

Ahrens Group Pty Ltd (Ahrens) is a vertically integrated diversified business - operating within the design, fabrication, construction, project management, erection and installation of commercial and industrial structures. As well as building refurbishments, process plants, material handling & storage, ATM installation, agricultural grain storage & handling, rural buildings, water storage, plant and building maintenance.

We work with a broad range of customers covering banks, property developers, manufacturers, transport/logistic operators, a myriad of owner/occupiers, builders, mining contractors, grain co-operatives, farmers and government departments. The nature of the company's activities requires a high degree of technical expertise, experience and reliability.

Ahrens is committed to providing all employees with a safe work environment that is free from inappropriate behaviour and will take all reasonable steps to prevent any form of workplace harassment or bullying.

The objectives of the Ahrens Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy are:

- Prevent all forms of harassment and bullying by or towards any employee, contractor, supplier, customer, client or visitor.
- Provide a process for employees, contractors, suppliers, customers, clients or visitors who believe they have been harassed or bullied, to bring about action to stop the harassment or bullying.
- Reassure employees that any issue will be taken extremely seriously and handled with utmost confidentiality.
- Help identify when harassment and/or bullying takes place.

Workplace harassment or bullying by or towards any employee, contractor, supplier, customer, client or visitor in any work-related situation will not be tolerated by Ahrens under any circumstances.

Ahrens recognises that workplace harassment and bullying may involve comments and behaviours that offend some people and not others. Management of Ahrens acknowledge that individuals may react differently to these comments and behaviours and therefore expect its employees to maintain a standard of behaviour that is respectful of everyone at all times.

It is important for employees to be aware that workplace harassment and bullying does not include the legitimate exercise of authority by an employer or manager/supervisor to direct and control how an employee performs their duties whilst at work, to monitor workflow or to provide feedback to employees about their performance.

For the purposes of this Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy, the following applies:

- "workplace harassment" is any verbal, written or physical behaviour or conduct that is of an offensive, threatening, intimidating, abusive or belittling nature, that is unwelcome, unreciprocated, uninvited and usually, but not always, repeated;
- "bullying", is behaviour directed towards an employee or a group of employees, that is repeated and systematic and that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, is of a nature to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten the employee or employees to whom the behaviour is directed, creating a risk to health or safety;
- "occupational violence" in the workplace is any incident where an employee is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace.

*The following are examples of "workplace harassment":*

- unwelcome practical jokes;
- the use of unsuitable language in the workplace;
- spreading gossip or rumours; or
- the reciting of sexist jokes.

*The following are examples of "workplace bullying":*

- verbal abuse;
- intimidating behaviour;
- denying opportunities for training, promotion or interesting work; or
- excluding or isolating employees.

Incidents of occupational violence may, constitute criminal assault, and Ahrens will report any instances of occupational violence to the appropriate authorities.

Within the above definitions, it is generally accepted that:

- "repeated" refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour, not the specific form of the behaviour. For example, the harassment or bullying may involve a variety of unreasonable and inappropriate behaviours

such as verbal abuse, persistent and unwarranted criticism and open or implied threats of being demoted or terminated;

- “systematic” means having, showing or involving a method or plan;
- “risk to health or safety” includes the risk to the physical or emotional health of the employee or employees concerned.

Any employee found guilty of perpetrating or permitting workplace harassment or bullying will be disciplined, and may, in serious cases, be dismissed. Any person found guilty of making malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations of workplace harassment or bullying that are held to be unfounded, will be disciplined, and in certain circumstances, may also be dismissed.

Ahrens recognises the rights of the employee accused of workplace harassment or bullying to be treated in accordance with the principles of natural justice. This includes the right to know full details of allegations against them, a right of reply to those allegations, a presumption of innocence until evidence against them shows otherwise and the benefit of any reasonable doubt.

As part of Ahrens commitment to minimising and eliminating instances of workplace harassment and bullying at work, Ahrens will:

- provide training workshops or information sessions for all employees relating to workplace harassment or bullying;
- provide training for managers/supervisors and other employees involved in the complaint resolution process and ensure the complaint resolution procedure is used when dealing with complaints of workplace harassment or bullying;
- distribute and regularly promote this Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy to all existing and new employees;
- monitor the working environment to ensure the appropriate standards of behaviour and conduct are observed at all times;
- treat all complaints of workplace harassment and bullying seriously and take immediate action to investigate and resolve any complaint quickly, fairly and with complete confidentiality;
- ensure employees who make or support a complaint of workplace harassment or bullying are not subsequently subjected to victimisation; and
- take all reasonable steps to ensure there is no recurrence of the offence.

All employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care to protect their own health, safety and welfare whilst at work and to avoid adversely affecting the health, safety and welfare of any other person at work, as outlined in the WHS Act. Further, all employees have a responsibility to comply with this Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy by ensuring they do not commit, encourage or condone workplace harassment or bullying in the workplace.

Employees are also encouraged to offer assistance or support to any person being harassed or bullied, and to keep any complaint confidential to avoid idle gossip and to prevent potential defamatory proceedings being taken against them.

Employees should be aware they could be held personally liable for harassing or bullying another person, or aiding, abetting or encouraging other persons to harass or bully and/or for condoning these types of actions.

Any employee who requires advice, information or support in relation to workplace harassment or bullying should contact their manager/supervisor, or the General Manager of Human Resources to assist them in such matters.

If any employee feels they have been harassed or bullied, they may make a complaint in accordance with *04.05 Issue Resolution Procedure*. If an employee is not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the organisation, they have the right to refer the matter to an external party.

A copy of this Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy shall be displayed and it is the responsibility of management and supervisory staff to ensure that it is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels in the Company.



**Stefan Ahrens**  
Managing Director, Ahrens Group Pty Ltd

