



Shire of
Katanning
Heart of the Great Southern

Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedures

Rights and obligations under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003

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Policy Statement

1. The Shire of Katanning does not tolerate from its offices, employees and contractors:
 - corrupt or other improper conduct, and
 - mismanagement of public resources, in the exercise of the public functions.
2. The Shire of Katanning is committed to:
 - the aims and objectives of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (PID Act);
 - the PID Act's aim to facilitate and encourage the disclosure of public interest information; and
 - the PID Act's protection for those who make disclosures and for those whom disclosures are made.
3. The Shire of Katanning will:
 - comply with the Commissioner's guidelines referenced in this procedure;
 - ensure contact and related discussions are to be treated in the strictest confidence, in accordance with the requirements of the PID Act.

Objective

4. These internal procedures provide for the manner in which the Shire of Katanning will comply with its obligations under the PID Act. They provide for the manner in which:
 - a. disclosures of public interest information are to be made to the Public Interest Disclosure Officer (PID Officer) only;
 - b. the PID Officer shall investigate the information disclosed, or cause that information to be investigated;
 - c. the PID Officer may take action following the completion of the investigation;
 - d. the PID Officer shall report to the discloser as to the progress and outcome of that investigation and the action taken as a consequence;
 - e. the confidentiality of the discloser, and any person who may be the subject of a public interest disclosure, shall be maintained; and
 - f. records as to public interest disclosures shall be maintained and reporting obligations complied with. Describe here the objective of the policy – why the policy exists, or why it is required, and what it is designed to ensure.

Scope

5. The PID Act only applies to disclosures made to an appropriate proper authority.
6. The PID Officer of a public authority is the proper authority for the disclosure of information relating to a matter falling within the sphere of responsibility of that public authority.
7. Disclosures to a journalist, the media or other persons who are not specified as proper authorities are not protected by the PID Act.

Note: A person may make a disclosure to a journalist of substantially the same information that was the subject of a disclosure of public interest information that the person has already made under this Act if the proper authority to which the disclosure was made, or the person to whom a matter raised by the disclosure was referred under section 9(1)(b) of the PID Act:

- (a) has refused to investigate, or has discontinued the investigation of, a matter raised by the disclosure; or
- (b) has not completed an investigation of a matter raised by the disclosure within the period ending 6 months after the disclosure was made; or
- (c) has completed an investigation of a matter raised by the disclosure but has not recommended the taking of action in respect of the matter; or
- (d) has not complied with section 10(1) or (4), if applicable, in relation to the disclosure.

Section 9. Proper authority's duties as to matter that might be disclosed

(1) If a proper authority forms the opinion that a person may be, may have been, or may in the future be, involved in a matter that may be the subject of a disclosure of public interest information, the proper authority must take such action as is necessary, reasonable, and within its functions and powers, to —

- (a) prevent the matter to which the disclosure relates from continuing or occurring in future; or
- (b) refer the matter to the Commissioner of Police or another person, body, or organisation having power to investigate the matter; or
- (c) take disciplinary action or commence or enable disciplinary proceedings to be commenced against a person responsible for the matter.

(2) Before taking action under subsection (1)(a) or (c) the proper authority is to afford any person against whom, or in respect of whom, the action is to be taken the opportunity to make a submission, either orally or in writing, in relation to the matter.

Legislative and Strategic Context

- 8. Public Interest Disclosures Act 2003 (the PID Act).
- 9. Public Sector Commission - Guidelines.

Review Position and Date

- 10. This policy and procedure is to be reviewed by the document owner annually.

Associated Documents

- 11. All associated documents contained within this document can be sourced from: www.publicsector.wa.gov.au

Definitions

- 12. Key terms and acronyms used in the policy are sourced from the PID Act and referenced guidelines.

Procedures

13. The following procedures are to be used in conjunction with the forms and guidelines provided.
14. It is recommended that the **PID Advice and Referral Line on 1800 676 607** is accessed prior to making a disclosure as this will assist the PID Officer.

A. Support for employees who make public interest disclosures

15. The Shire of Katanning will take all reasonable steps to provide protection to employees who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for the making of a public interest disclosure.
16. The Shire of Katanning does not tolerate any of its officers, employees or contractors engaging in acts of victimisation or reprisal against those who make public interest disclosures.

B. Rights and Obligations

17. The rights and obligations created by the PID Act are described in Appendix 1 to these procedures.

C. Designation & Responsibilities of the Public Interest Disclosure Officer

18. The person from time to time holding or acting in the position of **Deputy Chief Executive Officer** is designated as the Public Interest Disclosure Officer (PID Officer) of the Shire of Katanning.
19. The PID Officer is responsible for receiving disclosures of public interest information relating to matters falling within the sphere of responsibility of the Shire of Katanning.
20. As soon as practicable after assuming or acting designated officer is to forward a completed PID Officer's Declaration Form to the Public Sector Commission.
21. A copy of the completed PID Officer's declaration form shall also be retained on the public authority's file.

Note: The PID Officer should be a senior officer within the Shire of Katanning who is provided with support in relation to their obligations.

D. PID Officers for Named Authorities

22. Subsequent references in these procedures to the PID Officer shall be taken to include an employee or officer of the following:

Corruption and Crime Commission	The PID Act also provides for the Corruption and Crime Commission to receive public interest disclosures of information relating to an offence under State law.
Police	The PID Act also provides for any police officer to receive public interest disclosures of information relating to an offence under State law.
Ombudsman	The PID Act also provides for the Ombudsman to receive public interest disclosures of information relating to matters of administration within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman, and matters relating to most public officers.
Auditor General	The PID Act also provides for the Auditor General to receive public interest disclosures of information relating to substantial unauthorised or irregular use of, or substantial mismanagement of, public resources.

E. Receiving public interest disclosures – Advice to disclosures

23. Before a discloser makes a public interest disclosure to a PID Officer, the PID Officer shall advise the discloser of the following matters:

24. If they choose to make a public interest disclosure they will not as a result:

- a. incur any civil or criminal liability;
- b. be liable to any disciplinary action under State law;
- c. be liable to be dismissed or have his or her services dispensed with or otherwise terminated; and
- d. be liable for any breach of a duty of secrecy or confidentiality or any other applicable restriction on disclosure.

25. If they choose to make a public interest disclosure they may have the right to take civil proceedings if they are subject to detrimental action as a result of making the disclosure.

26. If they choose to make a public interest disclosure then their identity will not be disclosed except in accordance with section 16 of the PID Act (i.e. disclosure of their identity may be required in the course of the investigations).

27. If they choose to make a public interest disclosure then they will have the right to be informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation and action taken as a result.

28. If they choose to make a public interest disclosure:
- a. they are only protected if they believe on reasonable grounds that the information to be disclosed is or may be true.
 - b. they will commit an offence, and lose the protection of the PID Act, if they know the information to be false or misleading in a material particular or are reckless about whether the information is false or misleading in a material particular.
 - c. they will forfeit the protection given by the PID Act if they disclose the information otherwise than under the PID Act (i.e. if they provide the information to the media or a person who is not a proper authority).
 - d. they will forfeit the protection given by the PID Act if they fail, without reasonable excuse, to assist a person investigating the matter to which the information relates, by supplying any information requested.
 - e. they may commit an offence if they disclose information that might identify or tend to identify anyone as a person in respect of whom a disclosure of public interest information has been made.
29. The disclosure will only be protected if the PID Officer is the proper authority for receiving that kind of information, as indicated in the following table:

F. Proper authorities for receiving disclosures of public interest information

When the disclosure relates to:	The proper authority is:
A public authority or an officer of the public authority	PID officer of the public authority
Offences under State law	A police officer or the Corruption and Crime Commission
Substantial unauthorised or irregular use of, or substantial mismanagement of, public resources	PID officer of the public authority concerned or the Auditor General
Matters of administration affecting someone in their personal capacity falling within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman	PID officer of the public authority concerned or the WA Ombudsman
A police officer	Commissioner of Police or the Corruption and Crime Commission
A member of the Legislative Assembly	Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
A member of the Legislative Council	President of the Legislative Council
A judicial officer	Chief Justice
A public officer who is not a member of Parliament, a minister, a judicial officer or a commissioned or other officer specified in schedule 1 of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971.	PID officer of the public authority concerned, the WA Ombudsman or the Public Sector Commissioner

Important Notes: In addition, the information disclosed must be public interest information as defined in the PID Act.

Not all proper authorities to which a disclosure may be made will be required or have the power to investigate the information disclosed. In some cases it may be necessary for the discloser or information to be referred to another proper authority with power to investigate the information.

Assessing a public interest disclosure

30. The PID Officer must confirm that the discloser wishes to make a public interest disclosure under the Act.
31. If they do the PID Officer must make an initial assessment of whether:
 - a. the information disclosed relates to a public authority, a public officer or a public sector contractor;
 - b. the information disclosed relates to the performance of a public function;
 - c. the information disclosed tends to show improper conduct;
 - d. the improper conduct is of the kind for which the PID Officer is the proper authority (see the table above in section 1)
 - e. the discloser believes on reasonable grounds that the information is or may be true
 - f. the information is not protected by legal professional privilege.
32. If the above questions are all answered "yes", then the disclosure of information is a public interest disclosure to which the PID Act will apply.
33. In assessing whether a disclosure is a public interest disclosure, the PID Officer should consider the Flowchart for receiving and assessing disclosures at [Appendix 2](#), as well as complete part 1 of the assessment form (titled: Assessment Form – Part 1) for assessing public interest disclosures.

Important Note: Where the proper authority does not have the power to investigate a matter the person should be referred to the appropriate authority. However if they still wish to make the disclosure to you it should be assessed and if it is a public interest disclosure it should be referred to the appropriate authority for investigation as provided for under the PID Act.

Form of public interest disclosure

34. If a disclosure is a public interest disclosure, the discloser and the PID Officer can use the Public interest disclosure lodgement form. The PID Officer should also complete part 2 of the assessment form (titled: Assessment Form – Part 2) for public interest disclosures.
35. On completion of this form, the PID Officer should create a separate file for the public interest disclosure, with the following text clearly marked on the front of the file.

CONFIDENTIAL

The material in this file relates to a public interest disclosure made under the ***Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003***.

Disclosure of information that might identify or tend to identify either the discloser or a person in respect of whom the disclosure has been made is an offence, unless the disclosure occurs in accordance with the PID Act.

Penalty: \$24 000 or imprisonment for two years

36. The public interest disclosure should also be recorded in the Public interest disclosure register by the PID Officer and maintained in a secure location. The register is available on the Commission's website.

G. Investigating a public interest disclosure

Determining whether the matter must be investigated

37. After receiving a disclosure, the PID Officer must consider whether:
- a. the disclosure relates to the Shire of Katanning, its officers or contractors; or
 - b. the disclosure relates to a matter or person that Shire of Katanning has a function or power to investigate.
38. If the answer to both of these questions is “no”, the PID Officer is not required by the PID Act to investigate the matter.
39. The PID Officer must also consider whether:
- a. the matter is trivial;
 - b. the disclosure is vexatious or frivolous;
 - c. there is no reasonable prospect of obtaining sufficient evidence due to the time that has elapsed since the occurrence of the matter; or
 - d. the matter is being or has been adequately or properly investigated by another proper authority to which an appropriate disclosure of public interest information has been made under the PID Act.
40. If the answer to any of these questions is “yes”, the PID Officer is not required by the PID Act to investigate the matter.
41. Where the PID Officer considers that he or she lacks sufficient power to effectively investigate the matter, but the information received causes him or her to form the opinion that a public authority, public officer or public sector contractor may have engaged in improper conduct, the PID Officer should refer the matter to another appropriate investigative body. For example, an allegation of an offence supported by cogent evidence may need to be referred by a PID Officer to the Police for investigation.
42. The questions to be considered in the initial assessment by the PID Officer are indicated in the Flowchart for investigating information disclosed at Appendix 3, and part 1 of the assessment form for public interest disclosures should be completed.
43. In assessing whether a public interest disclosure should be investigated, a PID Officer should consider the Flowchart for investigating information disclosed at Appendix 3 and complete part 3 of the assessment form (titled: Assessment Form – Part 1) for public interest disclosures.

Investigating information received in a public interest disclosure

44. Where the PID Officer determines that the disclosure is a public interest disclosure that should be investigated, the officer must investigate the disclosed matter or engage another person to carry out the investigation.

Guide: In conducting an investigation, it is recommended that the following procedures are adopted:

- a. drawing up terms of reference, which should clarify the key issues identified by the disclosure
- b. specifying a date by which the investigation should be completed
- c. ensuring the objectives of the investigation include collecting and collating information relating to the disclosure, considering the information collected and drawing conclusions objectively and impartially
- d. maintaining procedural fairness for the person who is the subject of the disclosure
- e. giving information to the person who is the subject of a disclosure about their rights and obligations under the PID Act, the Code of conduct and integrity, any agency code of conduct, and the law
- f. the investigator making contemporaneous notes of discussions and interviews and, where practicable and appropriate, recording discussions and interviews on audio or videotape
- g. ensuring strict security with all investigations, so as to maintain the confidentiality requirements of the PID Act.

45. A disclosure once properly made cannot be withdrawn. A proper authority may still continue to investigate the issues raised.

Maintaining confidentiality in an investigation

46. The PID Act imposes strict confidentiality requirements in relation to the identity of the discloser and persons in respect of whom a public interest disclosure has been made.
47. The disclosure of information which might identify or tend to identify these persons, except in accordance with section 16 the PID Act, is a serious offence, punishable with a maximum penalty of \$24,000 or two years imprisonment.
48. The confidentiality provisions of the PID Act do not apply to all information disclosed in a public interest disclosure, but only to information that might identify or tend to identify the discloser and persons in respect of whom a public interest disclosure has been made.
49. One of the circumstances in which identifying information may be disclosed is with the consent of the person concerned. It is important that this consent be recorded. The Consent to disclosure of identifying information form should be used for this purpose.
50. Identifying information relating to a discloser may be disclosed without the discloser's consent where:
- a. it is necessary to do so, having regard to the rules of natural justice; or

- b. it is necessary to do so to enable the matter to be investigated effectively.
51. However, before information is disclosed for these reasons the person making the disclosure must take all reasonable steps (section 16) to inform the person whose identity is to be disclosed:
- a. that the disclosure is being made
 - b. the reasons for the disclosure being made.
52. This information should be given, where practicable, in the form for Notification of disclosure of identifying information.
53. Where identifying information in relation to a discloser is conveyed to another person for these reasons, the other person should be warned that disclosure of the information to a third person may involve a serious offence.
54. Identifying information relating to a person in respect of whom a public interest disclosure has been made can be disclosed at the investigation stage where the disclosure:
- a. is necessary to enable the matter to be investigated effectively
 - b. there are reasonable grounds to believe that the disclosure of identifying information is necessary to prevent or minimise the risk of injury to any person or damage to any property.
55. In addition, disclosures made in accordance with section 152 or 153 of the *Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003* are exempt from these confidentiality requirements.
56. Particularly where a discloser works for the Shire of Katanning, protecting the identity of the discloser is an important part of protecting the discloser from reprisals and victimisation.
57. Careful consideration must be given as to whether the disclosure of information that might identify or tend to identify a discloser is necessary for the effective investigation of the matter or having regard to the rules of natural justice.
58. Where a PID Officer appoints a third person to conduct an investigation in relation to the public interest disclosure, he or she must consider whether it is necessary to inform the investigator of the identity of the discloser. In some cases it may not be necessary to provide the investigator with the identity of the discloser. Where it is necessary, to enable an effective investigation, or having regard to the rules of natural justice, to provide identifying information to the investigating officer, then the discloser should be notified in the manner described above.

Recording the outcome of an investigation

59. The outcome of an investigation should be clearly and comprehensively recorded. In addition to any investigation report, the person conducting the investigation should complete part 4 of the assessment form (titled: Assessment Form - Part 4 – Investigation) for public interest disclosure.
60. The result of the investigation should also be recorded in the public interest disclosure register; this register is available on the Commission's website. All annual reporting requirements to the Public Sector Commissioner required under section 22 of the PID Act will be based on extracts from this Register. This register (electronic and hard copy) is to be kept strictly confidential and in a secure place.

H. Taking action following an investigation

61. The PID Officer must take action where he or she forms the opinion that a person may be, or has been or may in the future be, involved in improper conduct. Action that may be taken includes:
 - a. preventing the matter to which the disclosure relates from continuing or occurring,
 - b. referring the matter to the Police or other appropriate body, or
 - c. taking disciplinary action against a person responsible for the matter.
62. Before taking any action, the person against whom the action is to be taken is to be given the opportunity to make written or oral submissions.
63. In taking that action the PID Officer remains limited by the powers and functions that are conferred by the legislation under which the PID Officer operates. The PID Act does not give the PID Officer additional powers to take action.
64. As well as being limited to matters within the functions and powers of the PID Officer, the action to be taken is guided by what is necessary and reasonable.

Maintaining confidentiality when taking action

65. When taking action, the confidentiality of identifying information must be maintained, unless its disclosure is authorised by the PID Act.
66. The only additional exception, beyond those identified in relation to investigations, is where disclosure of the identity of a person who is the subject of a public interest disclosure is necessary in taking action following the investigation.

Recording action taken

67. In addition to keeping other records, the PID Officer shall complete part 5 of the assessment form (titled: Assessment Form – Part 5 – Further Action) for public interest disclosures and record a summary of the action taken in the public interest disclosure register. This register is available on the Commission's [website](#). All reporting requirements to the Public Sector Commissioner required under the PID Act will be based on extracts from this Register.

I. Reporting to a discloser on the progress and outcome of an investigation

68. Where the PID Officer decides not to investigate information disclosed under the PID Act, or discontinues an investigation, the PID Officer must give the person who made the disclosure reasons for doing so.
69. Within three months of the disclosure being made the PID Officer must notify the discloser of the action taken or proposed to be taken in relation to the disclosure (section 10).
70. A discloser may also request a progress report.
71. If an investigation is not complete, the PID Officer may provide to the discloser a progress report on the current status of the investigation.
72. If an investigation is complete, the PID Officer must provide a final report (section 10) to the discloser, stating the outcome of the investigation and the reason for taking action following the investigation.

73. In providing information (section 11) and reports to disclosers, the PID Officer must not give information that, in their opinion, would be likely to adversely affect:
- a. any person's safety
 - b. the investigation of an offence or possible offence; or
 - c. necessary confidentiality as to the existence or identity of another person who has made a disclosure of public interest information under the PID Act.

J. Protecting disclosers

Victimisation and reprisals

74. The Shire of Katanning will not tolerate any acts of victimisation or reprisal as a result of a person making, or proposing to make, a public interest disclosure.
75. Any victimisation or reprisals must be reported immediately to the Chief Executive Officer or the PID Officer, who must take immediate action to prevent the continuance of this unlawful conduct.
76. Where victimisation or reprisals are reported, a record of the report and the action taken must be placed on the file relating to the public interest disclosure.
77. Steps taken to prevent acts of victimisation or reprisal should be recorded in a manner that they will be accessible for reference, should legal action be taken against the Shire of Katanning.

Confidentiality

78. The confidentiality requirements in relation to information which might identify or tend to identify a discloser or a person in respect of whom a public interest disclosure has been made must be complied with at all times. As noted above, the disclosure of this identifying information, except in accordance with the PID Act, is an offence.
79. All files relating to a public interest disclosure, whether paper or electronic, must be secure and accessible only by authorised persons. Files should carry clear warnings that there are penalties for unauthorised divulgence of information concerning a disclosure.
80. It is strongly recommended that sensitive information is not emailed or faxed to machines with general or shared access.

K. Public interest disclosure register

81. To assist with annual reporting to the Commissioner Shire of Katanning shall maintain a Public interest disclosure register recording a unique register number and key information for each disclosure. All annual reporting requirements to the Public Sector Commissioner required under section 22 of the PID Act will be based on extracts from this register. This register (electronic and hard copy) is to be kept strictly confidential and in a secure place. This register is available from the Commission's website.

L. Reporting requirements

82. Under the PID Act public authorities will need to report to the Commissioner each year as outlined below.

Principal Executive Officer Report

83. Under section 23 (f) of the PID Act, the Shire of Katanning is required to report annually to the Public Sector Commissioner on:
- a. the number of public interest disclosures received over the reporting period
 - b. the results of any investigations conducted as a result of the disclosures
 - c. the action, if any, taken as a result of each investigation.

Commissioner's Compliance Report

84. Under section 19 and 22 of the PID Act, the Commissioner is required to monitor compliance with the PID Act, to assist public authorities to comply with the PID Act and the code of conduct and integrity and to provide an annual report to Parliament.

Report Format and Submission

85. The Commission runs an annual agency survey program (1 July to 30 June). Each public authority will be surveyed on questions relating to the authorities role and obligations under the PID Act. This survey also requires that the public authority's PID Officer completes and sends in a register in a confidential electronic format.
86. Where there have been no disclosures in the reporting period the format of the report will provide for a simple nil return.

M. Making information available

87. These internal procedures shall be made available for access by all employees and members of the public. Copies of these internal procedures are available from the PID Officer and are to be kept on the Shire of Katanning website: www.albany.wa.gov.au and on the City's intranet.
88. The information at Appendix 5 should also be provided to new employees on induction. Information about the public interest disclosure process is also available on the Commission's [website](#).
89. Where a person makes an allegation about improper conduct, but the person has not referred to the PID Act, the person should be advised that they might want to make a public interest disclosure under the PID Act. If they may wish to do so, they should be referred to the PID Officer for guidance on how to make a disclosure under the PID Act and on the implications of making a public interest disclosure.

Appendix 1 - Roles and responsibilities of persons directly involved in a public interest disclosure

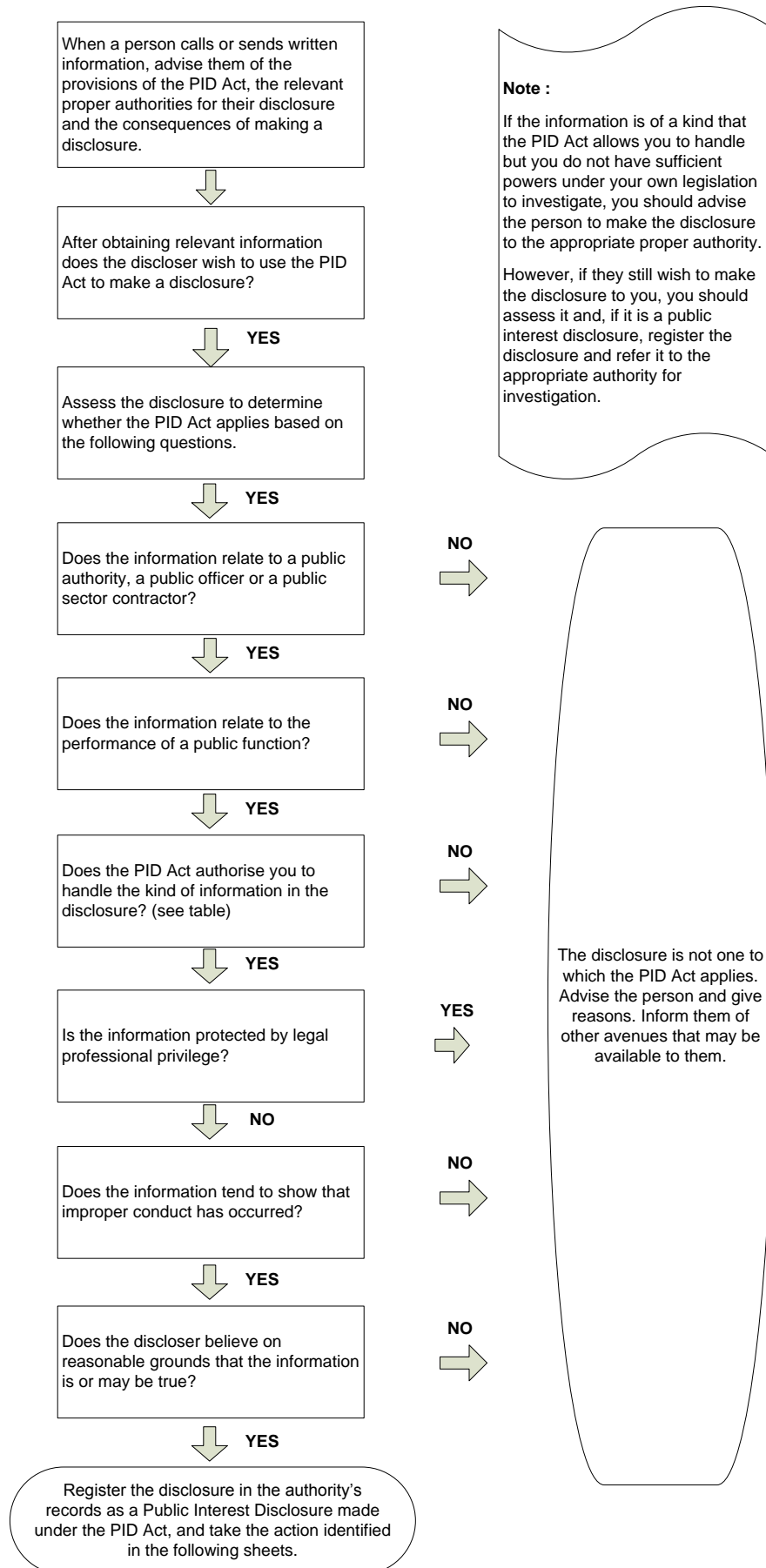
In the case of a typical public interest disclosure there will be a number of people involved with different roles and responsibilities.

The main players and their principal roles and responsibilities are noted in the table below. A more detailed description of the rights and obligations of these individuals is given elsewhere in these guidelines, and reference should be made to the preceding sections, as well as this table, in determining rights and responsibilities.

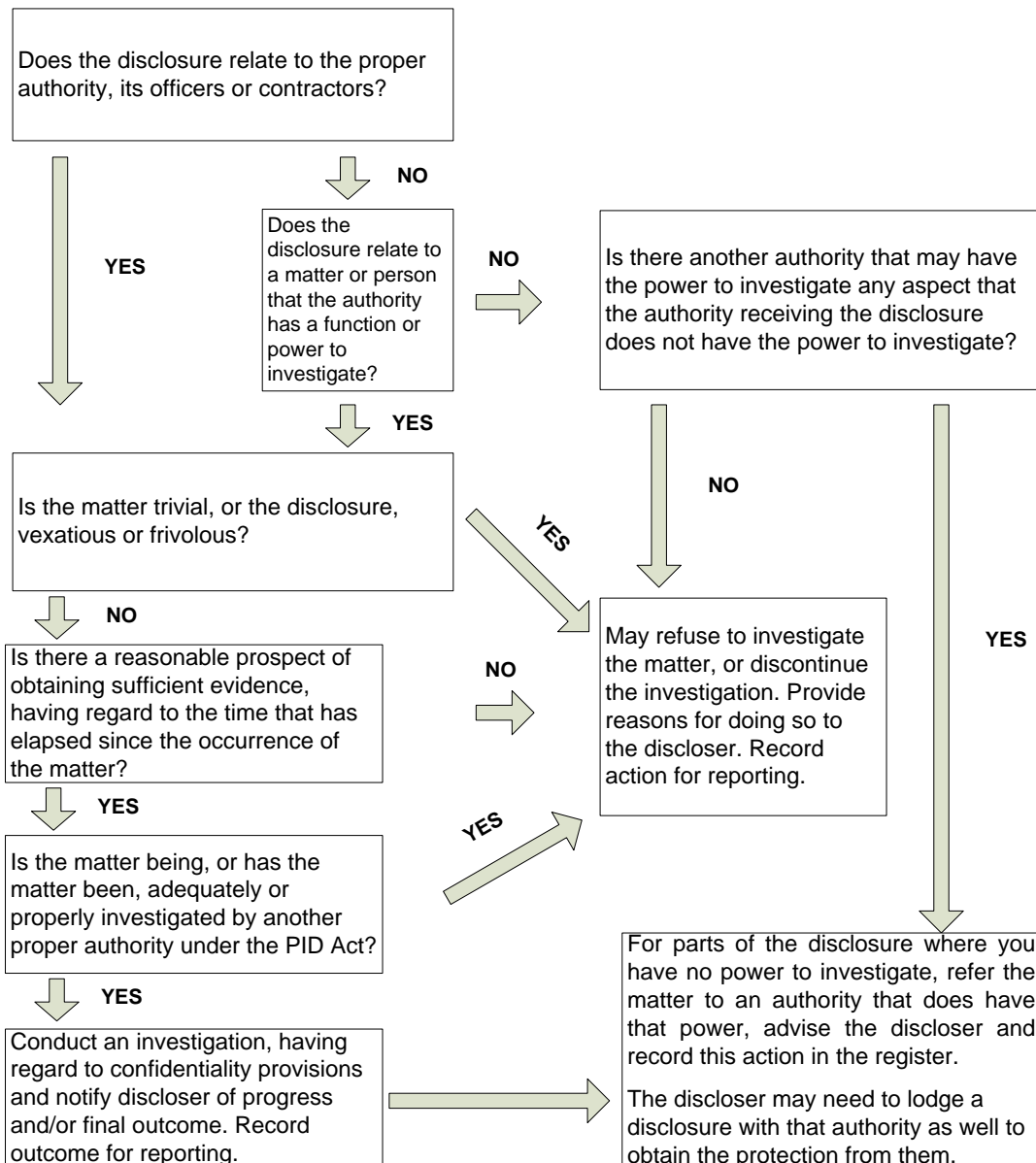
Roles and responsibilities of person's directly involved in a public interest disclosure:

Who	Role and responsibilities
The discloser	Makes an appropriate public interest disclosure Maintains confidentiality of the information disclosed and, in particular, the identity of the persons to whom the information relates
The proper authority	Receives a public interest disclosure Considers whether an investigation is required Carries out, or causes to be carried out, any investigation Maintains confidentiality of the identity of the discloser and persons subject to the disclosure, in accordance with the requirements of the PID Act Takes action following an investigation, where appropriate Provides appropriate reports of investigation and action taken to discloser Creates and maintains proper records in relation to disclosure Keeps statistics of disclosures made Acts in accordance with the rules of natural justice or procedural fairness
The person about whom the disclosure is made	May be subject to investigation and other action if improper conduct is established Maintains confidentiality of the identity of the discloser
An investigating officer	May conduct investigations of public interest information on behalf of a proper authority, within the terms of reference given Maintains confidentiality of the identity of the public interest discloser and persons subject to the disclosure, in accordance with the requirements of the PID Act Makes and keeps secure, comprehensive records of any investigation undertaken

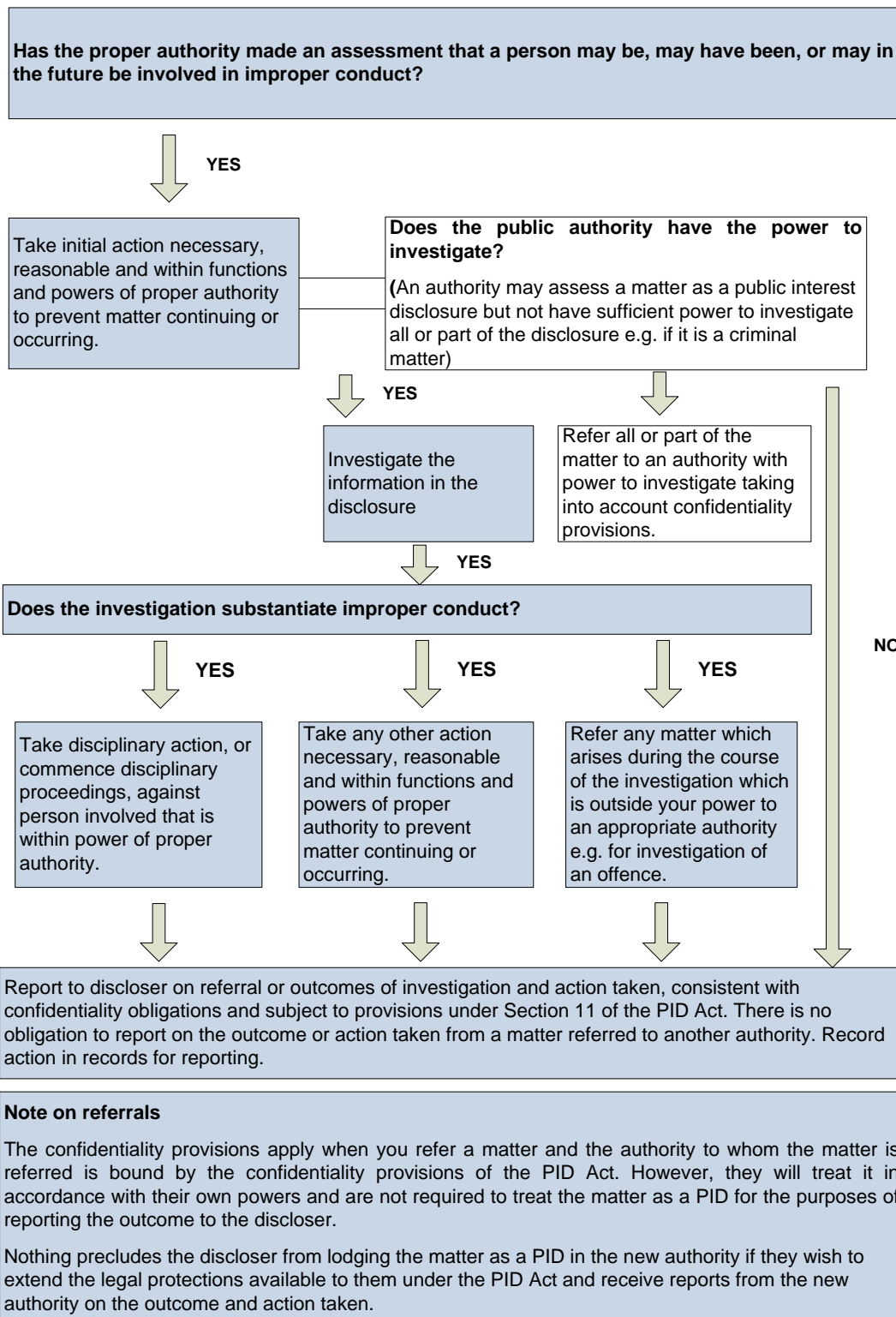
Appendix 2 - Flowchart for receiving and assessing disclosures



Appendix 3 - Flowchart for investigating information disclosed



Appendix 4 - Flowchart for taking action



Appendix 5 - Information for employees and elected members

What is a public interest disclosure?

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (The PID Act) came into effect on 1 July 2003. The PID Act facilitates the disclosure of public interest information by providing protection for those who make disclosures and those who are the subject of disclosures.

The Shire of Katanning is committed to the aims and objectives of the PID Act. It recognises the value and importance of contributions of employees to enhance administrative and management practices and strongly supports disclosures being made by employees regarding corrupt or other improper conduct.

What do I need to know before making a disclosure?

The PID Act deals with disclosures by anyone (not just government employees) but the information must be specific to the following areas:

Improper conduct	Irregular or unauthorised use of public resources
An offence under State law, including corruption	Substantial unauthorised or irregular use of, or substantial mismanagement of, public resources
Administration matter(s) affecting you	Conduct involving a substantial and specific risk of injury to public health, prejudice to public safety or harm to the environment

If your information falls outside the above areas then you may still be able to make a complaint, but this will not be a public interest disclosure under the PID Act.

Before making a disclosure it is important that you are aware of the rights and responsibilities imposed on disclosers and others under the PID Act. In particular you need to be aware that:

- a. at the time you make your disclosure, you must believe on reasonable grounds that the information you have is, or may be, true
- b. it is an offence to make a disclosure if you know, or are reckless about, it being false and misleading
- c. with some exceptions, the public authority will investigate your information and in doing so you will be expected to cooperate
- d. you will have to keep your information confidential – or else you may lose protection under the PID Act and may commit an offence under the PID Act.

The PID Act only confers protection where a disclosure is made to an appropriate proper authority.

The identity of the appropriate proper authority will vary according to the kind of information to be disclosed.

The Public Interest Disclosure (PID Officer) of the Shire of Katanning is the Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Phone: 9821 9999.

The PID Officer is responsible for receiving disclosures of public interest information relating to matters falling within the sphere of responsibility of the Shire of Katanning.

Proper authorities for receiving disclosures of public interest information

When the disclosure relates to...	The proper authority is...
The sphere of responsibility of a public authority (e.g. matters about the public authority or its officers, or which the public authority has the function of investigating)	The Public Interest Disclosure Officer (PID Officer) of the public authority
Offences under State law	A police officer or the Corruption and Crime Commission
Substantial unauthorised or irregular use of, or substantial mismanagement of, public resources	The PID Officer of the public authority concerned or the Auditor General
Matters of administration affecting someone in their personal capacity falling within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman	The PID Officer of the public authority concerned or the Ombudsman
A police officer	The Commissioner of Police or the Corruption and Crime Commission
A Member of the Legislative Council	The President of the Legislative Council
A Member of the Legislative Assembly	The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
A Judicial officer	Chief Justice
A public officer who is not a member of Parliament, a Minister, a judicial officer or a Commissioned or other officer specified in schedule 1 of the <i>Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971</i>	The PID Officer of the public authority concerned, the Ombudsman or the Public Sector Commissioner
A person or a matter of a prescribed class	A person declared by the regulations to be a proper authority

Important Note: In addition, the information disclosed must be public interest information as defined in the PID Act. Not all proper authorities to which a disclosure may be made will be required or have the power to investigate the information disclosed. In some cases it may be necessary for the discloser or information to be referred to another proper authority with power to investigate the information.

What you should ask yourself

Making a disclosure is a serious matter and needs to be fully considered. Before making a disclosure you should ask yourself:

- a. whether you have reasonable grounds to believe the information you are thinking of disclosing is or may be true
- b. if the information is something that you think is important to be disclosed because it is in the public interest
- c. whether you have sought proper advice
- d. if you fully understand your rights and responsibilities under the PID Act if you make a disclosure.

I have made a disclosure – what next?

After assessing your information the public authority will have to investigate unless it considers:

- the matter to be trivial
- the disclosure to be vexatious or frivolous
- there is no reasonable prospect of obtaining sufficient evidence, due to the lapse of time
- the matter is being, or has already been, adequately or properly investigated by a proper authority under the PID Act
- the information does not relate to the proper authority, an officer or contractor of the authority or a matter that the proper authority has the function or power to investigate.

Will I be kept informed?

Yes – the public authority must inform you within three months of making the disclosure of what they intend to do about your disclosure.

Where the information is under investigation you will be able to request a progress report.

You are entitled to a report on the outcome and any action taken when the investigation is complete.

What about confidentiality and my protection?

As the disclosure is about a public interest matter rather than a specific complaint, the PID Act requires confidentiality to be maintained about:

- The identity of the person making the disclosure
- The identity of any person named in the disclosure.

There are exceptions to these rules in certain circumstances (section 16 of the PID Act) and anyone thinking of making a disclosure should seek advice from the relevant PID Officer or the

Public Sector Commission on these prior to making a disclosure

A person making a disclosure is provided with protection under the PID Act for:

- any reprisals
- civil and criminal liability in the event of making a disclosure
- dismissal or having services dispensed with
- breach of confidentiality or secrecy agreements.

A person alleging victimisation as a result of a disclosure can complain to the Equal Opportunity Commission or may be able to take civil action. The Equal Opportunity Commission is at Level 2 Westralia Square 141 St Georges Terrace, Telephone (08) 9216 3900.

After investigation

After making a disclosure you will not normally be required to do anything else other than cooperate with an investigation. If you are unhappy with the public authority's response to your disclosure there is no right of appeal under the PID Act to challenge the public authority's actions. You may, however, be able to make another disclosure to a different proper authority.

Victimisation and reprisals

The Shire of Katanning will take all reasonable steps to provide protection to employees who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for the making of a disclosure.

The Shire of Katanning does not tolerate any of its officers, employees or contractors engaging in acts of victimisation or reprisal against those who make public interest disclosures.

These acts should be reported immediately to the PID Officer or the Chief Executive Officer.

Named proper authorities

There are some public authorities that are named as proper authorities in the PID Act that may be able to offer you assistance. These are listed below:

- The **Public Sector Commission** provides assistance to public authorities and public officers to comply with the code of conduct and integrity and the PID Act. The Commission also provides general information about the disclosure process to employees and members of the public. PID Advice and Referral Line on 6552 8888 1800 676 607 or website www.publicsector.wa.gov.au
- The **Corruption and Crime Commission** will be able to provide advice on misconduct and corruption. Telephone (08) 9215 4888 or website: www.ccc.wa.gov.au
- The **Ombudsman** will be able to provide advice on matters of State and local government administration. Telephone (08) 9220 7555 or website www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au
- The **Office of the Auditor General** will be able to provide advice on proper use and management of public resources and more generally public authorities' accountability and performance requirements. Telephone (08) 6557 7500 or website www.audit.wa.gov.au
- The **WA Police Service** will be able to provide advice on offences under a State law Telephone (08) 9223 1000 Website www.police.wa.gov.au

Forms - Public Interest - Disclosure Act 2003

- [Public Interest Disclosures Act 2003](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Regulations 2003](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Officer's declaration form](#)
- [Public interest disclosure lodgement form](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Guidelines - Word](#)
- [Don't be afraid to Speak Up – Your Guide to Public Interest Disclosure – PDF](#)
- [Information for public authorities – Website](#)

Appendix 6 – PDF Forms

- PID Assessment Form – Part 1- Receiving the disclosure
- PID Assessment Form – Part 2 – Internal Quality Control
- PID Assessment Form – Part 3 - Assessment of whether the disclosure should be investigated
- PID Assessment Form – Part 4 - Investigation
- PID Assessment Form – Part 5 - Further action
- PID Consent to disclosure of identifying information
- PID Notification of disclosure of identifying information