



## **Public Interest Disclosures (Whistleblower) Policy**

### **Purpose**

As part of its commitment to a business environment that is honest and ethical and operates with integrity, SWS recognises the value of internal reporting as a key element to identifying improper conduct. It also recognises the importance of providing a safe and respectful environment for employees and others connected to the business to report improper conduct and confidence that the reports will be properly addressed.

As a public body under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2002* (Tas) (the Act), Southern Waste Solutions is committed to the purposes of the Act, which are primarily to:

- encourage and facilitate disclosures of improper conduct by public officers;
- protect persons making those disclosures and others from reprisals;
- provide for the matters disclosed to be properly investigated and dealt with; and
- provide all parties involved with those disclosures with procedural fairness (referred to as natural justice in the Act).

### **Policy**

Southern Waste Solutions will not tolerate any behaviour of its directors, employees or contractors that do not meet its commitment to honesty, integrity or ethical conduct. It encourages those with legitimate suspicions or allegations of improper conduct by Southern Waste Solutions, its directors, employees or contractors to report the allegations under the Act.

Southern Waste Solutions commits to promptly investigating the allegations that meet the definition of disclosable matters under the Act and addressing the outcomes appropriately. Investigations will be undertaken as discreetly as possible to protect the disclosure's identity and to ensure procedural fairness (principles of natural justice) are extended to the alleged offender.

Southern Waste Solutions also commits to extending all possible protections from reprisal to the discloser (where disclosers identify themselves) and dealing promptly and appropriately with any reports of detrimental action against the discloser.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to Southern Waste Solutions (SWS) as a whole, its directors and employees. The policy also applies to Authority Representatives, in their capacity as appointed Representatives of participating Councils. For the purposes of this policy, the definition of

*employees* is extended to employees of contractors and sub-contractors or others who work in SWS workplaces but are not directly employed by SWS.

### **Responsibilities**

The **Board** of Southern Waste Solutions is responsible for:

- articulating and expecting a workplace culture that is honest, ethical and conducts business with integrity, and that promotes feedback and reporting in an open and respectful manner;
- ensuring the CEO provides sufficient resources to implement the policy and its related procedures;
- monitoring outcomes of, and any trends arising from, proven allegations of unacceptable behaviour and ensuring outcomes are actioned in a timely manner;
- supporting any investigations instigated by the Tasmanian Ombudsman or Integrity Commission;
- complying with the policy as individual directors.

The **Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for:

- leading and modelling a workplace culture that is honest, ethical and conducts business with integrity, and that promotes feedback and reporting in an open and respectful manner;
- maintaining and implementing the model procedures recommended by the Ombudsman Tasmania to support this policy;
- providing suitable and sufficient training to employees and others, as relevant, about this policy and its related procedures;
- providing sufficient resources to implement this policy and its procedures;
- ensuring appropriate records are prepared and kept securely to protect confidentiality;
- supporting any investigations instigated by the Tasmanian Ombudsman or Integrity Commission;
- liaising with the Board Chair in relation to serious actions proposed in response to proven allegations, such as termination of employment;
- identifying appropriate actions and any business improvements that address outcomes of any investigations;
- reporting to the Board in line with the policy and procedures;
- complying with the policy.

**Employees and Contractors** are responsible for:

- complying with the Code of Conduct to contribute to a workplace culture that is honest, ethical and conducts business with integrity;
- attending training about this policy and its related procedures;

- complying with the policy and procedures;
- avoiding any action that maybe detrimental to anyone who makes a disclosure under the policy or to anyone who is alleged to have acted improperly by a discloser.

### **Reporting**

Under the Act, the CEO will ensure that statistics related to disclosures under the Act are reported externally, in accordance with the Act.

If a claim or allegation appears legitimate but an investigation cannot be undertaken because it does not meet the definitions or limitations of the Act, the CEO will advise the Board if an investigation is warranted and possible under another Southern Waste Solutions' policy, code or process.

At the conclusion of any investigation, the CEO will consider the implications for the business and identify any improvements required to prevent a recurrence, and report these to the Board.

### **Related Documents**

- Public Interest Disclosure Procedures: available on Southern Waste Solutions' website,
- Code of Conduct
- Fraud, Corruption and Improper Conduct Prevention Policy and Procedures
- Anti-Harassment Policy (Employee Handbook)
- Grievance Prevention Handling Procedure

### **Approval and Review**

Further information: Please contact the Chief Executive Officer on [chris.adekunle@swstas.com.au](mailto:chris.adekunle@swstas.com.au) or 0409 574 727

Policy approved by: Chris Adekunle on 1st December 2022

Signature of Approver: 

Amendments to this Policy to be approved by: Chief Executive Officer.

Next review date by Approver: November 2024, unless a need arises earlier.