

	<b>Title:</b> <b>COMPLAINTS &amp; APPEALS (Grievance &amp; Dispute Resolution)</b>	
	<b>Version:</b> 1	<b>Approved:</b> Committee of Governance
	<b>Administered:</b> Committee	<b>Next Review:</b> September 2017

## **Introduction**

The Committee of Governance is committed to reaching a speedy and just resolution of any complaints or disputes that may arise and may threaten the harmonious functioning of the organisation.

Network West encourages staff and volunteers to resolve any issues or concerns that they may have at the earliest opportunity with their immediate supervisor. The preferred process involves satisfactory resolution of issues internally, without feeling the need to refer to external organisations or authorities for assistance.

This policy covers complaints, disputes, grievances and appeals and where “complaints” is used it should be deemed to cover all.

## **Purpose**

It is the objective of this policy to ensure that complaints are resolved by negotiation between the parties.

No staff member, volunteer or member will be treated unfairly as a result of making a complaint.

## **Policy**

Complaints should be dealt with as quickly, discreetly and effectively as possible. All steps in this process will be minuted and outcomes recorded. Complaints will be dealt with strictest confidentiality and only within the processes outlined, so that discussion of these complaints cannot be conducted in other ways.

## **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Committee of Governance and Networker to ensure that –

- They identify, prevent and address potential problems before they become formal complaints
- They are aware of, and are committed to the principles of communicating and information sharing with staff, volunteers and members
- All decisions relating to employment practices are made with consideration to the ramifications for the individual, as well as the Network in general
- Any complaint is handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity
- The Code of Conduct is referred to when determining disciplinary action (if any)
- All individuals are treated fairly and without fear of intimidation.

It is the responsibility of staff, volunteers and members to ensure that –

- They attempt to resolve any issues through their immediate supervisor and through internal processes at the earliest opportunity.

## **Procedure**

The parties to the complaint must meet and discuss the matter in dispute, and, if possible, resolve the issue within 14 days after it is brought to attention of the parties.

Where a complaint has been brought to the attention of the Committee or Networker, they should assess whether the individual is covered by an employment Award or Agreement, and, if so, should refer to that document for complaints and appeals procedures. If the individual involved is not covered by such a document, the guidelines below should be followed.

Where an individual considers they have a complaint they should first raise the matter with their immediate supervisor.

The supervisor will arrange for both parties to meet to identify and discuss the complaint together and attempt to resolve the issue within 14 days. The complaint should be recorded in writing on the Complaints Register, including the nature of complaint, timeframe and strategies for resolution.

If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily, an additional person being a member of the Committee of Governance, who is mutually agreed upon, can be asked to mediate in a meeting held within 10 days. Each party can bring an advocate or support person if they wish, and in the case of an employee, they may bring a union representative.

If the issue is still not resolved, it may be brought to the attention of the full Committee of Governance, either via a letter or by personal attendance at a meeting of the Committee within 4 weeks. A record of this meeting and outcomes will be minuted, and the meeting will observe strict confidentiality and strict processes for the resolution of the complaint.

If the complaint still exists, it may be referred to an appropriate body such as the Equal Opportunity Commission or Conciliation and Arbitration Board. The decision made by this body will be accepted by all parties as ending the matter and a letter will be sent to the individuals involved.

If there is no appropriate reference body, the matter will be referred to an independent person with no line management or Committee of Governance connections to Network West Inc. The decision made by this body will be accepted by the parties as ending the matter, and a letter will be sent to the individuals involved detailing outcomes and reasons within 2 weeks.

At all times, all parties to this process –

- must be given every opportunity to be heard;
- all parties must allow due consideration to any written statement submitted by any party; and
- ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties to the complaint throughout the mediation and resolution process.

## **Related Documents**

Code of Conduct