



Silex

## **Whistleblower Policy**

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Silex Systems Limited

ACN 003 372 067

ADOPTED BY BOARD RESOLUTION 20 July 2023

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## 1. Introduction

This Policy applies to Silex Systems Limited ACN 003 372 067, a company incorporated in Australia (**Company**), and its subsidiaries (collectively, the **Group**).

The Group is committed to maintaining a high standard of ethical business practice and corporate governance. Accordingly, the Group requires its directors, officers and employees to observe high standards of business conducts and ethics, as well as comply with all applicable laws, regulations, corporate reporting and disclosure, accounting practices and controls, auditing practices and other matters relating to fraud against shareholders (**Company Matters**).

Under Part 9.4AAA of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) (the **Australian Whistleblower Law**), eligible whistleblowers will be protected against suffering detriment where they make a protected disclosure. The Group embraces the reporting of suspected unethical, illegal, fraudulent, undesirable or unlawful conduct involving the Group's business and provides protections and measures to those persons who make a report to do so confidentially and without fear of intimidation, disadvantage or reprisal. Disclosers who make a disclosure in accordance with this Policy will qualify for protection under the Australian Whistleblower Law.

As part of its responsibilities, the Board is responsible for ensuring that a confidential and anonymous process exists whereby persons can report on Company Matters. Accordingly, in order to carry out its responsibilities, the Board has adopted this Policy.

This Policy sets out the Group's policy for reporting concerns of past, present or future instances of unethical or unlawful behaviour relating to the Group and applies to all employees, directors, officers, contractors (including employees of contractors), suppliers and consultants of all entities within the Group (**Personnel**).

This Policy encourages Personnel to report an issue if they genuinely believe someone has engaged in serious wrongdoing.

This Policy forms part of the Company's risk management framework which includes the Risk Management Policy and other related documents. Please also refer to the Company's Code of Conduct for further information.

## 2. Reporting process

### 2.1 Who does this Policy apply to?

A person is eligible for protection as a whistleblower under this Policy if they are or have previously been:

- an officer of the Group;
- an employee of the Group (whether full time, part time or casual, regardless of whether they are permanent, part time, fixed-term or temporary);
- a contractor, consultant, supplier, service provider (or their employee or subcontractor);
- an individual who is an associate (as set out in Division 2 of Part 1.2 of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)); or
- a relative, spouse or dependent of any of the above persons.

## 2.2 When should I report?

You may make a report under this Policy if you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a director, officer, employee, contractor, supplier, tenderer or other person of the Group who has business dealings with the Group has engaged in conduct (**Disclosable Events**) which:

- (a) is dishonest, fraudulent, corrupt, including bribery or other activity in breach of this Policy;
- (b) is illegal activity (e.g. theft, violence, harassment or intimidation, criminal damage to property or other breaches of state or federal law);
- (c) contravenes the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) (**Corporations Act**) or the *Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001* (Cth) and any other law administered by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (**ASIC**) and/or Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (**APRA**);
- (d) constitutes an offence against any other law of the Commonwealth that is punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months or more;
- (e) is prescribed by regulation;
- (f) is unethical or in breach of the Group's policies (e.g. dishonestly altering company records or data, adopting accounting practices that are questionable or wilfully breaching the Company's Code of Conduct or other policies or procedures);
- (g) amounts to an abuse of authority or position;
- (h) may cause financial loss to the Group or damage its reputation or be otherwise detrimental to the Group's interests;
- (i) is potentially damaging to the Group, an employee of the Group or a third party, such as unsafe work practices, environmental damage, health risks or abuse of the Group's property or resources;
- (j) involves harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying (other than personal work-related grievances, which are to be addressed in accordance with the Group's Workplace Grievance Policy, as defined in the Corporations Act);
- (k) any misconduct or improper state of affairs or circumstances which may cause loss to the Group or be otherwise detrimental to the interests of the Group including any breach of the Group's Anti-bribery and Corruption Policy, negligence, default, breach of trust and breach of duty, in relation to any Group entity; or
- (l) represents a danger to the public.

It is expected that employees of the Group who become aware of actual or suspect on reasonable grounds, potential cases of Disclosable Matters will make a report under this Policy or under other applicable policies. Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about any issue or suspicion at the earliest possible date.

## 2.3 How do I make a report?

- (a) The Company has several methods for making a report if you become aware of any issue or behaviour which you consider to be Disclosable Matters.
- (b) To qualify for protection, Disclosable Matters are to be made to any one of the people listed below being a **Protected Disclosure Officer**:  
  
CEO/Managing Director  
Phone: +61 2 9704 8888  
Email: refer to internal contact directory;  
  
CFO/Company Secretary  
Phone: +61 2 9704 8888  
Email: refer to internal contact directory; and  
  
any Director of the Company.
- (c) Reports may be made in the following ways:
  - (i) by letter to:  
  
Silex Systems Limited  
PO Box 75  
MENAI CENTRAL NSW 2234  
  
(marked to the attention of the Protected Disclosure Officer);
  - (ii) by email (marked to the attention of the Protected Disclosure Officer); or
  - (iii) by calling the Protected Disclosure Office on +61 2 9704 8888.
- (d) You may also raise the matter with an officer or senior manager of the Company. This includes 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 Group, or who has the capacity to affect significantly the Group's financial standing.
- (e) Where a Disclosable Matter is to be made to the Company's auditors (**Auditors**), we request that you contact the Auditors directly in addition to your notification to the Company, so that the Disclosable Matter can be considered in accordance with both this Policy and the relevant policies of the Auditors.

## 2.4 Disclosures outside of the Group

You will also qualify for protection under the Australian Whistleblower Law where you make a disclosure on a Disclosable Matter to:

- (a) the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (**ASIC**);
- (b) the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (**APRA**);
- (c) Commonwealth authority prescribed under the Corporations Regulations 2001 (Cth); and

- (d) a legal practitioner for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or representation in relation to the operation of the Australian Whistleblower Law.

Where you have previously made a disclosure to ASIC, APRA or a prescribed Commonwealth authority as described above (the Previous Disclosure), you may, in limited, prescribed circumstances, qualify for protection under the Australian Whistleblower Law if you make a disclosure (relating to the subject matter of the Previous Disclosure) to a journalist or member of Parliament of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory.

You should seek legal advice before making disclosures to a journalist or member of Parliament as not all disclosures made to a journalist or member of Parliament will qualify for protection under the Australian Whistleblower Law.

## 2.5 What should I report?

- (a) Where a report is made by email or letter, the subject of the email or letter should make it clear that it is a report under this Policy, so that its confidentiality can be maintained.
- (b) The communication should also indicate whether the reporting person consents to the recipient of their report disclosing their identity to other persons, which may include a designated investigation team (if one is established), Company officers and the Company's external legal advisors.
- (c) Given the Group may not be able to properly investigate a report without this consent, if you make a report you will be taken to consent to your identity being shared to these limited persons unless you positively indicate you wish to remain anonymous. Anonymity can also be specified (i.e. "*I do consent to you sharing my identity with an external investigator but not to employees or officers*").
- (d) If you elect to remain anonymous, we will respect your right not to identify yourself, however, it may mean that our investigation will be limited.
- (e) We do not expect an initial disclosure to include absolute proof of misconduct. Where possible it could include:
  - (i) the name, job title and workplace address of the person the subject of the disclosure;
  - (ii) details of the misconduct including dates and places;
  - (iii) names of anyone who may substantiate the disclosure; and/or
  - (iv) any other evidence that supports the disclosure such as emails or other documents.

These details will assist the Group in deciding how best to deal with the disclosure.

- (f) Not all information is required as part of an initial contact. For example, you may decide to contact a Protected Disclosure Officer with high level information and then follow up with further detail later.

## 2.5 What should not be disclosed under this Policy?

A disclosure about a personal work-related grievance does not qualify for protection under this Policy. A personal work-related grievance is generally one about any matter in relation to the discloser's employment, or former employment, having (or tending to have) personal implications for the discloser.

Examples of personal work-related grievances include:

- (a) an interpersonal conflict between the discloser and another employee;
- (b) a decision relating to the engagement, transfer or promotion of the discloser; and
- (c) a decision to suspend or terminate the engagement of the discloser, or otherwise to discipline the discloser.

There are, however, certain personal work-related grievances which may still qualify for protection under this Policy. This is the case where:

- (a) you suffer or are threatened with detriment for making, or proposing to make, a disclosure;
- (b) the disclosure has significant implications for a Group entity that do not relate to the discloser; or
- (c) the information concerns conduct, or alleged conduct, that:
  - constitutes an offence against, or a contravention of, certain legislation such as the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth);
  - constitutes an offence against any other law of the Commonwealth that is punishable by imprisonment for a period of 12 months or more; or
  - poses a significant risk to public safety or to the stability of, or confidence in, the Australian financial system.

If a potential disclosure relates to a personal work-related grievance and does not have any of the characteristics listed above, then you should follow the procedures set out in the Code of Conduct and the Company's grievance procedures.

A person who knowingly makes a false disclosure or makes a disclosure with malice and without having reasonable grounds to suspect that the disclosure is appropriate under this Policy will not qualify for protection. Group personnel may also be subject to disciplinary action for making false or malicious disclosures.

## **3. How will the report be investigated?**

### **3.1 Method of investigation**

- (a) The investigation process will vary depending on the precise nature of the conduct being investigated. All reports will be investigated, with a degree of investigation that reflects that nature of information provided and severity of allegations made.
- (b) The Company will investigate all matters reported under this Policy as soon as practicable after the matter has been reported.
- (c) All investigations will be conducted in a way that is thorough, objective and fair, and will have regard to any conflict of interests and other factors that require confidentiality.

- (d) The Protected Disclosure Officer will keep you informed of the outcome of the various stages of the investigation arising from your report (if any), subject to the considerations of the privacy of anyone who is the subject of the matter you have reported and other legal confidentiality requirements. The frequency and timeframe of any updates may vary depending on the nature of the disclosure.

### **3.2 Who will conduct the investigation?**

- (a) The investigation will be conducted by a Protected Disclosure Officer and a Protected Disclosure Officer may, with your consent, appoint a person to assist in the investigation of a report.
- (b) If the report is not anonymous, a Protected Disclosure Officer or investigator will contact you to discuss the investigation process including who may be contacted and such other matters as are relevant to the investigation.
- (c) Where a report is submitted anonymously, the Company will conduct the investigation and its enquiries based on the information provided to it.

## **4. Protection of Whistleblowers**

The Group 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.

### **4.1 Protection of your identity and confidentiality**

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

- (a) you consent; or
- (b) the concern is reported to ASIC, APRA, the Tax Commissioner (**ATO**) or the Australian Federal Police (**AFP**); or
- (c) the concern is raised with a lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice or representation.

There is no requirement for you to identify yourself in order for a disclosure to qualify for the protection under the Corporations Act. Disclosure of your identity by the Company is an offence under the Corporations Act which carries serious penalties for both the individual and the Company.

If the Company 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.

In particular, the Group will take whatever action possible that is consistent with this Policy to ensure that you are not personally disadvantaged for making a report.



## 4.2 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:

- (a) inform a Protected Disclosure Officer, officer or senior manager; or
- (b) raise it in accordance with paragraph 2.3 of this Policy.

## 4.3 Protection of files and records

- (a) All files and records created from an investigation will be retained securely.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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 the Company's disciplinary procedures.
- (d) The Corporations Act gives special protection to disclosures about breaches of that Act, provided certain conditions are met – please refer to Schedule 1 for further details.

## 4.4 Other

Disclosures made to a legal practitioner for the purposes of obtaining legal advice or representation in relation to the whistleblower provisions in the Corporations Act are protected.

The *Taxation Administration Act 1953* (Cth) also gives special protection to disclosures about breaches of any Australian tax law, provided certain conditions are met – refer to Schedule 2 for further details.

## 5. Training

The Company will provide training to its Personnel about this Policy and their rights and obligations under it.

The Company will also provide training of its managers and Protected Disclosure Officers who may receive whistleblower reports about how to respond to them.

## 6. Disclosure of Policy

This Policy will be made available to the Group and its Personnel upon the start of their employment or engagement with the Group, and will be placed on the Company's website.

## **7. General**

It is a condition of any employment or engagement by the Group that all Personnel must comply at all times with this Policy. However, this Policy does not form part of any agreement between any person and any Group company, nor does it constitute terms and conditions of any person's employment or engagement with a Group company.

## **8. Amendment**

This Policy cannot be amended without approval of the Company's Board and will be periodically reviewed to ensure that it remains effective and meets best practice standards and the needs of the Group.

## **9. Questions**

- (a) Any questions about this Policy can be directed to the Company Secretary.
- (b) Specific questions about whistleblower protection issues can be directed to the Protected Disclosure Officers whose contact details can found in paragraph 2.3.

## **10. Date of Policy**

- (a) This Policy is dated 20 July 2023.

## Schedule 1 – Special protections under the Corporations Act

### 1. Relevant Sections of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)

Part 9.4AAA of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) (**Corporations Act**) provides protection for whistleblowers.

### 2. Criteria for Protection

Importantly, there are a number of criteria that you must meet in order to qualify for whistleblower protection under the Corporations Act. These are captured in table below:

Criteria	Requirement
<b>Eligible whistleblower</b>	<p>You must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a current officer (usually a director or a secretary) of the Company;</li> <li>(b) a current employee of the Company</li> <li>(c) a contractor or employee of a contractor that has a current contract to supply goods or services to the Company;</li> <li>(d) a spouse, dependent, or other relative of a person listed at (a) to (c) above; and</li> <li>(e) an anonymous discloser.</li> </ul>
<b>Who the disclosure is made to</b>	<p>The disclosure must be made to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the Company's auditor, or a member of the Company's audit team;</li> <li>(b) a director, secretary or senior manager of the Company;</li> <li>(c) a person authorised by the Company to receive whistleblower disclosures (e.g. the Protected Disclosure Officer); or</li> <li>(d) ASIC.</li> </ul>
<b>Whether you provide your name</b>	<p>As at 1 July 2019, it does not matter whether you provide your name; anonymous disclosers will also be protected under the Corporations Act.</p>
<b>Reasonable grounds to suspect breach</b>	<p>You must have reasonable grounds to suspect that the information that is disclosed indicates that the Company or a company officer may have breached the Corporations Act or the <i>Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001</i> (Cth).</p>

Criteria	Requirement
<b>Made in good faith</b>	As at 1 July 2019, the 'good faith' test has been removed. However, if your report is solely about a personal workplace grievance, you will not be covered by the Corporations Act.

### 3. Protection under the Corporations Act

The Corporations Act gives protection to you in certain circumstances if you go public with your concerns about dangers to the public or matters in the public interest. Types of protection include:

**(a) Protection of information**

ASIC must keep information provided by you confidential if you are an eligible whistleblower. ASIC may not disclose the information you have provided unless the disclosure is specifically authorised by law, or you consent to the disclosure.

Breach of confidentiality of information can be a civil and/or criminal offence.

**(b) Protection of identity**

ASIC may not disclose your identity if you are an eligible whistleblower, unless the disclosure is specifically authorised by law or you consent to the disclosure.

**(c) Protection for whistleblowers against litigation**

If you are an eligible whistleblower, you are protected against civil or criminal litigation for protected disclosures. If you are the subject of a legal action for disclosing information, you can rely on a protection under the Corporations Act in your defence.

**(d) Reinstatement of employment**

If the Company terminates your employment as a result of a protected disclosure, you may ask the court for an order to reinstate you either in your original position, or in another position at a comparable level in the Company.

**(e) Protection for whistleblowers against victimisation**

It may be a civil and/or criminal offence to victimise you because of a protected disclosure made by you, as an eligible whistleblower.

If you suffer damage because of such victimisation, you can claim compensation for that damage from the offender.

## Schedule 2 – Special protections under the Taxation Administration Act

### 1. Relevant sections of the Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cth)

In accordance with amendments to the *Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cth)* (**TAA**), if you make a disclosure regarding breaches of tax laws or misconduct in relation to an entity’s tax affairs, you will be protected.

### 2. Criteria for protection

The TAA has broader application than the Corporations Act scheme. The following criteria must be met in order for you to be protected:

Criteria	Requirement
<b>Type of disclosure</b>	<p>You will qualify for protection in relation to a disclosure that you make about an entity or an associate of an entity, by reference to your current or former relationship with the entity.</p> <p>An entity can be an individual, company, partnership, trusts and superannuation entities.</p>
<b>Eligible whistleblower</b>	<p>You can be a current or former:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) officer of the entity;</li> <li>(b) employee of the entity;</li> <li>(c) individual who supplies services or goods to the entity (whether paid or unpaid);</li> <li>(d) individual who is an associate (within the meaning of section 318 of the <i>Income Tax Administration Act 1936 (Cth)</i>) of the entity;</li> <li>(e) spouse or a child of any individual referred to above;</li> <li>(f) dependent of an individual referred to above or a dependant of the individual’s spouse; and</li> <li>(g) individual prescribed by the regulations in relation to the entity.</li> </ul>
<b>Subject matter of the disclosure</b>	<p>In order to be an eligible disclosure, your disclosure must assist the Commissioner of Taxation to perform his or her functions or duties under taxation law in relation to the entity about which the disclosure is made.</p> <p>A ‘taxation law’ is an Act of which the Commissioner has general administration, a legislative instrument made under such Act of the <i>Tax Agent Services Act 2009 (Cth)</i> (<b>TASA</b>) or regulations made under the TASA.</p>

Criteria	Requirement
<p><b>Eligible recipient</b></p>	<p>You must make the disclosure to an eligible recipient. An eligible recipient is someone who is in the position to take some action in relation to the issues raised in a disclosure. An eligible recipient may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) an auditor or member of an audit team conducting an audit, of the financial or tax affairs of an entity;</li> <li>(b) a registered tax agent or BAS agent who provides services to the entity;</li> <li>(c) a person authorised by the entity in relation to the operation of the whistleblower regime;</li> <li>(d) a person or body prescribed in the regulations;</li> <li>(e) if the entity is a body corporate, a director, secretary or senior manager of the body corporate or other employee or officer who has functions or duties in relation to the entity's tax affairs;</li> <li>(f) if the entity is a trust, a trustee of the trust or a person authorised by the trustee to receive whistleblower disclosures; or</li> <li>(g) if the entity is a partnership, a partner or a person authorised by the partner to receive whistleblower disclosures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reasonable grounds</b></p>	<p>You must have reasonable grounds to suspect that the information indicates misconduct or an improper state of affairs or circumstances, in relation to the tax affairs of the entity, and may assist that eligible recipient to perform their functions or duties in relation to that tax affair.</p>
<p><b>Your disclosure must be in relation to tax affairs of an entity</b></p>	<p>Your disclosure must be in relation to a tax affair. A 'tax affair' is an affair relating to all taxes imposed by or under, or assessed or collected under, all laws administered by the Commissioner. Such information may include details of non-compliance by the entity.</p> <p>You will not be protected if your disclosure is given for purely workplace related issues.</p>

### 3. Protection under the TAA

Types of protection under the TAA include:

**(a) Confidentiality of identity**

It is an offence to disclose your identity or to disclose information that is likely to lead to your identification if you are eligible for protection under the TAA. This is designed to protect you from victimisation, career damage or other harm.

Disclosure of your identity is not an offence in the following limited circumstances:

- (i) if it is made to the ATO or AFP;
- (ii) if it is made to a legal practitioner for the purposes of obtaining legal advice or legal representation in relation to the operation of the tax whistleblower regime;
- (iii) if it is made to a person or body prescribed by regulation; or
- (iv) if it is made with the consent of the whistleblower.

## **(b) Whistleblower immunities**

The TAA ensures that you are entitled to a number of immunities if you are eligible for protecting under the TAA, including the following:

### *(i) Disclosure that qualifies for protection is not actionable*

You will not be subject to any civil, criminal or administrative liability (including disciplinary action) for making the disclosure, and no contractual or other remedy may be enforced against you on the basis of any eligible disclosure.

### *(ii) Information provided in disclosure is not admissible against the whistleblower*

Potentially incriminating information that is part of disclosure is prevented from being admissible in evidence against you in criminal proceedings or in proceedings for the imposition of a penalty. This immunity only applies to disclosures made to the Commissioner.

However, the information may be used in evidence against you in proceedings in respect of the falsity of the information.

### *(iii) Qualified privilege*

You are not, in the absence of malice, liable to an action for defamation in respect of the disclosure.

### *(iv) Contracts may not be terminated for disclosure*

You are protected from termination of your employment or of another contract to which you are a party.

## **(c) Victimisation of whistleblowers prohibited**

It is an offence for a person to victimise you or another person by engaging in conduct that causes detriment where the conduct is based on a belief or suspicion a person has made, may have made proposes to make or could make a disclosure that qualifies for protection.

'Detriment' is defined broadly, and includes:

- (i) dismissal of an employee;
- (ii) injury of an employee in his or her employment;
- (iii) alteration of an employee's position or duties to his or her disadvantage;

- (iv) discrimination between an employee and other employees of the same employer;
- (v) harassment or intimidation of another person;
- (vi) harm or injury to a person, including psychological harm;
- (vii) damage to a person's property;
- (viii) damage to a person's reputation;
- (ix) damage to a person's business or financial position; and
- (x) any other damage to a person.

**(d) Compensation and other remedies**

Compensation and other remedies are available for you or other individuals who are victimised as a result of or in relation to a disclosure qualifying for protection. A person can seek compensation for loss, damage or injury suffered because of the conduct of a person where:

- (i) the first person engages in conduct that threatens to (or cause) any detriment to another person;
- (ii) when the first person engaged in the conduct, the first person believed or suspected that the second person or any other person made, may have made, proposes to make, or could make, a qualifying disclosure; and
- (iii) the belief or suspicion is the reason, or part of the reason for the conduct.

Orders that can be made include:

- (i) order that requires the first person to compensate the person that has suffered the victimising conduct;
- (ii) where the first person is engaged in victimising conduct in connection with his or her position as an employee:
  - (A) requiring the first person and/or the first person's employer to compensate the person for loss, damage or injury;
  - (B) requiring the first person and the first person's employer jointly to compensate;
- (iii) an order granting an injunction to stop, prevent or remedy the victimising conduct;
- (iv) an order requiring the first person to apologise;
- (v) where the victimising conduct consists of termination of employment (wholly or partly), that the person be reinstated;
- (vi) order requiring the first person to pay exemplary damages; and/ or
- (vii) any other order that the court thinks is appropriate.