

Whistleblower Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Norwest Group (“the Group”) is committed to fostering a culture of ethical behaviour.
- 1.2. The purpose of this Policy is to outline how the Group will receive, investigate and resolve allegations of Reportable Conduct and, will ensure the protection of those who make such reports (“Whistleblower”).
- 1.3. This Policy was drafted in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and applies to all personnel engaged in the Group’s operations including, but not limited to,
 - a) Current and former Employees, Contractors, Labour hire personnel, Students, Volunteers, Associates and Officers; and,
 - b) Relatives, dependants, trustees or spouses of a person described in paragraph 1.3a.
- 1.4. A copy of this Policy will be made available to all internal stakeholders and external stakeholders via the Group’s website (<https://www.norwestcranehire.com.au>)

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of this Policy are to:
 - a) provide Whistleblowers with a clear framework with which to make an allegation;
 - b) ensure any reports of Reportable Conduct are dealt with appropriately;
 - c) provide Whistleblowers with a clear understanding of how allegations will be handled;
 - d) protect Whistleblowers from victimisation and retaliation;
 - e) support Whistleblowers throughout the reporting process;
 - f) afford natural justice and procedural fairness to anyone who is the subject of an allegation of Reportable Conduct.
- 2.2. To support its stated objectives, this Policy provides a framework for Whistleblowers to make a Protected Disclosure by:
 - a) providing reasonable protections for a Whistleblower who, acting honestly with genuine or reasonable belief that the information in the allegation is true or likely to be true, raises concerns about Reportable Conduct; and
 - b) ensuring allegations of Reportable Conduct are properly and lawfully investigated and addressed.

3. Protected Disclosures

- 3.1. A “**Protected Disclosure**” is a report of Reportable Conduct made in accordance with this Policy. Nothing in this Policy is intended to abrogate or diminish any additional or

alternative protections which may be available under law. Where this Policy differs from applicable law, the Group will apply the higher standard.

3.2. To be protected under this Policy, a Whistleblower must:

- a) be acting honestly with genuine or reasonable belief that the information in the allegation is true or likely to be true;
- b) make the disclosure in accordance with this Policy; and
- c) not themselves have engaged in serious misconduct or illegal conduct in relation to the Reportable Conduct.

3.3. Where a Whistleblower makes a Protected Disclosure and continues to comply with this Policy during the reporting process, that person will be protected from disciplinary action, victimisation, retaliation or claims by the Group as a result of the report.

3.4. In circumstances where, for any reason, the identity of the Whistleblower is known outside of the investigation process, the Group will take all reasonable steps to protect the Whistleblower from retaliatory or discriminatory action.

3.5. In some jurisdictions, in addition to the protections provided for under this Policy, a person making an allegation of Reportable Conduct may be protected by local law from civil and/or criminal proceedings, and, against retaliatory or discriminatory action as a result of having made an allegation protected by applicable local law. Whistleblowers should be aware that, in some jurisdictions, making an allegation to a government authority without using the Groups internal procedure may result in the loss of Whistleblower protections available under this Policy.

4. Reportable Conduct

4.1. This Policy supports the reporting of allegations of serious wrongdoing (“**Reportable Conduct**”) by those eligible parties as defined in section 1.3.

4.2. Reportable Conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a) dishonest, corrupt or illegal activities;
- b) theft, fraud, money laundering or misappropriation;
- c) a serious breach of the Group’s policies or procedures;
- d) offering or accepting a bribe;
- e) use of Group funds or resources in a manner that falls within the scope of Reportable Conduct;
- f) damage, sabotage, violence and the sale/use of drug and alcohol;
- g) serious risks to health and safety;
- h) unethical conduct;
- i) Wilfully breaching the Norwest Group Code of Conduct;
- j) bullying, discrimination, harassment or abuse;
- k) victimising someone for reporting Reportable Conduct;

- l) recrimination against someone because they participated in an investigation or review;
- m) any instruction to cover up or attempt to cover up serious wrongdoing;
- n) manipulation of internal or external audit processes.

4.3. This Policy extends to serious wrongdoing that occurs before or after the commencement of this Policy and is not limited to the above examples.

4.4. Personal work-related grievances, other than those detailed in paragraph 4.5, are not considered Reportable Conduct and are to be handled in accordance with the Group's Grievance Management Policy.

4.5. Personal work-related grievances are only considered Reportable Conduct if there is systematic, widespread or ongoing misconduct relating to grievance management.

5. Making a report

5.1. A Protected Disclosure may be made using the reporting channels outlined below. The availability of each channel depends on whether the Whistleblower is external or internal to the Group (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 respectively).

5.2. **External Whistleblowers** – External Whistleblowers can contact a Group Whistleblower Protection Officer (“WPO”) (see section 6 for more information)

5.3. **Internal Whistleblowers** – Internal Whistleblowers may use any of the following channels of communication to make a report:

- a) verbally or in writing to their immediate supervisor, Senior manager or member of the Group Executive;
- b) verbally or in writing to a Group Whistleblower Protection Officer (“WPO”) as listed in section 6 of this Policy; or,

5.4. At any time, a potential Whistleblower who is unsure about whether to report Reportable Conduct will be entitled to discuss the matter in confidence with their immediate supervisor or Senior Manager or a WPO. In the event a Whistleblower does not formally make a Protected Disclosure, the Group may nevertheless be compelled to act on the information provided if that information reasonably suggests Reportable Conduct has occurred or may occur.

a) Whistleblower Protection Officers

5.5. The Group's WPOs are appointed to:

- a) safeguard the interests of Whistleblowers;
- b) assess the immediate welfare and protection needs of a Whistleblower and, where the Whistleblower is an employee, seek to foster a supportive work environment; and,
- c) respond as appropriate and necessary to any concerns or reports of victimisation by a Whistleblower.

5.6. The Group's WPOs are:

- a) Chief Operating Officer, Graeme Parker (graemepwpo@nchgroup.com.au);

- b) Group HR Manager, Louise Nelson (louisenwpo@nchgroup.com.au);
- c) Group HSEQ Manager, Peter Kagioulis (peterkwpo@nchgroup.com.au); and,
- d) General Manager Corporate Services, Toni Jessop (tonijwpo@nchgroup.com.au).

5.7. The WPOs may be contacted:

- a) via email at the above addresses noted;
- b) in person; or
- c) via call to the Group, 9277 5830

5.8. If a Whistleblower is uncertain how to contact a WPO, they may seek clarification from their supervisor or manager.

b) Consequences of making a false report

5.9. Anyone who knowingly makes a false report of Reportable Conduct, or who otherwise fails to act honestly with reasonable belief in respect of the report may be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal, termination of service or sanctions as appropriate.

c) Confidentiality and Privacy

5.10. The Group will make all reasonable efforts to ensure the identity of a Whistleblower remains confidential throughout the investigation process. The Group will not disclose a Whistleblower's identity unless:

- a) the Whistleblower consents to the disclosure of their identity;
- b) disclosure of the Whistleblower's identity is compelled by law;
- c) disclosure is necessary to prevent a serious threat to any person's health or safety; or,
- d) it is necessary to protect or enforce the Group's legal rights or interests or to defend any claims as recognised by applicable laws.

5.11. Whistleblowers can report anonymously. Any supervisor or manager who receives a Whistleblower report must not disclose that report to anyone other than a WPO or member of the Executive.

5.12. Unauthorised disclosure of the Whistleblower's identity or information from which the identity of the Whistleblower could be inferred will be regarded as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in accordance with the Group's disciplinary procedures.

5.13. A Whistleblower must always keep information relating to an allegation as confidential, both during any investigation process and following any resolution of an allegation.

d) Investigation

5.14. A Whistleblower's report may only be investigated and acted upon following referral to a WPO. Any other person (such as a supervisor or manager) who receives a report of Reportable Conduct must immediately refer it to a WPO, take no further action and keep the report confidential.

5.15. Once received, all allegations of Reportable Conduct pursuant to this Policy must be referred to the WPOs and include, at a minimum, the following details:

- a) the date the Whistleblower made the report;
- b) the date and substance of the Reportable Conduct;
- c) the identity and level of seniority of the alleged wrongdoer;
- d) the level of risk associated with the alleged wrongdoing.

5.16. The WPOs will determine whether sufficient information exists to allow the report to be investigated, whether an investigation is required, and, if so, determine the appropriate investigation process, including:

- a) the nature and scope of the investigation;
- b) who will conduct the investigation and whether that person should be external to the Group;
- c) the nature of any technical, financial or legal advice that may be required;
- d) a timeframe for the investigation (having regard to the allocated level of risk).

5.17. The Whistleblower will, if the Group deems it appropriate and permissible to do so, be informed on a continuing basis as to the nature and progress of the investigation.

5.18. The Group may be required to refer an allegation of Reportable Conduct to the Police or other agency. In such circumstances, the Group may not be able to keep a Whistleblower informed on the progress of a Protected Disclosure.

e) Investigation Findings

5.19. The Group will apply principles of procedural fairness and natural justice to the conduct of any investigation and its findings arising under this Policy.

5.20. The person leading an investigation will report their findings to the relevant WPO and advise the recommended course of action (if any) that the Group should take in response to the findings. Such action may include a disciplinary process or another form of escalation of the report within or outside of the Group.

5.21. A WPO and the Executive will determine the action (if any) to be taken. If appropriate, and subject to any applicable confidentiality, privacy or legal constraints, the WPO may notify the Whistleblower of the conclusion of the investigation and the action taken.

f) Record Keeping and Accountability

5.22. The Group's Chief Operating Officer is responsible for:

- a) establishing and maintaining the Whistleblower Service;
- b) generating and distributing the Whistleblower Service details to the WPOs;
- c) communicating this Policy and the Whistleblower Service details to the Group's personnel; and,
- d) otherwise ensuring maintenance and adherence to this Policy.

5.23. The Group will establish and maintain a record of all reports of Reportable Conduct received, the investigation process undertaken, and any actions taken to resolve the matter (“Whistleblower Register”).

g) Victimisation

5.24. The Group is committed to ensuring that any person who reports Reportable Conduct, acts as a witness or participates in any way with respect to a report of Reportable Conduct is not victimised.

5.25. The Group will thoroughly investigate reports of victimisation. If proven, those who have victimised a person may be subject to disciplinary action.

h) Support

5.26. The WPO can initiate or coordinate support for employees who have, or are in the process of making, a report. As a first step, employees can contact the Group’s employee assistance provider – *Peoplesense* on 1300 307 912



Bernie Johnson

Director

Norwest Crane Hire