

Whistleblowers Policy – Client Fact Sheet

POLICY STATEMENT

PRONIA appreciates and facilitates all reporting of wrongdoing within the organisation. We actively promote a workplace free of unacceptable behaviour and serious misconduct. We address and investigate any reports of misconduct, ensure that Whistleblowers are protected and we will rectify identified wrongdoing.

1 PURPOSE

To ensure that any suspected wrongdoing by PRONIA or its employees is reported, investigated and addressed promptly and appropriately and that any person who reports concerns about such matters (the Whistleblower) is protected.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all PRONIA services and team members and is open for access by clients and participants of services. Some elements of the Policy apply specifically to Aged Care services operating under the Aged Care Act 2024.

3 OVERVIEW

This policy supports simple and clear reporting and appropriate resolution processes in response to the identification of illegal, inappropriate or unethical conduct.

We have a whistleblower policy to:

- Encourage disclosures of wrongdoing
- Help deter wrongdoing, in line with our risk management and governance framework
- Ensure individuals who disclose wrongdoing (whistleblowers) can do so safely, securely and with confidence that they will be protected and supported
- Ensure whistleblower's reports (disclosures) are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner
- Provide transparency around our process for receiving, handling and investigating disclosures
- Support our values and code of conduct
- Support our long-term sustainability and reputation and
- Meet our legal and regulatory obligations.

If we are to achieve this purpose it is important that anyone who is aware of possible wrongdoing has the confidence to speak up knowing that they are fully supported and protected by PRONIA and the whistleblower legislation.

4 WHO CAN BE A WHISTLEBLOWER?¹

Anyone can be a whistleblower if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that PRONIA or one of its workers may have contravened the law or a provision of the Aged Care Act 2024.

¹ Australian Government Federal Register of Legislation [Aged Care Act 2024](#) Part 5—Whistleblower protections

5 WHAT CAN BE REPORTED BY A WHISTLEBLOWER?

Any suspected contravention of the law or the Aged Care Act 2024, including:

- Physical, psychological or other abuse of a consumer of our service
- Receiving gifts or monies from a consumer of our service without the permission of a senior manager
- Illegal conduct, such as theft, dealing in, or use of illicit drugs, violence or threatened violence, and criminal damage against property
- Fraud, money laundering or misappropriation of funds
- Offering or accepting a bribe
- Financial irregularities
- Failure to comply with or a breach of legal or regulatory requirements
- Engaging in or threatening to engage in detrimental conduct against a person who has made a disclosure or is believed or suspected to have made, or be planning to make, a disclosure.

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General complaints about service delivery are managed through our Complaints and Feedback Policy.

6 WHO CAN A WHISTLEBLOWER REPORT TO?

A whistleblower needs to report concerns to one of the eligible recipients below to qualify for protection as a whistleblower:

An Appointed Commissioner or a member of the staff of the Commission

The System Governor, or an official of the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Directly to PRONIA (to any staff member or responsible officer).

A police officer

An independent aged care advocate.

If you wish to report directly to PRONIA, we encourage you to contact a member of senior management (such as the CEO or Executive Team members).

Note: Any eligible recipient who is implicated in a disclosure cannot be involved in any aspect of receiving, handling or investigating the disclosure.

If a disclosure relates to the conduct of the CEO or Board Members, we therefore advise whistleblowers to consider reporting directly to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission or other eligible external recipient.

7 HOW TO MAKE A DISCLOSURE

A whistleblower can report a disclosure to any eligible recipient in person, by telephone, email or letter at any time. If making a disclosure to PRONIA, the best email address to use is whistleblower@pronia.com.au.

You can request that you, or any other individual named in the request, remain anonymous.

PRONIA encourages anonymous disclosers to maintain ongoing two-way communication (e.g. via an advocate, or an anonymous email) so we can seek clarification or provide updates. We will not pressure an anonymous disclosure to reveal their identity..

7.1 SEEKING ADVICE BEFORE A DISCLOSURE

Consumers, their families, or others who wish to seek advice before making a disclosure are encouraged to contact an independent aged care advocate. These advocates are recognised recipients under the Act and can provide free, confidential support and assistance.

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8 PROTECTIONS FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS

1. The identity of a whistleblower will be kept private; it will only be shared if consent is provided or if it is required by law, for example, to protect someone from harm, and only with appropriate safeguards in place.
2. Whistleblowers are protected from being mistreated, penalised or disadvantaged because of their disclosure. These protections also apply to a family member or carer who supports a whistleblower.

You still qualify for whistleblower protection even if your disclosure turns out to be incorrect, except for deliberate false reporting.

9 HANDLING AND INVESTIGATING A DISCLOSURE

PRONIA will:

- Establish identity protections for you
- Formulate an initial response and a subcommittee to review, assess, investigate and take appropriate action
- Offer and provide appropriate support to the person making the disclosure
- Conduct an appropriately thorough investigation
- Maintain open and transparent communication with the person making the disclosure
- Ensure that all parties mentioned or involved in the disclosure are treated fairly.

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10 SUPPORT

You may choose to have a family member, carer, interpreter, or **independent advocate** assist you.

We can help you contact:

- **Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) / Elder Rights Australia** – 1800 700 600
www.opan.org.au / www.elderrights.org.au
- **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC)** – 1800 951 822
www.agedcarequality.gov.au
- **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** – 13 14 50
www.tisnational.gov.au