Policy

Whistleblower Policy

Governance Schedule

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Bendigo Bank

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Overview

Purpose and Application

The Whistleblower Policy (**Policy**) outlines Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited's (**the Bank/ BEN**) and its subsidiaries management and governance arrangements of the Bank's Whistleblower framework and procedures. BEN is committed to promoting a culture of integrity, accountability and ethical behaviour, where our decisions, actions and conduct reflect and reinforce our corporate values. Our Code of Conduct and other policies have been developed to promote a culture where individuals feel safe to report issues or improper conduct.

Whistleblowing is essential to good risk management and corporate governance. It helps uncover misconduct that may otherwise not be detected. The purpose of this Policy is to:

- outline the protections available to individuals who disclose wrongdoing, so they feel confident that they can do so without fear of personal *Detriment*;
- improve BEN's whistleblowing culture and increase transparency in how the Bank handles disclosures of wrongdoing;
- encourage more disclosures of wrongdoing; and
- deter wrongdoing, promote better compliance with the law and promote a more ethical culture, by increasing awareness that there is a higher likelihood that wrongdoing will be reported.

While staff are encouraged to speak up about a range of matters, the scope of this Policy is limited to disclosures protected under the *Whistleblower Protections* contained the Corporations Act 2001 (the Act). This includes concerns raised by an *Eligible Whistleblower* about improper conduct, which includes unethical behaviour or breaches of law and/or policy.

This Policy explains how to raise a whistleblower concern and what you can expect if you do. It also aims to provide clarity on:

- the importance of raising your whistleblower concerns;
- how you qualify for protection as a Whistleblower under the Corporations Act;
- how the *Group* will deal with whistleblower concerns;
- your rights and protections so you feel safe to speak up; and
- roles and responsibilities.

This Policy applies to all officers, employees, suppliers (and their employees), associates, trustee, custodian (and their relatives and/ or dependents) of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited ABN 11 068 049 178 and all related entities within the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank *Group* ("the *Group*").

Supporting Documents

Related documents which should be read in conjunction with this Policy include:

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure for Employees
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Fraud Management Policy
- Anti-bribery & Corruption Policy
- Fit and Proper Policy
- Consequence Management Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Whistleblower Program Officer - Head of Accountability and Integrity	• Promote a culture that encourages open and confidential reporting of concerns. • Ensure there is staff and third-party awareness of the Policy, its requirements and protections. • Oversight of the effective functioning of the Whistleblower Policy. • Make related recommendations to the Executive Committee and Board Committee, as relevant. • Obtain expert, independent advice on any area relevant to the operation of the Whistleblower Policy. • Ensure that the BEN Whistleblower Service is conducted in accordance with the Whistleblower Policy. • The contact point for the BEN Whistleblower Service if the report involves a concern about a Whistleblower Investigator. • Overarching role with visibility of all individual cases, who can follow up as required, talk to investigators internally, and act as the contact with the external Whistleblower Service provider (Deloitte). • Oversee training for staff and Eligible Recipients. • Oversight for the protection of any person who reports a concern.
Whistleblower Program Office	• Support the effective functioning of the Whistleblower Policy. • Monitor the BEN Whistleblower Service to ensure it is conducted in accordance with the Whistleblower Policy. • Support role with visibility of all individual cases, who can follow up as required, talk to investigators internally, and act as the contact with the external Whistleblower Service provider (Deloitte). • Develop training modules for staff and Eligible Recipients. • Acknowledge and allocate whistleblower concerns to relevant Whistleblower Investigators • Engage Legal to obtain advice if relevant. • Escalate matters to the Whistleblower Program Officer or the Chief People Officer if relevant.

Whistleblower Investigator **Financial Crimes Risk** Chief Compliance and Financial Crime Officer (MLRO) Manager Internal Investigations **People and Culture** Head of Employee Relations Senior Manager Employee Relations **Group Legal** Senior Legal Counsel	• Receive notification of reports from the Whistleblower Program Officer. • Carry out investigations into whistleblower concerns referred to them, in accordance with any directions by the Whistleblower Program Officer, and any BEN policies. • Report to the Whistleblower Program Officer, including providing investigation reports and recommendations. • Provide advice and assistance to people on the process for reporting concerns. • Impartially assess each whistleblower concern referred to them, including deciding whether an investigation is appropriate. • Provide protection to a person raising a whistleblower concern (e.g., in relation to confidentiality and record management, the welfare of the person and keeping the person informed). • If the BEN Whistleblower Service received the initial report, provide regular status reports to the BEN Whistleblower Service to enable communication between the BEN Whistleblower Service and the reporting person, subject to privacy, confidentiality and other legal considerations. • If necessary, seek assistance of specialist advisers as required such as People and Culture, the police, legal and forensics advisers. • As appropriate, liaise with the Whistleblower Program Officer.
Eligible Recipients	• Receive whistleblower concerns and obtain consent from the whistleblower (where possible or relevant) and refer the whistleblower concern to the BEN Whistleblower Service. • Maintain confidentiality about whistleblower concerns received, in accordance with this Policy. • Immediately report any concerns in relation to any detrimental conduct to the Whistleblower Program Officer. • Complete any training as required. • Where Eligible Recipients are members of Corporate Secretariat or Group Assurance teams, the 'Heads of' these teams are responsible for contacting the Whistleblower Program Officer to arrange training for new staff and/or refresher training.

People Leaders	• Where appropriate, leaders should be consulted in the handling of concerns. • The role of a leader, where the leader is not the subject of the whistleblower concern or implicated in the matter reported, includes the following: • Assist the Whistleblower Investigator by providing access to information, employees or premises as needed. • Maintain confidentiality in relation to any relevant information as well as the identity of a reporting person, the subject of a whistleblower concern, the Investigator and any witnesses. • Secure relevant documentation, information or other evidence under their control, as requested. • Confer with the Whistleblower Program Officer and / or Investigator in developing appropriate recommendations regarding the outcome of any investigation.
Employees and Officers	• Employees and officers are expected to report whistleblower concerns regarding suspected misconduct. • All employees and officers have an important role to play in supporting those who have raised a whistleblower concern. They must not cause Detriment to any person because of raising a whistleblower concern. • All employees and officers should maintain the confidentiality of a person they know or suspect to have made a disclosure.
Board People and Culture Committee	• Provide oversight over the effectiveness of the implementation of this Policy. • Ensure that the *Group* establishes and maintains policies and procedures for employees to submit, confidentially, information about accounting, internal control, compliance, audit, and other matters about which the employee has concerns. • This includes ensuring that there is a process for ensuring employees are aware of these policies and for dealing with matters raised by employees under these policies.

Policy

1 Whistleblower Concerns

Everyone has a responsibility to speak up and report improper conduct. By reporting your whistleblower concern regarding suspected misconduct (*Reportable Conduct*), you make the *Group* a fair, safe and honest place to work and assist in preventing misconduct and wrongdoing, including theft, fraud and dishonesty. The *Group* endeavours to identify and address any wrongdoing as early as possible, so raise your whistleblower concern as soon as you can.

1.1 Who can raise a whistleblower concern?

Whistleblower concerns can be raised by individuals inside and external to the *Group* under this Policy and qualify for protection *(Protected Disclosure)* under the Corporations Act.

Eligible Whistleblowers include current and former:

- Employees and Directors;
- Community Bank employees and Directors;
- Agency staff;
- Contractors, consultants and suppliers;
- Third party providers;
- Brokers; and
- Auditors.

In addition, whistleblower concerns may be raised by an associate, relative, dependent or spouse of these individuals.

Community Bank employees and Directors can also raise a whistleblower concern under the Community Bank Whistleblower Policy. The Whistleblower Program Officer and / or the *Whistleblower Investigator* has the discretion to determine that a concern raised under this Policy should be referred back to and dealt with by the individual Community Bank, under their corresponding policy.

1.2 What is *Reportable Conduct*?

'*Reportable Conduct*' refers to whistleblowing concerns regarding past, present or future suspected or actual breach of law, our Code of Conduct or another *Group* policy and is protected (*Protected Disclosure*).

It includes an activity, conduct or state of affairs that is illegal, unethical or improper. For example:

- allegation of criminal activity (including fraud, theft, modern slavery, bribery and corruption);
- unethical behaviour;
- failure to comply with a legal obligation, including taxation obligations;

- significant breaches of the *Group*'s Code of Conduct Policy or other policy;
- breaking any law administered by *ASIC*, *APRA* or the Commonwealth;
- activities that represent a danger to the public or the financial system; and
- dealings with Government officials may be subject to scrutiny from various anti-corruption bodies.

Please note that matters not relating to the above *Reportable Conduct* will not be covered by *Whistleblower Protections* (*Protected Disclosures*) under the Corporations Act.

Further, employee workplace complaints, also known as personal work-related grievances, are **excluded** from this Policy if they do not also relate to *Reportable Conduct*. In those circumstances, the employee workplace complaint will be handled under the Complaints Procedure for Employees.

1.3 Reasonable grounds to suspect

You will not be disadvantaged for reporting a whistleblower concern under this Policy, even if it turns out you are mistaken.

We will focus on the quality of the information concerning the *Reportable Conduct*, not on the motivation of the Whistleblower. You are not required to prove the allegations or have all the details but must have reasonable grounds to suspect improper conduct. However, a mere allegation with no supporting evidence is not likely to be considered as having 'reasonable grounds to suspect'.

You can still qualify for protection even if the concern turns out to be incorrect.

1.4 What concerns are excluded from this Policy?

The following do not qualify for *Whistleblower Protections* under the Corporation Act.

- Matters that do not relate to *Reportable Conduct*; and
- Employee workplace complaints, also known as personal work-related grievances, are **excluded** from this Policy if they do not also relate to *Reportable Conduct*.

We take employee workplace complaints seriously and recommend you raise your complaint via the channels indicated in the 'Raising a Concern' section of the Complaints Procedure for Employees.

1.4.1 Work-related Grievances

An employee workplace complaint, or personal work-related grievance, is a concern or complaint made by an employee relating to their current or former employment or the work environment and have, or tend to have, implications for the Whistleblower personally but do not:

(a) have any other significant implications for BEN (or another entity); or

(b) relate to any *Reportable Conduct*.

An employee workplace complaint may arise from a policy of the *Group*, or may relate to an act, omission, situation or decision that an employee believes is unfair, discriminatory, unjust or unreasonable.

Examples of employee workplace complaints include:

- performance management;
- disputes between colleagues;
- situations or decisions an employee believes are unfair, unjust or unreasonable;
- routine operational decisions;
- customer service issues;
- policy disagreements; and
- speculative allegations.

1.5 False Reports

You must not deliberately make a false report. All matters reported are treated seriously and a false report will be investigated, and appropriate disciplinary action will be considered.

2 How to Report a Whistleblower Concern?

There are three key channels through which you can raise a whistleblowing concern and receive protection:

- Through the external Whistleblower Service; or
- Contacting an *Eligible Recipient*; or
- Reporting directly to the Whistleblower Program Officer.

If you decide to report a whistleblower concern you can do so by disclosing your name, or you can report the matter anonymously.

2.1 External BEN Whistleblower Service

The BEN Whistleblower Service is an independent service managed by Deloitte.

You can contact the BEN Whistleblower Service using any of the methods set out below:



Online

Use the Online Report Form – this contains step by step instructions to assist you in making your disclosure **http://speakingup.deloitte.com.au**



Email

speakingup@deloitte.com.au



Phone

BEN Whistleblower Hotline – (toll free)

1800 223 150 (Australia)

000 800 0820469 (India)



Post

BEN WHISTLEBLOWER SERVICE

Reply Paid 12628

A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 8006

2.1.1 Process: The BEN Whistleblower Service

The following outlines the process when a whistleblower concern is made to the BEN Whistleblower Service:

- Telephone calls to the BEN Whistleblower Service are not recorded, nor is there a caller ID to identify the call. Your whistleblower concern will be known only by a reference number unless you choose to tell the BEN Whistleblower Service your name.
- Tell the BEN Whistleblower Service as much as you can about the suspected misconduct. For example:
  - specific nature of the concern being raised;
  - details of the person/people you think engaged in the relevant conduct- details of anyone else aware of, or involved in the matter including names of any witnesses;
  - date, time and location of the misconduct;
  - any supporting information details of any proof;
  - money or assets involved; and

- how often you think the incident has happened.

Bendigo Bank investigators may seek additional information utilising the BEN Whistleblower Service as an intermediary.

- The BEN Whistleblower Service will advise you of the protections available under the legislation.
- The information will be provided to the Whistleblower Program Office at Bendigo Bank.
- If you provide your name and contact details, this information will only be known to those required to have this information to investigate the matter.
- If you choose to remain anonymous, feedback will be made available on the BEN Whistleblower Service portal, which you can access using the case ID and your password, which you will receive at the end of lodging your initial whistleblower concern.
- You always have the option of providing additional information or making note of any concerns of adverse treatment, via the BEN Whistleblower Service portal once you have logged in.

2.2 Reporting to *Eligible Recipients*

If the above options for raising your whistleblower concern are not available for any reason, you can also contact an '*Eligible Recipient*'. Our *Eligible Recipients* are:

- Directors;
- *Executives;*
- Chief Legal and Corporate Affairs Officer;
- The auditor of any *Group* company, or a member of the audit team conducting the audit (both internal and external auditors);
- The Company Secretary;
- Chief Compliance and Financial Crime Officer (MLRO) (Compliance & Financial Crimes Risk); and
- Manager Internal Investigations (Compliance & Financial Crimes Risk)

You can do this by:

- Speaking with them in person or by phone; and
- Before disclosing your whistleblower concern, inform the *Eligible Recipient* that you would like to raise a whistleblower concern under this Policy.

An *Eligible Recipient* may direct you to raise your whistleblower concern via our external Whistleblower Service, or to the Whistleblower Program Officer, if they consider it appropriate.

If an *Eligible Recipient* is the subject of your whistleblower concern, or if you have another reason to believe that the *Eligible Recipient* is not likely to deal with your concern properly, then report your concern via the BEN Whistleblower Service as outlined above.

Persons who receive a disclosure who are not *Eligible Recipients* should promptly refer the matter to an *Eligible Recipient* without disclosing the identity of the

Whistleblower or information likely to identify them, or seek their consent prior to sharing their personal details.

2.2.1 Obligations of an *Eligible Recipient*

*Eligible Recipient*s must treat all Whistleblowing reports seriously and in confidence.

*Eligible Recipient*s must not disclose the report or any related information that might lead to the identification of the individual to anyone outside the Whistleblowing Program Office, or *Whistleblower Investigator*, without the consent of the Whistleblower.

The Whistleblower's identity must be protected and can only be disclosed with the Whistleblower's consent. All reasonable steps should be taken to prevent someone outside the Whistleblower Program Office from working out the Whistleblower's identity.

The Whistleblower must also be protected from *Detriment*, as a result of reporting the matter.

2.2.2 Reporting directly to the Whistleblower Program Officer (also an *Eligible Recipient*)

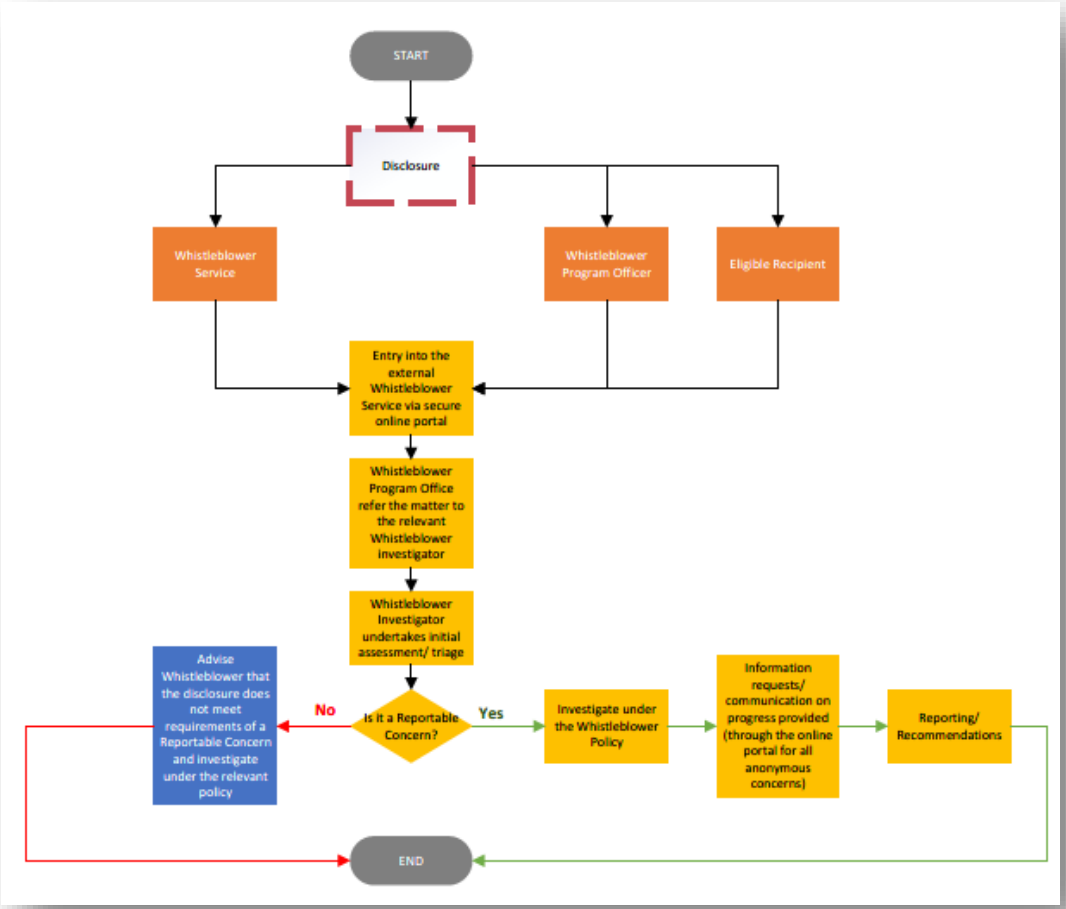
You can raise the suspected misconduct directly with the Whistleblower Program Officer (Head of Accountability and Integrity). Prior to disclosing your whistleblower concern, inform the Whistleblower Program Officer that you would like to raise a whistleblower concern under this Policy.

2.3 Other ways you can raise your whistleblower concern

Nothing in this Policy is intended to limit you from disclosing *Reportable Conduct* or providing information to a legal practitioner, government agency, law enforcement body or a regulator in accordance with any relevant law, regulation or prudential standard as well as journalists and members of the Commonwealth, state or territory parliaments (Parliamentarians), under certain circumstances.

You may also qualify for protection if you are an *Eligible Whistleblower* and choose to make an *Emergency Disclosure* or a *Public Interest Disclosure* - these terms are defined in the 'Definitions' section of this Policy. Specific criteria apply when raising your concern under either of these methods of disclosure, and it is recommended that you contact an independent legal advisor before making an *Emergency Disclosure* or a *Public Interest Disclosure*.

2.4 Reporting a whistleblower concern: Process Map



3 Choosing to remain anonymous

While all whistleblower concerns (whether they are *Reportable Conduct* or not) are treated confidentially, Whistleblowers can choose to report matters anonymously. Anonymous disclosures are still protected under the Corporations Act.

You can choose the level of anonymity when reporting a matter through the BEN Whistleblower service.

If you choose to remain anonymous, your identity will not be disclosed. Information that could lead to your identification will only be shared if it is for the investigation, and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect your identity.

If you choose to remain anonymous and report through our independent service, feedback will be made available on the BEN Whistleblower Service portal, which you can access using the case ID and password given to you at the end of lodging your initial whistleblower concern.

If you do decide to remain anonymous, please be aware that this may impact on the *Group*'s ability to investigate your concern.

4 Investigation protocols

The following principles apply to the investigation of a Whistleblower report:

All investigations are conducted fairly, objectively and independently, with all reasonable efforts made to preserve confidentiality.

To avoid putting an investigation at risk, if you raise a concern under this Policy you are required to keep that fact confidential (subject to any legal requirements).

The investigation process will differ depending on the nature of the suspected misconduct being investigated. It may be a formal in-depth investigation, or a broad review or audit on the subject matter or the work area disclosed. The purpose of the investigation is to determine if whistleblower concerns are substantiated, with a view to the *Group* then remedying any misconduct uncovered, where practical.

Stage	Description
Receipt of Report	The Whistleblower Program Office reviews the report and will refer to the relevant department.
Initial Assessment	A *Whistleblower Investigator* will first assess your concern to determine if it qualifies for protection and requires a formal investigation. Even in unclear cases you may be treated as a Whistleblower.
Investigation	If the concern qualifies for protection, an appropriate investigation, review or audit will be conducted. Where necessary, an external expert may also be engaged to assist. If the concern involves senior members of the Bank, or where the Whistleblower Program Officer and / or *Whistleblower Investigator* deems it necessary, external independent investigators may be engaged to perform the investigation. If you choose to remain anonymous, your identity will not be disclosed to the Investigator or to any other person. Information that is likely to lead to your identification may be disclosed to the investigating team without your explicit consent, provided that: o It is disclosed for the purpose of reasonably investigating the whistleblower concern; and o All reasonable steps are taken to reduce the risk that you may be identified.

4.1 Keeping you informed

If you provide your details, feedback will be provided initially within seven days and then regularly while the investigation is in progress, with a further update when the investigation has been finalised.

If you choose to remain anonymous, feedback will be made available on the BEN Whistleblower Service portal, which you can access using the case ID and password given to you at the end of lodging your initial whistleblower concern.

4.1.1 Outcomes

You will be informed when the investigation has been finalised and the matter has been closed.
There may be circumstances where it may not be appropriate to provide you with details of the outcome.

4.1.1.1 Whistleblower concerns that are substantiated

If the *Whistleblower Investigator* and / or Whistleblower Program Officer are satisfied on completion of an investigation that the whistleblower concern/s raised are substantiated, they may make recommendations for further action.

The *Whistleblower Investigator* and / or Whistleblower Program Officer will take the following into account when making recommendations:

- Where appropriate, develop recommendations in consultation with the relevant Executive.
- Aim to stop any substantiated misconduct which may be in breach of the law, our Code of Conduct or a Bendigo Bank policy.
- Aim to minimise any damage or loss to the *Group* as a result of the substantiated misconduct.
- Identify the action/s recommended to be taken.
- Consider appropriate legal action.
- Consider if information should be provided to the *Group*'s insurers or other third parties.

4.1.1.2 Whistleblower concerns that are not substantiated

If the Whistleblower Investigator is satisfied that a whistleblower concern is not substantiated, they will make a recommendation of no action in relation to the whistleblower concern. The *Whistleblower Investigator* and / or Whistleblower Program Officer has discretion to make this decision without undertaking an investigation if the circumstances justify it.

If a report of a whistleblower concern is considered by the *Whistleblower Investigator* and/or Whistleblower Program Officer to have been deliberately false or misleading, and wasn't reported anonymously, the *Whistleblower Investigator* and / or Whistleblower Program Officer may recommend that disciplinary action be taken against the person raising the whistleblower concern. In this case the matter must be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure (and any other relevant policies or procedures).

4.1.1.3 Reporting to third parties

In certain circumstances you may have a legal obligation to make a report to a third party, such as a statutory body or government department. You should make sure that you meet all reporting requirements. The Whistleblower Program Officer can advise you on these reporting obligations.

5 Support and Protections for Whistleblowers

You will qualify for *Whistleblower Protections* if you are an *Eligible Whistleblower*.

5.1 Civil, criminal and administrative liability

A Whistleblower will not be subject to any civil, criminal or disciplinary action for raising a whistleblower concern that is covered by this Policy, or for participating in any subsequent investigation.

Provided you acted without malice, you are not liable for defamation.

However, this Policy will not protect you if you are also involved in the reported misconduct or illegal activities, or if the whistleblower concern is deliberately false or misleading. Anyone who raises a whistleblower concern but is later found to have been involved in wrongdoing related to the concern, will not be protected in relation to their role in the reported wrongdoing. However, in some cases the raising of the whistleblower concern may be a mitigating factor.

5.2 Confidentiality

The *Group* recognises that maintaining confidentiality is important to the integrity of the whistleblower concerns process and to protect the welfare of people making reports. If you choose to disclose your name, every effort will be made to protect your identity.

We maintain your confidentiality in the following ways:

- All documentation is stored securely;
- Any information related to the concern can only be accessed by those directly managing the matter; and
- Training *Eligible Recipient*s and the Whistleblower Program Office of their obligations to maintain confidentiality.

Information about your identity and information that is likely to lead to your identification may be disclosed in the following circumstances:

- Where the information is provided to *ASIC*, *APRA* or the Australian Federal Police;
- Where the information is disclosed to a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice in relation to the operation of applicable *Whistleblower Protection* laws; or
- Where you consent.

If your whistleblower concern relates to an allegation of suspected misconduct against a person, in most cases it will be necessary to disclose details about the whistleblower concern raised to the person against whom an allegation is made, to enable them to respond. In these circumstances, we will take all reasonable steps to

reduce the risk that you will be identified. You may refuse to answer questions you feel could reveal your identity at any time, including during follow up conversations.

If it is not possible to keep your identity anonymous during the investigation, we will take all reasonable steps so that you will not be disadvantaged in your employment or arrangement with the *Group*.

It is illegal for a person to identify a Whistleblower discloser or share any information that could lead to the identification of a discloser, outside of the above circumstances. You can lodge a complaint about an actual or suspected breach of confidentiality by contacting the Whistleblower Program Officer, or by lodging your complaint with *ASIC*, *APRA* or the ATO for investigation.

5.3 Protection Against Detrimental Conduct

Whistleblowers will be protected from actual or threatened (express or implied) *Detriment* and victimisation as a result of raising, or potentially raising, a whistleblower concern.

Detriment includes, but is not limited to:

- Termination of employment;
- A reduction in your terms and conditions of employment;
- Demotion;
- Unfair or unequal treatment in the workplace, or if you are a supplier, cancellation of your contract.

Retaliation in any form against an individual who reports suspected misconduct under this Policy (even if the whistleblower concern turns out to be mistaken) or who helps in the investigation of a whistleblower concern, will not be tolerated and will be treated as a breach of this Policy and the Code of Conduct.

You will not be protected from actions that are not detrimental conduct, such as management of unsatisfactory work performance, as long as the action is consistent with our Performance Counselling Policy, or actions that are undertaken to protect you from *Detriment* – such as changing your usual work location.

If you have raised a whistleblower concern and believe you have been or are likely to be disadvantaged in any way by an employee, including your manager, director or third party contact the Whistleblower Program Officer for assistance. The Whistleblower Program Officer[1] has specific responsibilities including protecting those who raise a whistleblower concern under this Policy.

Alternatively, you may also seek independent legal advice or contact a relevant regulatory body (such as *ASIC*, *APRA* or the ATO), if you think you have suffered *Detriment*.

[1] Note: The Whistleblower Program Officer is the Head of Accountability and Integrity.

5.4 Support for Whistleblowers

Raising a whistleblower concern can be stressful and difficult. Whistleblowers are encouraged to make use of the Employee Assistance Program, a confidential counselling service available to all employees of the *Group*, at any time.

You may also contact the Whistleblower Program Officer, who may appoint an independent support person from the People and Culture team to assist you in managing your health and wellbeing. Be aware that this action may require you to consent to disclosure of your identity, or information that could lead to the disclosure of your identity.

Anonymous Whistleblowers should proactively report any adverse treatment experienced by them, so the *Group* can take immediate steps to rectify this.

5.5 Compensation

You, or any other staff member or individual, can seek compensation and other remedies through the courts if you believe you have:

- Suffered loss, damage or injury because of a whistleblower concern you have raised; and
- The *Group* failed to take reasonable steps to prevent the detrimental conduct that you have experienced.

In these circumstances, we recommend you obtain independent legal advice.

6 Implicated Employee Protection

Whistleblower Investigators must take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of both Whistleblowers and implicated employees, and adequate support should be provided to both the Whistleblower and implicated individuals (as relevant).

6.1 Confidentiality

Whistleblower Investigators **must** take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of the person who is the subject of the whistleblower concern during the assessment and investigation process.

Where an investigation does not substantiate suspected misconduct, the existence of the investigation, its findings, and the identity of the person who was the subject of the whistleblower concern **must** remain confidential.

6.2 Information sharing

Subject to any privacy, confidentiality and other legal considerations, if the *Whistleblower Investigator* conducts an investigation or appoints an external investigator, the *Whistleblower Investigator* will make sure the person who is the subject of the investigation is:

- Informed of the substance of any allegations;
- Entitled to respond to any allegations;
- Has their position or circumstances set out fairly in any report by the *Whistleblower Investigator*; and
- Informed of the outcome of any investigation, including any adverse recommendations (for example, disciplinary action) where the misconduct is substantiated.

6.3 Support for implicated individuals

The *Group* recognises that a person who is the subject of a whistleblower concern may require support during the handling and investigation of the suspected misconduct.

Staff who are the subject of a whistleblower concern are encouraged to make use of the Employee Assistance Program.

They can also contact the Whistleblower Program Officer, who may appoint an independent support person from the People and Culture team to assist in managing the employees' health and wellbeing.

7 Staff Training and Awareness

The Whistleblower Program Office takes reasonable steps to ensure employees understand and are aware of the Whistleblower Policy through induction, and regular training.

In addition, specialist training is delivered for *Eligible Recipients* annually.

Investigators must be suitably trained and have demonstrated competence and experience in conducting investigations.

8 Reporting

The Whistleblower Program Officer will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the Whistleblower Program and provide periodic reporting to the Bank's relevant Executive and Board Committees, including appropriate information on whistleblower disclosures, trends and emerging themes.

9 Access to the policy

This Policy will be made available on the internal *Group* intranet (BENnet) and the Bendigo Bank public website.

Appendix A – Definitions

Term	Definition
APRA	The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority.
ASIC	The Australian Securities & Investments Commission.
Bendigo Bank / BEN	Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited (ACN 068 049 178).
Detriment	Any actual or threatened harm or damage suffered by an Eligible Whistleblower as a result of reporting their concern, including (but not limited to): • termination of employment; • harassment, bullying or intimidation; • personal or financial disadvantage; • unlawful discrimination; • harm or injury, including psychological harm; • damage to reputation; or • any other conduct that constitutes retaliation.
Eligible Recipient	An individual who can receive a Protected Disclosure. At BEN this includes all Board members, all Executives, members of the Audit team (internal and external); the Company Secretary, Whistleblower Program Officer, Head of Group Financial Crime Risk and MLRO and Manager Internal Investigations.
Eligible Whistleblower	An individual to whom the Whistleblower Protections apply. An individual is an Eligible Whistleblower in relation to BEN if the individual is or has been any of the following: a) an officer; b) an employee; c) an individual who supplies good or services; d) an employee of a person who supplies goods or services; e) an individual who is an associate; as well as f) a relative and/ or dependant of an individual referred to in (a) – (g); and g) an individual prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph in relation to BEN. Note: See RG 270.43–RG 270.44 and s1317AAA of the Corporations Act. Also see s14ZZU of the Taxation Administration Act.
Emergency Disclosure	The disclosure of information to a journalist or parliamentarian, where the discloser has reasonable grounds to believe that the information concerns a substantial and imminent danger to the health or safety of one or more persons or to the natural environment. Note: The disclosure must meet a number of other criteria to qualify. See RG 270.76 and s1317AAD(2) of the Corporations Act.

Term	Definition
Executive	Executive for this purpose is a person who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole or a substantial part of the business of the Group or has the capacity to impact significantly the company's financial standing. Within the Group this is defined as a Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Executive Committee member. Our Executives can be found on our corporate internet site under the About Us section.
Group	Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited and its related bodies corporate.
Protected Disclosure	A legally protected report (of *Reportable Conduct*) by an individual regarding misconduct or improper affairs within an organisation covering a wider range of misconduct made to an *Eligible Recipient* or through the Whistleblower Service.
Public Interest Disclosure	The disclosure of information to a journalist or a parliamentarian, where the discloser has reasonable grounds to believe that making a further disclosure of the information is in the public interest. The disclosure must meet a number of other criteria to qualify. Note: See RG 270.75 and s1317AAD(1) of the Corporations Act.
Reportable Conduct	Reportable Conduct includes an activity, conduct or state of affairs that is illegal, unethical or improper. For example: • allegation of criminal activity (including fraud, theft, modern slavery, bribery and corruption); • unethical behaviour; • failure to comply with a legal obligation, including taxation obligations; • significant breaches of the *Group*'s Code of Conduct policy or other policy; • breaking any law administered by ASIC, APRA or the Commonwealth; and activities that represent a danger to the public or the financial system. Excludes: **Personal work-related grievances**. Personal work-related grievances are matters in relation to your current or former employment or engagement that has implications for you personally (that is, matters that are solely related to you). Examples include: • a conflict between you and another employee • a decision relating to your employment or engagement, transfer, remuneration or promotion; or • a decision relating to the termination or terms and conditions of your employment or engagement. Such personal grievances should be raised with the Employee Relations team. However, if that grievance relates to Detriment suffered by you because you have previously raised a concern about Reportable Conduct, then that grievance will be covered by this Policy.
Whistleblower Investigator	The person responsible for investigating disclosures.

Term	Definition
Whistleblower Protections	The protections available under the Act to a person who makes a Protected Disclosure.

Document Control Table

Version No:	Document Owner	Date Approved	Approved By	Next Review	Purpose or Change
1.0	*People & Performance*			*01/02/2013*	
1.1	*People & Performance*		*People & Performance*	*01/02/2015*	
1.2	*People & Performance*		*People & Performance*	*01/02/2015*	
1.3	*People & Performance*		*People & Performance*	*06/03/2019*	
1.4	*People & Performance*		*People & Performance*	*06/03/2019*	
2.0	*People & Culture*	*11/11/2019*	*Board Governance & HR Committee*	*27/11/2021*	
2.1	*People & Culture*	*25/05/2021*	*Board*	*May 2023*	
2.2	*People & Culture*	*22/06/2022*	*People & Culture*	*May 2023*	
3.0	*People & Culture*	*March 2024*	*Board*	*March 2026*	
3.1	*People & Culture*	October *2024*	*People & Culture*	*March 2026*	
4.0	*People & Culture*	*April 2026*	*Board People & Culture Committee*	*April 2028*	Scheduled Review
4.1	*People & Culture*	*October 2026*	*Head of Accountability & Integrity*	*April 2028*	Minor Updates