



Governance and Management

Whistleblowers

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage the reporting of misconduct, unethical behaviour, or breaches of the *Aged Care Act*.
- Ensure disclosures are handled appropriately and confidentially.
- Protect whistleblowers from victimisation, retaliation, or disadvantage.
- Comply with obligations under the *Aged Care Act 2024* and *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, contractors, volunteers, suppliers, clients, and their supporters. This includes officers and Board members of RangeCare and covers any individual with reasonable grounds to suspect misconduct.

What Can Be Reported

The following concerns can all be reported under whistleblower protection:

- Abuse, neglect, or substandard care.
- Fraud, financial misconduct, or exploitation.
- Safety violations or medication errors.
- Discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct.
- Breaches of the *Aged Care Act* or *Corporations Act*.
- Retaliation for reporting concerns.

How to Make a Disclosure

Before proceeding, consider:

- Is the issue serious (e.g., abuse, neglect, fraud, misconduct)?
- Do you have reasonable grounds to suspect wrongdoing?
- Are you connected to RangeCare (e.g., employee, volunteer, client, family member)?

If yes, whistleblowing may be appropriate. For minor issues, consider using the feedback or complaints channels instead

Disclosures must be made to:

- **Internal:**
 - RangeCare's Whistleblower Protection Officer (the Corporate Services Manager) or a manager.
 - Any aged care worker or responsible person within RangeCare.
- **External:**
 - Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
 - Department of Health and Aged Care
 - Polic
 - Independent aged care advocate
 - Legal advisor (for Corporations Act matters)
 - The Complaints Commissioner
 - The System Governor (Secretary of the Department of Health and Aged Care)

You may choose to:

- **Remain anonymous:** This protects your identity but may limit the investigation.
- **Disclose your identity:** Helps with follow-up and a thorough investigation. This may be required in some cases (e.g., reporting to the Commissioner).

You can report:

- **By phone:** Call RangeCare or a relevant authority.
- **By email or mail:** Send a written disclosure.
- **In person:** Speak directly to an eligible recipient.

You will need to include:

- A clear description of the issue
- Who was involved
- When and where it occurred
- Any supporting evidence

- Whether you wish to remain anonymous

What Happens Next:

- The recipient will assess your disclosure.
- An investigation may be initiated.
- Your identity will be protected (if requested).
- You will be protected from retaliation or detriment.
- You may be contacted for further information (if not anonymous).

Protections for Whistleblowers

You will not be discriminated against or disadvantaged in your connection with RangeCare for making a report in accordance with this policy and procedure, nor will you receive reprisals due to your actions in making a report. RangeCare will take all reasonable steps to ensure that adequate and appropriate protection is being provided for those who, in good faith, make a report. This protection applies if the matter is proven or not, and also if it is reported to an external authority.

You will receive protection from:

- Civil, criminal, or administrative liability.
- Contractual remedies due to disclosure.
- Victimisation or threats of detriment.

Strict confidentiality applies; identity must not be disclosed unless with consent, required by law, or necessary for investigation with steps to protect anonymity.

Compliance with the Aged Care Act 2024

This policy forms part of RangeCare's compliance with registration obligations under Section 96 of the *Aged Care Act 2024*. RangeCare maintains a whistleblower policy and system as a condition of registration.