

8. RECEIPT OF A DISCLOSURE

- 8.1. A flowchart outlining the Disclosure Process is at **Appendix B** to this Procedure.
- 8.2. If a Council member, employee or officer receives a Disclosure of public interest information regarding a location within the Council area, or pertaining to a public officer of Council as the Relevant Authority the recipient of that Disclosure will:
 - 8.2.1. ask the Informant whether they consent to the details of their identity being provided to the Responsible Officer, and in doing so advise the Informant that a failure to provide that consent may mean that the Disclosure cannot be properly investigated; and

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- 8.2.2. refer the Disclosure to the Responsible Officer and, in doing so, comply with the wishes of the Informant with respect to whether details of their identity may be divulged and
- 8.2.3. if the Informant does not consent to the details of their identity and Disclosure being provided to the Responsible Officer, then the officer, Employee or Elected Member of Council as the Relevant Authority will undertake the process under Clause 8.3
- 8.3. Upon the receipt of a Disclosure (whether directly, or by referral from the recipient, the Responsible Officer will:
 - 8.3.1. immediately undertake a Preliminary Assessment in accordance with Part 9 of this Procedure; and
 - 8.3.2. as soon as practicable thereafter, in accordance with this Procedure:
 - 8.3.2.1. notify the OPI of the Disclosure; and
 - 8.3.2.2. confirm receipt of the Disclosure to the Informant; and
 - 8.3.3. subject to the outcome of the Preliminary Assessment, take appropriate action, including, where required:
 - 8.3.3.1. appointing an Independent Assessor to further investigate the Disclosure in accordance with Part 11 of this Procedure; and
 - 8.3.3.2. notifying the Informant of the outcome of any action, including any investigation in accordance with Part 11 of this Procedure; and
 - 8.3.3.3. notifying the OPI of the outcome of any action taken in accordance with Part 10 of this Procedure; and/or
 - 8.3.3.4. report the outcome of any action taken to the Minister in accordance with Part 12 of this Procedure; and
 - 8.3.3.5. prepare and issue a final report to the Principal Officer in accordance with Part 13 of this Procedure.

9. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF DISCLOSURE

- 9.1. Where the identity of the Informant is known to the Responsible Officer or is reasonably ascertainable, the Responsible Officer will verbally acknowledge receipt of the Disclosure within three (3) working days and then by written acknowledgement within five (5) working days of receipt of Disclosure. A copy of the PID Policy and Procedure will also be provided to the Informant.
- 9.2. Upon receipt of a Disclosure, the Responsible Officer will undertake a preliminary assessment to determine:

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- 9.2.1. if the content of the Disclosure suggests there is an imminent risk of serious physical injury or death to any person or the public generally;
- 9.2.2. if the matter/s the subject of the Disclosure involve corruption in public administration, or serious or systemic misconduct or maladministration in public administration; or
- 9.2.3. if the information disclosed justifies further action, including a decision as to whether the Disclosure:
 - 9.2.3.1. is frivolous, vexatious or trivial (in which case, no further action will be taken in relation to the Disclosure);
 - 9.2.3.2. involves a matter which has already been investigated or acted upon by a Relevant Authority and there is no reason to re-examine the matter or there is other good reason why no action should be taken in respect of the matter (in which case, no further action will be taken in relation to the Disclosure);
 - 9.2.3.3. requires referral to another Relevant Authority external to the Council; or
 - 9.2.3.4. warrants referral to an Independent Assessor for a formal investigation and report to Council.
- 9.3. Where the Disclosure relates to public administration information about a public officer who is a member, officer or employee of the Council and it is made to the person responsible for the management or supervision of the public officer the subject of the Disclosure (**the Supervisor**), the Supervisor will conduct the Preliminary Assessment instead of the Responsible Officer, and will then report the outcome of their determination following the Preliminary Assessment to the Responsible Officer to action.
- 9.4. The Responsible Officer must report the outcome of their determination following the Preliminary Assessment to the Chief Executive Officer (unless the Disclosure relates to the Chief Executive Officer). Any report prepared in accordance with this Part will not disclose particulars that will or are likely to lead to the identification of the Informant, unless the circumstances in clause 6.2 of this Procedure apply.
- 9.5. Where the Responsible Officer (or Supervisor) determines that the content of the Disclosure suggests there is an imminent risk of serious physical injury or death to any person or to the public generally, the Responsible Officer (or Supervisor) must immediately communicate such information as may be necessary to mitigate that risk to the most appropriate agency (for example, South Australia Police, SafeWork SA, SA Ambulance, Environment Protection Authority). In doing so, the Responsible Officer or Supervisor must also have regard to **clause 6.2.1** of this Procedure.
- 9.6. Where the Responsible Officer (or Supervisor) forms a reasonable suspicion that **subject** matter/s of the Disclosure involve corruption in public administration, or serious or systemic misconduct or maladministration in public administration, the Responsible Officer (or Supervisor) must comply with their reporting obligations under the ICAC Act in accordance with the Directions and Guidelines. Where the Responsible Officer determines the Disclosure warrants referral to an

external body or another Relevant Authority, the Responsible Officer will undertake the referral, including ensuring that such information as is necessary to enable action to be taken is communicated to the most appropriate person or relevant authority to take that action. Where the Preliminary Assessment is being undertaken by the Supervisor, the Supervisor will include this recommendation in their report to the Responsible Officer for the Responsible Officer to action.

- 9.7. Where the Responsible Officer determines the Disclosure warrants further investigation, the Responsible Officer will, having regard to available resources, appoint the Independent Assessor and refer the Disclosure to the Independent Assessor for investigation. Where the Preliminary Assessment is being undertaken by the Supervisor, the Supervisor will include this recommendation in their report to the Responsible Officer for the Responsible Officer to action.
- 9.8. Where the Responsible Officer determines the Disclosure requires any other action to ensure the matter the subject of the Disclosure is properly addressed, the Responsible Officer will include in their determination details of that other recommended action. Where the Preliminary Assessment is being undertaken by the Supervisor, the Supervisor will include this recommendation in their report to the Responsible Officer for the Responsible Officer to action.

10. NOTIFICATION OF PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

- 10.1. So long as the identity of the Informant is known to the Responsible Officer or is reasonably ascertainable, the Responsible Officer will notify the Informant of the outcome of their determination in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable after the Preliminary Assessment has been made, and in any event **within 30 days of receipt** of the Disclosure. In doing so, the Responsible Officer must advise the Informant of:
- 10.1.1. any action that has been, or will be, taken in relation to the Disclosure; or
 - 10.1.2. if no action is being taken in relation to the Disclosure, the reason/s why.
- 10.2. If the Responsible Officer fails to notify the Informant in accordance with clause 10.1 above, the Informant may be entitled to protection in relation to any subsequent Disclosure of that information to a journalist or Member of Parliament in accordance with the PID Act.
- 10.3. If the Informant is dissatisfied with the Responsible Officer's determination, it is open to them to report the Disclosure to another Relevant Authority external to the Council.
- 10.4. As soon as reasonably practicable following the Preliminary Assessment and notification to the Informant, the Responsible Officer must use the dedicated online notification form at icac.sa.gov.au to notify OPI of the Disclosure (**Initial Notification**), and in doing so must ensure that the details required by Guideline 1.4 of the Public Interest Disclosure Guidelines are included in the Initial Notification.
- 10.5. The Responsible Officer will retain the unique reference number issued by the OPI upon making the Initial Notification and will ensure that reference number is provided to any other person or authority to whom the Disclosure is referred.

11. INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

- 11.1. Where the Responsible Officer determines, following a Preliminary Assessment, that a Disclosure warrants referral to an Independent Assessor for a formal investigation and report to Council, the Responsible Officer will appoint an Independent Assessor in accordance with this Part to investigate the Disclosure.
- 11.2. The Independent Assessor will be appointed on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the Disclosure. Council may prepare a list of pre-approved persons who may be appointed as an Independent Assessor in any given circumstances, in which case the Responsible Officer must have regard to this list in appointing the Independent Assessor.
- 11.3. The objectives of the investigation process are:
 - 11.3.1. in appropriate circumstances, to investigate the substance of the Disclosure and to determine whether there is evidence in support of the matters raised or, alternatively, to refute the report made;
 - 11.3.2. to collate information relating to the allegation as quickly as possible. This may involve taking steps to protect or preserve documents, materials and equipment;
 - 11.3.3. to consider the information collected and to draw conclusions objectively and impartially;
 - 11.3.4. to observe procedural fairness in the treatment of any person who is subject of the Disclosure; and
 - 11.3.5. to make recommendations arising from the conclusions drawn concerning remedial or other appropriate action.
- 11.4. The Independent Assessor will observe the principles of natural justice throughout the investigation process. The investigation will be conducted in an efficient manner and will involve a thorough and balanced assessment of the available evidence and any other factors deemed relevant to making a fair and reasonable judgement about the matter.
- 11.5. Upon receipt of a Disclosure referral under this Part, the Independent Assessor will bring the fact of the Disclosure to the attention of the person who is the subject of it in writing within five (5) days, and provide them with an opportunity to respond to the Disclosure within a reasonable timeframe (either in writing or in person). The full details of any allegations contained in the Disclosure need not be brought to the person's attention if the Independent Assessor considers that doing so will compromise the investigation.
- 11.6. During any interview with the Independent Assessor, the person who is the subject of a Disclosure may be accompanied by any person providing support to them (including a lawyer) as they see fit. Any costs incurred in relation to obtaining the assistance of a support person are the personal expenses of the person subject of the Disclosure. The support person is bound by a duty of confidentiality in relation to any matter discussed during such interview.

- 11.7. The investigation will be undertaken in confidence. So long as the identity of the Informant is known to the Responsible Officer or is reasonably ascertainable, the Independent Assessor will keep the identity of the Informant confidential unless the circumstances in clause 6.2 of this Procedure apply.
- 11.8. The Independent Assessor will keep the Responsible Officer informed of the expected timeframes for completion of the investigation and the provision of their investigation report to the Responsible Officer.
- 11.9. Upon finalising an investigation the Independent Assessor must prepare an investigation report to the Responsible Officer that will contain the following details:
- 11.9.1. the allegation(s);
 - 11.9.2. an account of all relevant information received including any rejected evidence, and the reasons why the rejection occurred;
 - 11.9.3. the conclusions reached and the basis for them; and
 - 11.9.4. any recommendations arising from the conclusions, including any remedial action which should be taken by the Council.
 - 11.9.5. the report is to be accompanied by:
 - 11.9.5.1. the transcript or other record of any verbal evidence taken, including tape recordings; and
 - 11.9.5.2. all documents, statements or other exhibits received by the Independent Assessor and accepted as evidence during the course of the investigation.
- 11.10. Any report prepared in accordance with this Part will not disclose particulars that will or are likely to lead to the identification of the Informant, unless the circumstances in clause 6.2 of this Procedure apply.
- 11.11. The Responsible Officer must take whatever action is, in their discretion, considered appropriate in the circumstances having regard to the matters identified in the Independent Assessor's report.

12. NOTIFICATION OF FURTHER ACTION

- 12.1. So long as the identity of the Informant is known to the Responsible Officer or is reasonably ascertainable, the Responsible Officer will notify the Informant of the outcome of their determination in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable after the Further Action has been taken and, in any event, **within either:**
- 12.1.1. **90 days of receipt** of the Disclosure; or
 - 12.1.2. such longer period as may be specified by written notice given by the Responsible Officer within that 90-day period.
- 12.2. In doing so the Responsible Officer must advise the Informant of:

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- 12.2.1. any action that has been, or will be, taken in relation to the Disclosure; or
- 12.2.2. if no action is being taken in relation to the Disclosure, the reason/s why.
- 12.3. If the Responsible Officer fails to notify the Informant in accordance with clauses 12.1 and 12.2 above, the Informant may be entitled to protection in relation to any subsequent Disclosure of that information to a journalist or member of Parliament in accordance with the PID Act.
- 12.4. If the Informant is dissatisfied with the Responsible Officer's determination or the action taken it is open to them to report the Disclosure to another Relevant Authority external to the Council.
- 12.5. As soon as reasonably practicable following the Preliminary Assessment and notification to the Informant, the Responsible Officer must use the dedicated online notification form at icac.sa.gov.au to notify OPI of the action taken in relation to the Disclosure (**Further Notification**) and, in doing so, must ensure that the details required by Guideline 2 of the Public Interest Disclosure Guidelines are included in the Further Notification.
- 12.6. If the Disclosure came to the Council by way of a referral from a Minister, the Responsible Officer must ensure that the Minister is notified of the action taken in relation to the Disclosure, and the outcome of any such action. The Minister will be notified in accordance with this clause following the Preliminary Assessment if the Responsible Officer determines that no action is to be taken.

13. FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

- 13.1. Upon finalising any action required in relation to a Disclosure, the Responsible Officer must prepare a report that will contain the following details:
 - 13.1.1. the subject of the Disclosure;
 - 13.1.2. an account of the steps taken by the Responsible Officer in accordance with this Procedure, including, where appropriate, enclosing a copy of any Independent Assessor's report;
 - 13.1.3. conclusions reached as a result of the steps taken in response to the Disclosure and the basis for them; and
 - 13.1.4. any recommendations arising from the conclusions, including any remedial action which should be taken by the Council.
- 13.2. Any report prepared in accordance with this Part will not disclose particulars that will or are likely to lead to the identification of the Informant, unless the circumstances in clause 6.2 of this Procedure apply.
- 13.3. The Responsible Officer's Report must be provided to the Chief Executive Officer to action as they consider appropriate.
- 13.4. The Chief Executive Officer may, in their discretion, inform the elected body, on a confidential basis, about a Disclosure in accordance with Part 7 of the Public Interest Disclosure Policy.

14. SECURE HANDLING AND STORAGE OF INFORMATION

- 14.1. The Responsible Officer must ensure accurate records of an appropriate Disclosure are securely and confidentially maintained including notes of all discussions, phone calls, and interviews.
- 14.2. The Responsible Officer will ensure all information relating to an appropriate Disclosure is maintained as confidential and as such, will be solely responsible for the secure storage of this information, which will be stored separately from the Council's records.
- 14.3. In performing their duties, the Responsible Officer will maintain a confidential file of information (including written documents, disks, tapes, film or other objects that contain information) that relates to a Disclosure and/or is a product of the associated investigation/reporting process. All such information will be recorded in a register which is to remain confidential and be securely stored within the Council's records management system.
- 14.4. In the event that a person's appointment as a Responsible Officer is terminated, the person must provide this information to the newly appointed Responsible Officer and having done so will continue to be bound by a duty of confidentiality in respect of an Informant's identity and the information received as a result of the Disclosure.
- 14.5. Although the Responsible Officer is ultimately responsible to ensure public interest information will be securely received and stored, the security and confidentiality obligations outlined in this Part also apply to any Independent Assessor appointed pursuant to this Procedure in relation to any Investigation.

15. PROTECTION FOR THE INFORMANT

- 15.1. Although the PID Act does not provide any protection to people who knowingly make Disclosures that are false or misleading in a material particular, an Informant who makes an appropriate Disclosure will ordinarily be protected by:
 - 15.1.1. immunity from criminal or civil liability;
 - 15.1.2. a prohibition on Disclosure of their identity, other than in limited specific circumstances as set out under section 8 of the PID Act and Guideline 3 of the Guidelines;
 - 15.1.3. a prohibition against victimisation; and
 - 15.1.4. a prohibition against hindering, obstructing or preventing an Informant from making an appropriate Disclosure.
- 15.2. A person who personally commits an act of victimisation against an Informant is guilty of an offence and may be prosecuted.
- 15.3. Council will take action as appropriate in the circumstances of the relevant Disclosure/s to protect Informants from victimisation, and/or from being hindered or obstructed in making a Disclosure.
- 15.4. Such action may include acting in accordance with the following risk minimisation steps:



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- 15.4.1. set out in the Public Interest Disclosure Procedure and/or referring the matter to the SA Police
- 15.4.2. disciplinary action by the Council or the Chief Executive Officer (as appropriate) for any failure to act otherwise than in accordance with this Procedure or the Public Interest Disclosure Policy (including with respect to divulging the identity of an Informant) in relation to a Disclosure.

16. REVIEW

This Procedure will be reviewed every four (4) years or more frequently if legislation or Council requires.

17. AVAILABILITY

- 17.1. This Procedure is available without charge on the Southern Mallee District Council website: www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au.
- 17.2. A copy of the Procedure may also be purchased from the Council Office at Lameroo or Pinnaroo, upon payment of a prescribed fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

18. ADOPTION & AMENDMENT HISTORY

The table below sets out the adoption, review and amendment history of the Policy.

| Version No: | Issue Date: | Authorised by: | Description of Change: | Minutes Reference: |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1.0 | 16 October 2019 | Council | Adopted | Ordinary Council -16 October 2019 |
| 1.1 | 30 January 2024 | Council | Minor formatting changes made. Clarification on Appropriate Disclosures | Ordinary Council -20 December 2023 |
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Appendix A Relevant Authorities

| Where the information relates to... | the relevant authority is... |
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| <p>a public officer*</p> <p>*as defined and set out in Schedule 1 of the <i>Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012</i> - relevantly, this includes members, officers and employees of local government bodies</p> | <p>either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person who is designated by the Guidelines as being taken to be responsible for management or supervision of the public officer; or the person who is in fact responsible for the management or supervision of the public officer; or the relevant responsible officer (as designated by the Council in accordance with section 12 of the PID Act) |
| a public sector agency or public sector employee | <p>either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment; or the responsible officer for the relevant public sector agency |
| an agency to which the <i>Ombudsman Act 1972</i> applies | the Ombudsman |
| a location within the area of a particular council established under the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> | a member, officer or employee of that Council |
| a risk to the environment | the Environment Protection Authority |
| an irregular and unauthorised use of public money or substantial | the Auditor-General |
| the commission, or suspected commission, of any offence | a member of the police force |
| a judicial officer | the Judicial Conduct Commissioner |
| a member of Parliament | the Presiding Officer of the House of Parliament to which the member belongs |
| a person or a matter of a prescribed class ¹ | an authority declared by the regulations to be a relevant authority in relation to such information |

¹ presently, no prescribed persons or classes have been identified



Public Interest Disclosure Procedure

| Where the information relates to... | the relevant authority is... |
|---|--|
| <p>public interest information - being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• environmental and health information (information that raises a potential issue of a substantial risk to the environment or to the health or safety of the public generally or a significant section of the public); or• public administration information (information that raises a potential issue of corruption, misconduct or maladministration in public administration) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the OPI;• a Minister of the Crown; or• any other prescribed person or person of a prescribed class |

Appendix B

Notification Process Flowchart

