

Whistleblower Policy: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support a culture of integrity, transparency, and accountability within the Australian Association of the Order of Malta Limited (ABN 37 142 209 121) (the "Association") by encouraging members, employees, and volunteers to speak up about any concerns related to the safety and wellbeing of Children and Vulnerable Adults. The policy ensures that those who raise concerns are protected from victimisation, harassment, or reprisal.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Members, Employees, and Volunteers of the Association, including contractors and consultants, who wish to report concerns relating to:

- Abuse or neglect of a Children and Vulnerable Adults.
- Misconduct or inappropriate behaviour in safeguarding contexts.
- Breaches of safeguarding policies or protocols.

3. Policy Statement

The Association is committed to safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of all Children and Vulnerable Adults. We recognise the responsibility of every member of our community to report suspected abuse or misconduct. Those who raise concerns in good faith will be supported and protected under this policy.

4. Guiding Principles

- **Duty to Report:** Everyone has a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns.
- **Good Faith Protection:** Anyone who raises a concern in good faith will not face any retaliation or adverse action.
- **Confidentiality:** All reports will be handled sensitively and confidentially.
- **No Tolerance for Retaliation:** Harassment, victimisation or reprisals against a whistleblower will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.
- **Accountability:** Malicious or knowingly false reports may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

5. Reasons to Whistleblow

- To protect Children and Vulnerable Adults from harm or ongoing risk.
- To ensure that inappropriate behaviour is addressed early.
- To prevent organisational or reputational damage.

- To fulfil moral and legal responsibilities.

6. Barriers to Whistleblowing – Acknowledged but Addressed

We understand concerns such as:

- Fear of being wrong or not believed.
- Fear of reprisals or professional consequences.
- Concern about damaging relationships or disrupting the organisation.

However, the wellbeing and protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults must always take precedence. Support will be provided for anyone coming forward.

7. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns can be raised in the following ways:

1. **Primary Contact:** Your local Regional Safeguarding Officer or.
2. **Alternative Contact:** If uncomfortable with the primary contact, raise the concern with the Regional Hospitalier.
3. **Escalation:** If necessary, concerns can be raised directly with the National Safeguarding Officer

All concerns should be raised as soon as possible, either verbally or in writing. Anonymous disclosures will be considered, although they may limit our ability to investigate fully.

8. After a Concern is Raised

- You will receive acknowledgment of your concern.
- The matter will be reviewed and, if appropriate, investigated under safeguarding protocols.
- You will be kept informed of the progress and outcome, where appropriate.
- Support will be offered throughout the process.

9. Protection for Whistleblowers

- You are protected from any detrimental treatment or victimisation arising from your report.
- You will not be penalised if the concern is found to be unsubstantiated, provided it was raised in good faith.
- Any form of retaliation will result in disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator.

10. False or Malicious Reports

- Reports found to be deliberately false or made with malicious intent may be subject to disciplinary action.

- This does not apply to reports made in good faith that turn out to be incorrect.

11. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by legislative changes or organisational needs.

Approved by: Executive Council

Policy Version: 1.0

Approval Date: 24 September 2025

Next Review: July 2028