

Title	Public Interest Disclosure	Version	4
Policy No.	BP2022/02	Effective date	7/11/2022

1. OVERVIEW

Public officials (disclosers) who suspect serious wrongdoing within the Forestry Corporation or other parts of the public sector can raise their concerns under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022* (PID Act).

This policy establishes an internal reporting system for the reporting of disclosures. It is designed to complement normal communication channels between supervisors and staff. Staff are encouraged to continue to raise appropriate matters at any time with their supervisors, but as an alternative, have the option of making a protected disclosure in accordance with this policy.

2. BACKGROUND

The Act aims to encourage and facilitate the disclosures of corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste in the public sector, and government information contravention that are in the public interest. This is achieved by;

- established procedures for making disclosures concerning such matters
- protecting persons from reprisals that might otherwise be inflicted on them because of these disclosures and
- providing for those disclosures to be properly investigated and dealt with

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all public interest disclosures made under the PID Act by permanent, temporary and casual employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the Board.

4. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition	Example
Corrupt conduct	Dishonest or partial exercise of official functions by a public official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ taking or offering bribes, public officials dishonestly using influence, blackmail, fraud and illegal gambling. ▪ the improper use of knowledge, power or position for personal gain or the advantage of others ▪ acting dishonestly or unfairly, a member of the public influencing or trying to influence a public official to use their position in a way that is dishonest, biased or breaches public trust
Maladministration	Conduct that involves action or inaction of a serious nature that is contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ making a decision and/or taking action that is unlawful ▪ refusing to grant someone a licence for reasons that are not related to the merits of their application

Term	Definition	Example
	oppressive or improperly discriminatory or based wholly or partly on improper motives.	
Serious and substantial waste of public money¹	The uneconomical, inefficient or ineffective use of resources, authorised or unauthorised, which results in a loss/wastage of public funds/resources. the true nature and materiality of the waste will be considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> awarding large contracts without complying with the Corporation's procurement policy or poor cost management practices
Government information contravention	A failure to properly fulfil functions under the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> (GIPA Act).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> destroying, concealing or altering records to prevent them from being released knowingly making decisions that are contrary to the legislation directing another person to make a decision that is contrary to the legislation

For more information about each category of wrongdoing see the NSW Ombudsman's guideline on [what can be reported](#).

5. POLICY

Forestry Corporation

- does not tolerate corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, or Government Information contravention
- is committed to the aims and objectives of the [Public Interest Disclosures Act](#)
- recognises the value and importance of contributions of staff to enhance administrative and management practices
- strongly supports disclosures of wrongdoing being made by staff and other people
- will take all reasonable steps to provide protection to staff who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for the making of the disclosure.

Procedure

Reports about the four categories of serious wrongdoing – corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money and information contravention – will be dealt with under the PID Act as protected disclosures where requested by the person making the disclosure.

The processes for this are outlined in the Procedure for Public Interest Disclosure.

Although reports about the previous four categories of conduct can attract the specific protections of the PID Act, you should report all activities or incidents including:

- harassment or unlawful discrimination
- reprisal action against a person who has reported wrongdoing
- practices that endanger the health or safety of staff or the public.

These types of issues should be reported to a supervisor. Even if these reports are not dealt with as protected disclosures, it is intended that the person making the report should be protected as much as possible from any form of reprisal.

¹ Not defined in the PID Act. This definition comes from the Auditor-General

6. RELATED LEGISLATION

- Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022
- Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Public Finance and Audit Act 1983
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

7. RELATED POLICIES

- Forestry Corporation Code of Conduct
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy

8. RELATED DELEGATIONS

- Administrative

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Public Interest Disclosure Procedure

10. REVISION HISTORY

Version	Policy Number	Date
1	BP2013/02	02/07/2013
2	BP2016/03	01/07/2016
3	BP2019/02	11/09/2019
4	BP2022/02	07/11/2022

11. DATE OF NEXT REVIEW

7/11/2025

12. CONTACT OFFICER

Manager Risk and Internal Audit



Chief Executive Officer