



# Whistleblower Policy

## Purpose

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Australian Strata Management (ASM) is committed to the highest standards of conduct and ethical behaviour in all of our business activities and to promoting and supporting a culture of honest and ethical behaviour, corporate compliance and good corporate governance.

ASM encourages the reporting of any instances of suspected unethical, illegal, fraudulent or undesirable conduct involving ASM businesses and provides protections and measures so that those persons who make a report may do so confidentially and without fear of intimidation, disadvantage or reprisal.

This policy will be made available to officers and employees of the company via the ASM intranet. ASM Head Office and franchises will adopt a consistent policy and make it available on their websites, intranets and in such other ways as will ensure the policy is available to employees and persons wishing to use it.

## Policy Application

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This policy applies to all franchisees, directors, officers and employees of the ASM Network.

## Policy

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### REPORTABLE CONDUCT

You may make a report under this policy if you have reasonable grounds to suspect that an ASM franchisee, director, officer, employee, contractor, supplier, tenderer or any other person who has business dealings with ASM has engaged in conduct which:

- is dishonest, fraudulent or corrupt;
- is illegal activity (such as theft, violence, harassment or intimidation, criminal damage to property or other breaches of state or federal law);
- is unethical or in breach of ASM's policies and/or agreements (such as dishonestly altering company records or data, adopting questionable accounting practices or wilfully breaching the SCA's Code of Conduct or other policies or procedures as outlined in the Franchise Operations Manual);
- is potentially damaging to ASM, an ASM franchisee or employee or a third party, such as unsafe work practices, environmental damage, health risks or abuse of ASM's property or resources;
- amounts to an abuse of authority;
- may cause financial loss to ASM or any or all franchisees, or damage its reputation or be otherwise detrimental to ASM's interests;
- involves harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying, other than personal work-related grievances as defined in the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (Corporations Act); or
- involves any other kind of misconduct or an improper state of affairs or circumstances.

### REPORTING CHANNELS

ASM has several channels for making a report if you become aware of any issue or behaviour which you consider to be Reportable Conduct.

For the purposes of this policy to ensure appropriate escalation and timely investigation, reports should be to the following Protected Disclosure Officers:

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Reporting	To	Contact Details
Franchisees	<b>Richard Reid</b> Chief Operating Officer	E: rreid@asmstrata.com.au
Employees	<b>Richard Reid</b> Chief Operating Officer	E: rreid@asmstrata.com.au
Chief Executive Officer	<b>Elly Foster</b> Company Secretary	E: elly@mbcm.com.au
Directors	<b>Richard Reid</b> Chief Operating Officer Or <b>Elly Foster</b> Company Secretary	E: rreid@asmstrata.com.au  E: elly@mbcm.com.au

While it is ASM’s preference that you raise reports with the Protected Disclosure Officers, it is important to note that under the Corporations Act, you may also raise the matter with an “officer” or “senior manager” of the company. These are defined in the Corporations Act as “a director, or a senior manager in the company who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part, of the business of the company, or who has the capacity to affect significantly the company’s financial standing.”

## Investigation

ASM will investigate all matters reported under this policy as soon as practicable after the matter has been reported. The Protected Disclosure Officer who receives the complaint may, with your consent, appoint a person to assist in the investigation of a report.

Where appropriate, ASM will provide feedback to you regarding the investigation’s progress and/or outcome (subject to considerations of the privacy of those against whom allegations are made).

The investigation will be conducted in an objective and fair manner, and otherwise as is reasonable and appropriate having regard to the nature of the Reportable Conduct and the circumstances.

While the particular investigation process and enquiries adopted will be determined by the nature and substance of the report, in general, as soon as practicable upon receipt of the report, if the report is not anonymous, a Protected Disclosure Officer or investigator will contact you to discuss the investigation process including who

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may be contacted and such other matters as are relevant to the investigation.

Where a report is submitted anonymously, ASM will conduct the investigation and its enquiries based on the information provided to it.

## Protection of whistleblowers

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ASM is committed to ensuring confidentiality in respect of all matters raised under this policy, and that those who make a report are treated fairly and do not suffer detriment.

### A. PROTECTION AGAINST DETRIMENTAL CONDUCT

Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, demotion, harassment, discrimination, disciplinary action, bias, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with making a report.

If you are subjected to detrimental treatment as a result of making a report under this policy you should:

inform a protected disclosure officer, officer or senior manager within your relevant division/business unit immediately under the divisional whistleblower policy; or

raise it in accordance with paragraph 2 of this policy.

### B. PROTECTION OF YOUR IDENTITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject to compliance with legal requirements, upon receiving a report under this policy, ASM will only share your identity as a whistleblower or information likely to reveal your identity if:

- (i) you consent;
- (ii) the concern is reported to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), the Tax Commissioner or the Australian Federal Police (AFP); or
- (iii) the concern is raised with a lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or representation.

If ASM needs to investigate a report, it may disclose information that could lead to your identification, but it will take reasonable steps to reduce this risk. Any disclosures of your identity or information likely to reveal your identity will be made on a strictly confidential basis.

### C. PROTECTION OF FILES AND RECORDS

All files and records created from an investigation will be retained securely. Unauthorised release of information to someone not involved in the investigation (other than senior managers or directors who need to know to take appropriate action, or for corporate governance purposes) without your consent as a whistleblower will be a breach of this policy.

Whistleblowers are assured that a release of information in breach of this policy will be regarded as a serious matter and will be dealt with under ASM' disciplinary procedures.

The Corporations Act gives special protection to disclosures about breaches of that Act, provided certain conditions are met.

The Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cth) (Taxation Administration Act) also gives special protection to disclosures about breaches of any Australian tax law, provided certain conditions are met.

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## Duties of employees in relation to reportable conduct

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It is expected that employees of ASM who become aware of actual or suspect on reasonable grounds, potential cases of Reportable Conduct will make a report under this policy or under other applicable policies.

## Reporting procedures

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The Corporations Act gives special protection to disclosures about any misconduct or improper state of affairs relating to ASM if the following conditions are satisfied:

(a) the whistleblower is or has been:

- i. an officer or employee within the ASM network;
- ii. an individual who supplies goods or services to the ASM network or an employee of a person who supplies goods or services to a ASM network;
- iii. an individual who is an associate of a MBCM Group company; or
- iv. a relative, dependent or dependent of the spouse of any individual referred to at (i) to (iii) above;

(b) the report is made to:

- i. a Protected Disclosure Officer;
- ii. an officer or senior manager of ASM;
- iii. ASIC; or
- iv. a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or legal representation in relation to the operation of the whistleblower provisions in the Corporations Act;

(c) the whistleblower has reasonable grounds to suspect that the information being disclosed concerns misconduct, or an improper state of affairs or circumstances in relation to the ASM network.

This may include a breach of legislation including the Corporations Act, an offence against the Commonwealth punishable by imprisonment for 12 months or more, or conduct that represents a danger to the public.

Examples of conduct which may amount to a breach of the Corporations Act include: insider trading, insolvent trading, breach of the continuous disclosure rules, failure to keep accurate financial records, falsification of accounts, failure of a director or other officer within the network to act with the care and diligence that a reasonable person would exercise, or to act in good faith in the best interests of the corporation or failure of a director to give notice of any material personal interest in a matter relating to the affairs of the company.

(d) The protections given by the Corporations Act when these conditions are met are:

- i. the whistleblower is immune from any civil, criminal or administrative legal action (including disciplinary action) for making the disclosure;
- ii. no contractual or other remedies may be enforced, and no contractual or other right may be exercised, against the whistleblower for making the report;
- iii. in some circumstances, the reported information is not admissible against the whistleblower in criminal proceedings or in proceedings for the imposition of a penalty;
- iv. anyone who causes or threatens to cause detriment to a whistleblower or another person in the belief or

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suspicion that a report has been made, or may have been made, proposes to or could be made, may be guilty of an offence and may be liable for damages;

- v. a whistleblower's identity cannot be disclosed to a Court or tribunal except where considered necessary;
- vi. the person receiving the report commits an offence if they disclose the substance of the report or the whistleblower's identity, without the whistleblower's consent, to anyone except ASIC, APRA, the AFP or a lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or representation in relation to the report.

## Confidentiality

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If a report is made, the identity of the discloser must be kept confidential unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- (a) the discloser consents to the disclosure of their identity;
- (b) disclosure of details that might reveal the discloser's identity is reasonably necessary for the effective investigation of the matter;
- (c) the concern is reported to ASIC, APRA, or the AFP; or
- (d) the concern is raised with a lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or representation.

The Taxation Administration Act gives special protection to disclosures about a breach of any Australian tax law by ASM or misconduct in relation to the ASM network's tax affairs if the following conditions are satisfied:

- (a) the whistleblower is or has been:
  - i. an officer or employee of a MBCM Group Company;
  - ii. an individual who supplies goods or services to a MBCM Group Company or an employee of a person who supplies goods or services to a MBCM Group company;
  - iii. an individual who is an associate of a MBCM Group company;
  - iv. a spouse, child, dependent or dependent of the spouse of any individual referred to at (i) to (iii) above;
- (b) the report is made to:
  - i. a Protected Disclosure Officer;
  - ii. a director, secretary or senior manager of a MBCM Group Company concerned;
  - iii. any MBCM Group Company external auditor (or a member of that audit team);
  - iv. a registered tax agent or BAS agent who provides tax or BAS services to a MBCM Group company;
  - v. any other employee or officer of ASM who has functions or duties relating to tax affairs of the company (e.g. an internal accountant); (ASM recipients) (vi) the Commissioner of Taxation; or
  - vi. a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or legal representation in relation to the operation of the whistleblower provisions in the Taxation Administration Act; and
- (c) if the report is made to a ASM recipient, the whistleblower:

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i. has reasonable grounds to suspect that the information indicates misconduct, or an improper state of affairs or circumstances, in relation to the tax affairs of a MBCM Group Company or an associate of that company; and

ii. considers that the information may assist the ASM recipient to perform functions or duties in relation to the tax affairs of a MBCM Group Company or an associate of the company; and

(d) if the report is made to the Commissioner of Taxation, the whistleblower considers that the information may assist the ASM recipient to perform functions or duties in relation to the tax affairs of a MBCM Group Company or an associate of the company.

The protections given by the Taxation Administration Act when these conditions are met are:

(a) the whistleblower is immune from any civil, criminal or administrative legal action (including disciplinary action) for making the disclosure;

(b) no contractual or other remedies may be enforced, and no contractual or other right may be exercised, against the whistleblower for making the report;

(c) where the disclosure was made to the Commissioner of Taxation, the reported information is not admissible against the whistleblower in criminal proceedings or in proceedings for the imposition of a penalty, except where the proceedings are concerned with whether the information is false;

(d) unless the whistleblower has acted unreasonably, a whistleblower cannot be ordered to pay costs in any legal proceedings in relation to a report;

(e) anyone who causes or threatens to cause detriment to a whistleblower or another person in the belief or suspicion that a report has been made, or may have been made, proposes to or could be made, may be guilty of an offence and liable to pay damages;

(f) a whistleblower's identity cannot be disclosed to a Court or tribunal except where considered necessary; and

(g) the person receiving the report commits an offence if they disclose the substance of the report or the whistleblower's identity, without the whistleblower's consent, to anyone except the Commissioner of Taxation, the AFP or a lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or representation in relation to the report.

If a report is made, the identity of the discloser will be kept confidential unless one of the following exceptions applies:

(a) the discloser consents to the disclosure of their identity;

(b) disclosure of details that might reveal their identity is reasonably necessary for the effective investigation of the allegations;

(c) the concern is reported to the Commissioner of Taxation or the AFP; or

(d) the concern is raised with a lawyer for the purpose obtaining legal advice or representation.