

Whistleblower Policy

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all employees are aware of their rights in relation to disclosing any malpractice or misconduct of which they become aware; and provide protection for employees who disclose any such allegations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all officers and employees of Cessnock Hospitality Group Ltd. Third parties, such as contractors, suppliers, and relatives or dependents of officers or employees, may also use the procedures in this policy.

This policy will be made available via email and upon request. For further information about this policy please contact the CEO.

POLICY

Reportable conduct

This policy applies to the disclosure of information which a person has reasonable grounds to suspect concerns misconduct, or an improper state of affairs or circumstances in relation to the Group. This would likely include:

- fraud;
- corruption;
- illegal activities or conduct (including theft, drug sale/use, violence, threatened violence, or criminal damage against Cessnock Hospitality Group Ltd. assets/property);
- discrimination, vilification, sexual harassment, harassment, bullying and victimisation;
- acts or omissions in breach of commonwealth or state legislation or local authority by-laws;
- other serious improper conduct (including gross mismanagement, serious and substantial waste of Cessnock Hospitality Group Ltd. resources, or repeated breaches of administrative procedures);
- unsafe work-practices;
- any other improper conduct which may cause financial or non-financial loss to Cessnock Hospitality Group Ltd. or be otherwise detrimental to the interests or reputation of Cessnock Hospitality Group Ltd., or any of its employees; or
- the deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the matters listed above.

Please see the Group's Grievance Procedure on how personal workplace or other matters that are not covered by this policy may be dealt with.

Protection of whistleblower

This policy is designed to give guidance so that honesty and integrity are maintained at all times by Cessnock Hospitality Group Ltd.

Subject to this policy and the relevant legislation, a whistleblower may be protected, even if the disclosed allegations or information prove to be incorrect (although a person who maliciously or vexatiously makes disclosures or makes false disclosures may be subject to disciplinary action).

The *Corporations Act 2001* gives special protection to disclosures about wrongdoing relating to the Group if the following conditions are satisfied:

1. The whistleblower is or has been:
 - a. an officer or employee of the Group;
 - b. an individual who supplies goods or services to the Group or an employee of a person who supplies goods or services to the Group;
 - c. an individual who is an associate of the Group; or

- d. a relative, dependent or dependent of the spouse of any individual referred to at (a) to (c) above;
2. The report is made to:
 - a. the people designated within this policy;
 - b. an officer or senior manager of the Group;
 - c. The Group's external auditor (or a member of that audit team);
 - d. ASIC;
 - e. APRA; or
 - f. a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or legal representation in relation to the operation of the whistleblower provisions in the *Corporations Act*;
 3. The whistleblower has reasonable grounds to suspect that the information being disclosed concerns misconduct, or an improper state of affairs or circumstances in relation to the Group. This may include a breach of legislation including the *Corporations Act*, an offence against the Commonwealth punishable by imprisonment for 12 months or more, or conduct that represents a danger to the public or financial system.

No detriment

The Group will not take any adverse action against a whistleblower because they have made a disclosure which meet the above-mentioned conditions, unless the whistleblower is a participant in the prohibited activities with respect to which the complaint is made.

If a disclosure qualifies for protection under the applicable legislation, the protection afforded to the discloser overrides any provision of their employment contract, including any confidentiality clause.

If the whistleblower was involved in the conduct which was the subject of the disclosure, the fact that the whistleblower has made the disclosure may be taken into account in determining the severity of the disciplinary measures, if any, that may eventually be taken against such whistleblower.

PROCEDURE

Reporting

The Group has several channels for reporting wrongdoing. In the first instance, any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a breach of a law or other standard of behaviour has occurred, is encouraged to report that suspicion to their immediate Supervisor/Manager or the HR Manager.

If this is considered inappropriate, the person should raise the concern with the CEO, by phone or email, or in writing. You may also raise the matter with an "officer" or "senior manager" of the Group. This includes a director, or a senior manager in the Group who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part, of the business of the company, or who has the capacity to affect significantly the Group's financial standing.

If neither of these channels are deemed appropriate, disclosures may be made to the Group's auditor Ben McEwan of McEwan Partners via:

Email: Ben@mcewans.com.au

Telephone: 4963 2200

Where an allegation of wrongdoing relates to the Group's tax affairs, a person may qualify for protection by disclosing the allegation to additional recipients; the Commissioner of Taxation or a registered tax agent or BAS agent.

All disclosures should provide specific, adequate and pertinent information with respect to, among other things, dates, places, persons, witnesses, amounts, and other relevant information, in order to allow for a reasonable investigation to be conducted. If the whistleblower discloses his or her name, the person receiving the disclosure will acknowledge having received the disclosure and may initiate a follow-up meeting.

However, if the disclosure is submitted on an anonymous basis, there will be no follow-up meeting regarding the disclosure and Cessnock Hospitality Group Ltd. will be unable to communicate with the whistleblower if more information is required, or if the matter is to be referred to external parties for further investigation.

Please remember that all disclosures received will be dealt with on a confidential basis and whistleblowers are encouraged to disclose their identities, to obtain the protection afforded to them at law.

Confidentiality

Cessnock Hospitality Group Ltd. recognises that maintaining appropriate confidentiality is crucial in ensuring that potential whistleblowers come forward and make disclosures in an open and timely manner and without fear of reprisals being made against them.

The Group will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of the whistleblower and will adhere to any statutory requirements in respect of the confidentiality of disclosures made. In appropriate cases, disclosure of the identity of the whistleblower, or the allegation made by them, may be unavoidable, such as if court proceedings result from a disclosure pursuant to this policy.

***Note for Clubs:** section 1317AAE of the Corporations Act 2001 requires the confidentiality of the whistleblower's identity be maintained. In circumstances where there is a risk of identification of the whistleblower please seek advice from ClubsNSW or the Group's lawyer.*

Investigation

Once a disclosure has been received from a whistleblower, the Group will consider the most appropriate action. This might include an investigation of the alleged conduct.

Any investigation in relation to a disclosure will be conducted promptly and fairly, with due regard for the nature of the allegation and the rights of the persons involved in the investigation. A report will not be investigated by a person who is implicated in the concern.

Cessnock Hospitality Group will ensure that, provided the disclosure was not made anonymously, the whistleblower is kept informed of the outcomes of the investigation of his or her allegations, subject to the considerations of privacy of those against whom allegations are made.

BREACH OF POLICY

Any reprisals against a whistleblower are a serious breach of this policy and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal. Where the Group becomes aware of any reprisals against a whistleblower for complying with this policy or the legislation, the Group will take steps to either overturn, or deem void, the decision or action. This protection applies to anyone providing information related to an investigation pursuant to this policy.

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