



## WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Approved by Board: 21 August 2018

Next review date: August 2019

Managed on behalf of the CEO and Board by: CEO

\*Revisions to this version are identified on the last page before declaration form

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### 1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines Interplast Australia & New Zealand's (Interplast's) commitment to accountability and transparency. The purpose of this policy is to provide a supportive work-relationship environment where misconduct within or by Interplast can be raised without fear of retribution. This is achieved by:

- Encouraging the reporting of serious misconduct
- Providing protected misconduct reporting alternatives to remove inhibitions that may impede such disclosures
- Establishing procedures that enable:
  - protection for those that make serious misconduct disclosures
  - independent internal inquiry/investigation of disclosures made
  - resolution of the issue(s) identified

This policy is closely associated with a number of other Interplast policies and should be read in conjunction with Interplast's Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy (Employees and Volunteers), Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy and Child Protection Policy.

### 2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the following:

- Interplast staff members and contractors;
- Interplast volunteers<sup>1</sup>;
- Interplast Board of Directors and Committee and Working Group members; and
- Observers/visitors accompanying an Interplast activity.

These people are collectively referred to as Interplast personnel for the purposes of this policy.

Internal issues and grievances that an employee or volunteer has related to their work, or work environment, will be managed in accordance with Interplast's Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy (Employees and Volunteers).

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<sup>1</sup> Volunteers include medical volunteers (surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and allied therapists) undertaking an activity overseas or participating in professional development in their own country or overseas and non-medical volunteers, such as those in administrative, promotional, governance or fundraising roles.

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### **3. Legislative Framework and Standards**

There are a number of legislative and other frameworks and standards that apply to this policy:

- *Corporations Act 2001*
- As a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, Interplast is committed to protecting the human rights and safety of its employees and volunteers by enabling them to report wrongdoing through fair, transparent and accessible procedures (Quality Principle 9 People and Culture; Commitment 9.2).
- As a DFAT-accredited NGO, Interplast is also required to comply with DFAT standards relating to protection of whistle-blowers, specifically, DFAT Accreditation Criteria A2.4: ANGO has established public-facing complaints handling, whistleblowing and incident management systems that are accessible to all stakeholders.
- G20 Commitment to Whistleblowing (2010 Seoul Summit)
- Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistle-blower Protections) Bill 2017 (this amendment is currently before the Senate at the time of writing this Policy)

### **4. Definitions**

Whistleblowing is the disclosure by or for a witness, of actual or suspected misconduct in an organisation that reveals fraud, corruption, illegal activities, gross mismanagement, malpractice or any other serious wrongdoing.

A whistleblower is a person who reports serious misconduct in accordance with this policy.

Misconduct includes behaviour that:

- is fraudulent or corrupt (as defined under the Interplast Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy)
- is illegal
- is unethical, such as acting dishonestly; altering company records; wilfully making false entries in office records; engaging in questionable accounting practices; or wilfully breaching Interplast's Code of Conduct or the ACFID Code of Conduct
- is potentially damaging to Interplast, such as maladministration
- is seriously harmful or potentially seriously harmful to staff, volunteers, or the general public such as deliberate unsafe work practice or wilful disregard to the safety of others in the workplace
- may cause serious financial or non-financial loss to Interplast; or damage its reputation; or be otherwise seriously contrary to this Policy
- involves any other kind of serious impropriety including retaliatory action against a whistleblower for having made a wrongdoing disclosure

Complaints regarding occupational health and safety should as a general rule be made through the Interplast Occupational Health and Safety Policy procedures.

## **5. Policy Statement**

Interplast is committed to the highest standards of legal, ethical and moral behaviour. Interplast recognises that people who have a working relationship with Interplast are often the first to realise there may be concerns. No person should be personally disadvantaged for reporting a wrongdoing. Interplast is committed to maintaining an environment where legitimate concerns can be reported without fear of retaliatory action or retribution. When a person makes such a disclosure they are entitled to expect that:

- Their identity always remains confidential to the extent permitted by law or is practical in the circumstances
- They will be protected from reprisal, harassment or victimisation for making the report
- Should retaliation occur for having made the disclosure then Interplast will treat it as serious wrongdoing under this Policy.

## **6. Policy in Practice**

The Board is responsible for adopting this policy. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

All Interplast personnel (staff, Board, volunteers and other program activity participants) will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities to report wrongdoing to the CEO, as well as through the Program Activity Participant Protocol which is signed by volunteers and observers. It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure all staff are adequately trained in understanding, identifying and (where possible) mitigating any activity that may breach the definitions of fraudulent or corrupt behaviour.

All Interplast stakeholders will have access to the Policy via the Interplast Australia & New Zealand website.

Where a whistleblower believes on reasonable grounds that any Interplast personnel has breached general law, any provision of the organisation's constitution, or its policies, or its code of conduct, or generally recognised principles of ethics, that person may report their concern to the Interplast CEO. Reports must be made in good-faith and be as thorough as is possible. False or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary actions.

Where it is not possible or appropriate to report suspicion of misconduct to the CEO, or, if they feel that the CEO may be complicit in the breach, reports should be raised directly to the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, or a Director on the Executive Committee of the Interplast Board who will notify the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

An investigation plan will be developed to ensure all relevant questions are addressed, the scale of the investigation is in proportion to the seriousness of the allegation(s) and sufficient resources are allocated. The responsibilities of the appointed investigator include the assurance that action taken in response to the inquiry is appropriate to the circumstances and retaliatory action will not be taken against whistleblower and further support is provided to that person if necessary. The investigator has direct, unfettered

access to independent financial, legal and operational advisers as required, and a direct line of reporting to the CEO, as may be required to satisfy the objectives of this Policy.

A whistleblower must provide information to assist any inquiry/investigation of the wrongdoing disclosed. This should include details of:

- the nature of the alleged breach;
- the person or persons responsible for the breach;
- the facts on which the whistleblower's belief that a breach has occurred, and has been committed by the person named, are founded;
- the nature and whereabouts of any further evidence that would substantiate the whistleblower's allegations, if known.

Even though a whistleblower may be implicated in the wrongdoing, they must not be subjected to any actual or threatened retaliatory action or victimisation in reprisal for making a report under this policy. It is important to note that making a report does not absolve the whistleblower from the consequences of any involvement on their part in the wrongdoing itself. A person's liability for their own conduct is not affected by their reporting of that conduct under this policy.

The CEO must keep the whistleblower informed of the progress and outcomes of the inquiry/investigation, subject to considerations of privacy of those against whom the allegations have been made.

The internal investigator must have internal independence of line management of the area affected by the wrongdoing disclosure. The investigator may second the expertise of other officers in Interplast to assist in the investigation and may seek the advice of internal or external experts as required.

These procedures do not authorise any Interplast personnel to inform commercial media or social media of their concern, and do not offer protection to any Interplast personnel who does so.

#### Anonymity

Disclosures may be made anonymously, and this anonymity shall as far as possible be preserved by Interplast, except insofar as it may be overridden by due process of law.

Where anonymity has been requested the complainant is required to maintain confidentiality regarding the issue on their own account and to refrain from discussing the matter with any unauthorized persons.

The principles of procedural fairness (natural justice) will be observed<sup>2</sup>.

#### Findings

A report will be prepared when an investigation is complete. This report will include

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<sup>2</sup> Natural justice and procedural fairness do not require that the person affected be informed of the identity of the person making the initial disclosure, unless that communication constitutes part of the evidence relied upon in making the eventual finding.

- the allegations
- a statement of all relevant findings of fact and the evidence relied upon in reaching any conclusions
- the conclusions reached (including the damage caused, if any, and the impact on the organisation and other affected parties) and their basis
- recommendations based on those conclusions to address any wrongdoing identified and any other matters arising during the investigation.

The report will also be provided to the person making the allegation (with, if necessary, any applicable confidentiality stipulations).

The CEO will provide a register to the Interplast Board through the Audit & Risk Committee, summarising the protected disclosures received, at least once a year or more frequently as required, protecting confidentiality, anonymity and any information which might make possible the identification of the whistleblower in any way.

## **7. Monitoring and Review of Policy**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed in line with the process outlined in the Policy Framework. The CEO is accountable to the Board for managing and maintaining this policy.

Where compliance issues are identified, the CEO will work with staff and other relevant stakeholders to address these issues promptly.

Any updates and revisions to this policy must be endorsed by the CEO before being submitted to the Interplast Board for its approval. Policy changes will be reflected, as necessary in updated operational manuals.