

# Whistleblowers Policy

## Hydrix Ltd

ACN 060 369 048

(the Company)

Adopted by the Board on 30 August 2017



# **Whistleblowers Policy**

## **Hydrix Ltd (the Company)**

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### **1. Introduction and Purpose**

#### **1.1 Background**

The Company is committed to promoting and supporting a culture of corporate compliance and ethical behaviour.

#### **1.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this Whistleblowers Policy (**Policy**) is to:

- (a) encourage Employees to raise any concerns and report instances of Reportable Conduct where there are reasonable grounds to support such action, without fear of intimidation, disadvantage or reprisal;
- (b) outline the mechanisms for the reporting and investigation of reported matters;
- (c) outline the measures in place to protect a whistleblower; and
- (d) outline the additional procedures and protections that apply to whistleblowers under the Corporations Act in relation to the reporting of possible breaches of the Corporations Legislation. Paragraph 5.2 of this Policy explains these procedures and protections.

It is expected that Employees will report known, suspected or potential cases of Reportable Conduct. Failure to raise issues could result in disciplinary action.

#### **1.3 Definitions**

Capitalised terms used in this Policy are defined in the Schedule.

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### **2. Scope**

This Policy applies to all Employees who wish to report Reportable Conduct regarding the Company's activities.

This Policy does not deal with staff grievances which do not constitute Reportable Conduct (it is noted that separate procedures exist to deal with staff grievances).

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### **3. Reporting conduct**

#### **3.1 How to report conduct**

Employees can report Reportable Conduct to:

- (a) their immediate General Manager; or
  - (b) if the Employees feels unable to raise the Reportable Conduct with their General Manager, one of the Whistleblower Protection Officers identified in paragraph 3.2 of this Policy.
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## **3.2 Whistleblowers Protection Officers**

In addition to the General Managers, the current Whistleblower Protection Officers nominated by the Company is the Company Secretary, who is currently Alyn Tai and can be contacted on +61 3 9286 7502 or by email at (at@ccounsel.com.au).

## **3.3 Confidentiality of reported conduct**

Reports will be kept confidential to the extent possible, subject to legal and regulatory requirements. Reports can be made anonymously if required by sending written reports directly to a Whistleblower Protection Officer. If an Employee chooses to disclose Reportable Conduct anonymously, this may hinder the ability of the Company to fully investigate the matter. Further, it may in certain circumstances prevent the whistleblower from accessing additional protection at law (refer paragraph 5.2 of this Policy). Disclosures that involve a threat to life or property, illegal activities or legal action against the Group may require actions that do not allow for complete anonymity.

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# **4. Handling of reports**

## **4.1 Timely review of reported conduct**

All reports of Reportable Conduct will be investigated by a Whistleblower Protection Officer on a timely basis. Appropriate corrective action will be taken as warranted by the investigation.

## **4.2 Role of Whistleblower Protection Officer**

The Whistleblower Protection Officer is responsible for:

- (a) coordinating the investigation into any report received from a whistleblower;
- (b) documenting and handling all matters in relation to the report and investigation; and
- (c) finalising all investigations.

The Whistleblower Protection Officer will, at all times, have direct and unrestricted access to reasonable financial, legal and operational assistance when this is required for any investigation.

## **4.3 Rights of person who is alleged to have acted improperly**

A person who is the subject of an investigation is entitled to be:

- (a) informed as to the substance of any adverse comment that may be included in a report or other document arising out of any such investigation; and
- (b) given a reasonable opportunity to put their case to the Whistleblower Protection Officer who is investigating the report.

## **4.4 Whistleblower will be kept appropriately informed**

The whistleblower will be kept appropriately informed of the progress of action taken in respect of their report. At the conclusion of the investigation, they will be informed of the outcome.

## **4.5 Confidentiality**

The Company and any persons receiving reports will not disclose particulars of reported matters that would suggest the identity of the whistleblower without obtaining the whistleblower's prior consent, subject to any requirements of applicable law. Any such disclosure to which the whistleblower consents will be made on a strictly confidential basis.

All files and records created from an investigation will be retained under strict security. The unauthorised release of information without a whistleblower's consent to any person not involved in the investigation (other than the Audit & Risk Management Committee) is a breach of this Policy, subject to any requirements of applicable law.

The Audit & Risk Management Committee will receive copies of all investigation reports from Whistleblower Protection Officers. Anonymity and confidentiality requirements will be observed by the Audit & Risk Management Committee.

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## **5. Protection of whistleblowers**

### **5.1 General protections**

Whistleblowers that report a concern in good faith under this Policy must not be personally disadvantaged by:

- (a) dismissal;
- (b) demotion;
- (c) any form of harassment;
- (d) discrimination; or
- (e) current or future bias.

The whistleblower is not, however, protected from civil or criminal liability for any of his or her conduct which may be revealed by the report. However, if a whistleblower reports such conduct and actively cooperates in an investigation in which they may be implicated, there may be some cases where the fact they have made a report will be taken into account as a mitigating factor when determining actions which may be taken against them.

### **5.2 Protection under the Corporations Legislation**

The Corporations Act provides additional protections in relation to the reporting of a possible contravention of the Corporations Legislation. A disclosure of information by a person qualifies for protection under the Corporations Act if:

- (a) the whistleblower is an officer or employee of a Group company, a contractor (who has a contract for the supply of services or goods to the Company) or an employee of such a contractor;
- (b) the report is made to:
  - (i) ASIC;
  - (ii) the Company's auditor, or a member of the audit team;
  - (iii) a director, secretary or senior manager of the Company (for example, the immediate General Manager of the whistleblower); or
  - (iv) a person authorised by the Company to receive disclosures of that kind (that is, a Whistleblower Protection Officer);
- (c) the whistleblower provides their name before making the report. Anonymous reports are not protected under the Corporations Legislation;

- (d) the whistleblower has reasonable grounds to suspect that the information indicates that there has been a contravention of the Corporations Legislation by the Company or any of its officers or employees;
- (e) the disclosure is made in good faith.

If these conditions are met, the Corporations Act provides the following protections to the whistleblower:

- (a) The whistleblower is not subject to any civil or criminal liability for making the disclosure. The whistleblower is not, however, protected from civil or criminal liability for any of its conduct which may be revealed by the report.
- (b) No contractual or other remedy may be enforced or exercised against a whistleblower on the basis of the disclosure, and a contract to which the whistleblower is a party may not be terminated on the basis that the disclosure constitutes a breach of the contract.
- (c) If the Company purports to terminate the employment of a whistleblower on the basis of the disclosure, a court may reinstate the whistleblower to the same position or a position at a comparable level.
- (d) The whistleblower is protected from actual or threatened detriment because of the report and may receive compensation for any damage caused by such detriment.
- (e) Subject to limited exceptions, the person to whom the disclosure is made must not disclose the substance of the report, the whistleblower's identity or information likely to lead to identification of the whistleblower.

The Company and its subsidiaries are committed to full compliance with these protective provisions.

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## **6. Other matters**

### **6.1 Amendment of policy**

This Policy can only be amended with the approval of the Board.

### **6.2 Adoption of Policy and Board review**

This Policy was adopted by the Board on 30 August 2017, and takes effect from that date and replaces any previous charter in this regard.

The Board will review this Policy periodically. The Company Secretary will communicate any amendments to employees as appropriate.

## Schedule 1 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

**ASIC** means the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

**Corporations Act** means Corporations Act 2001 (Cth).

**Corporations Legislation** has the meaning given to that term in section 9 of the Corporations Act, and includes the Corporations Act and Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001 (Cth).

**Employees** include any director, secretary, officer, employee, secondee or contractor of the Company.

**General Manager** means the general manager of each applicable department.

**Group** means the Company and its subsidiaries.

**Reportable Conduct** means conduct that is illegal, unacceptable or undesirable, or the concealment of such conduct. It includes conduct that:

- (a) is against the law or is a failure by the Company to comply with any legal obligation;
- (b) is unethical or breaches the Company's policies or Code of Conduct;
- (c) is dishonest, fraudulent or corrupt;
- (d) is coercion, harassment, victimisation or discrimination;
- (e) is misleading or deceptive conduct of any kind (including conduct or representations which amount to improper or misleading accounting or financial reporting practices either by, or affecting, the Company);
- (f) is potentially damaging to the Company, an Employee or a third party, including unsafe work practices, environmental damage, health risks or substantial wasting of company resources;
- (g) may cause financial loss to the Company or damage its reputation or be otherwise detrimental to the Company; or
- (h) involves any other serious impropriety.

**whistleblower** means an Employee who alerts the Company and/or a regulatory authority to Reportable Conduct within the Company/Group.

**Whistleblower Protection Officer** means a General Manager or other person nominated by the Company whose key responsibilities include protecting whistleblowers who report concerns under this Policy. The names and contact details of the Company's current Whistleblower Protection Officers, other than the General Managers, are identified in paragraph 3 of this Policy.