

QUEENSLAND TONGA RUGBY LEAGUE

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY



Whistleblower Policy

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Drafted by	QTRL Chair Person and Secretary	Board approval on	20th February 2025
Person Responsible	QTRL Chair Person and Secretary	Scheduled review date	February 2026

Overview

The purpose of this policy is to encourage League players and officials to report actual and suspected breaches of ethical and legal standards without fear of being disadvantaged in any way by raising their concern.

The policy ensures all players and officials are protected from victimisation, harassment or disciplinary action as a result of making a report, where the report is made in good faith and is not made maliciously or for personal or club gain.

The Chair Person is responsible for implementing this policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

A whistleblowing program is an important aspect of detecting poor or unacceptable practice and misconduct in an organisation.

The League is committed to maintaining a culture where players and officials are encouraged to be responsible for the integrity of their own competition and club.

The League Board and staff are to support and assist clubs run a successful competition through transparent and effective governance.

1. WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?

Whistleblowing is the confidential disclosure by an individual regarding any concern encountered in an organisation relating to a perceived wrong doing. The person raising the concern is referred to as a Whistleblower.

2. WHAT CAN BE REPORTED?

Players and officials are encouraged to report any genuine concern they believe may constitute a breach of policy or the law. These are known as **Reportable Instances**.

3. REPORTABLE INSTANCES

Reportable Instances are matters described as any conduct or activity (actual or suspected) that players and officials genuinely believe:

- is dishonest, fraudulent, corrupt or illegal.
- endangers the health and safety of any person.
- is considered a significant danger to the environment.
- is coercive, harassing or discriminatory by, or affecting, any player or official.
- is a significant breach of football rules and policies.
- may be detrimental to the League's reputation and interests.

Examples of Reportable Instances:

- Offers and payments to play in the League.
- Playing under a false name.
- Failing to comply with the concussion policy.
- Committees not operating within their constitution and rules.

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4. REPORTING PROCESS

1. Making an initial report

If a player or official believes a Reportable Instance has occurred, they should in the first instance, raise the issue with their direct report eg; President, Coach, Team Manager.

2. Making a report under the Whistleblower Policy

Where a player or official does not feel comfortable or confident of reporting the matter with their direct report, they are encouraged to report the matter in accordance with the League Whistleblower Policy.

3. Making a report outside of the League

The League aims to ensure that individuals do not have a need to discuss concerns outside of the League, however nothing in the Whistleblower Policy or Procedures should be interpreted as preventing or restricting an individual from raising an issue or providing information to a third party in accordance with any relevant law or regulation.

5. INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS

1. Investigation process

- All reports made through the Whistleblower Policy will be managed by the Secretary.
- The report will be investigated as reasonably possible, depending on the nature of the matter. The Whistleblower (unless anonymous) will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.
- Whistleblowers will be promptly informed of the outcome of the investigation of their report. This is subject to considerations of privacy of those against whom allegations have been made and the customary confidentiality practices of the League.

2. Role of the Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for protecting and safeguarding the interest of any player or official making a report within the context of this policy. The Secretary will have access to independent financial, legal and specialist advisors.

The Secretary;

- a. will receive whistleblower reports.
- b. will investigate matters reported to them.
- c. will protect the identity of the Whistleblower and keep the matter confidential.
- d. may consult and seek guidance from the Chair Person to determine the appropriate course of action.
- e. will advise the Whistleblower of how the matter will be investigated.
- f. will communicate with the Whistleblower of the progress and outcomes of the investigation.
- g. will investigate and action appropriately any concerns the Whistleblower may have with reprisal from reporting the matter.
- h. keep a secure record of any documents relating to their investigation.
- i. act to resolve the matter or correct offending behaviour.
- j. report findings to the QTRL Board or Chair Person, which may then be referred to an Investigation Tribunal.

6. PROTECTION, ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The League is committed to fostering an environment that encourages effective reporting of misconduct. Whistleblowers will be provided with protection under this policy so long as they have complied with all obligations of this policy. Individuals who make a false report may be subject to deregistration, fine or disciplinary proceedings.

1. Confidentiality

For all reports made, the League will keep confidential:

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- the identity of the individuals.
- the information that is reported.
- any information which may lead to the identity of the individual being revealed.

The identity of an individual making a report will not be disclosed to any person, including the Chair Person, unless they have consented to this in writing.

It may not be possible for the League to investigate a matter further unless the individual gives consent for the information reported to be disclosed. Generally, subject to any requirements by law, the League will not need to disclose their identity, or any information that would lead to their identity being revealed.

2. Protection

The League will not tolerate retribution against any individual who makes a report in good faith and with reasonable grounds. Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who subjects a person to discrimination, bias, harassment, demotion or dismissal as a result of their legitimate Whistleblower actions.

Individuals making a report:

- are only protected from liability relating to the reporting of the conduct.
- are not protected from the liability arising out of an illegal act or act of misconduct in which they themselves are involved.

All reports must be in good faith in order for the individual to qualify for protection.

6.3. ANONYMITY

The individual can choose to make a report anonymously, however this may limit the investigation as:

- it may limit the Secretary to progress with the investigation if they cannot make contact if further information is required
- less priority may be given to a report made anonymously.
- An individual can request to only disclose their identity to the Secretary.
- In these circumstances:
- a guarantee of anonymity will be given, subject to any legal requirements that may require disclosure of the identity of the person making the report
- this must be requested at the first possible opportunity so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

7. CONSEQUENCES OF REPORTING

The League recognises that an individual will usually decide to submit a report after a great deal of thought. Provided the report is raised in good faith, individuals are not at risk of suffering any form of reprisal for coming forward.

1. Improper reporting

Improper reporting is described as a false report. False reports are those that are not raised in good faith. If an individual know or believe that matters relating to the Reportable Instance are untrue, this is considered a false reports. If a false report occurs, this will be regarded as misconduct and the individual is subject to deregistration or disciplinary proceedings.