Standard 3: Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution

Problems and disputes can arise from time to time between businesses, their customers, suppliers and employees. Most can be resolved quickly and efficiently with a common sense approach.

Unresolved disputes and grievances, however, can be very costly to everybody involved, both financially and indirectly through other areas, including: reduced morale; erosion of confidence and trust in working relationships; loss of reputation; lost opportunities for future work; and, the destruction of business relationships.

This standard will assist clubs to develop a Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy and a clear set of standards and procedures to effectively and fairly respond to complaints in a professional, timely and cost effective manner. A structured complaints and dispute resolution process, with a focus on effective resolution at an early stage, will help your club to minimise disruption in the workplace and to avoid many of the costs outlined above.

All clubs must develop and put into practice an independent and objective complaints and dispute resolution system that includes:

- A written Policy that sets out how complaints and disputes will be handled, including:
  - How to lodge a complaint or dispute regarding the club’s actions or decisions;
  - Time frames for decisions regarding complaints;
  - Information to be provided to complainants; and
  - Options available when a complaint or dispute is not resolved.

- Effective communication of the club’s Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy to members of the public, club members, employees, registered greyhound participants, volunteers, suppliers and contractors;

- A complaints register that records details of complaints and disputes and their progress; and

- Referral arrangements to external dispute resolution resources for disputes that cannot be resolved through the internal resources of the club.

Templates

A Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy template is provided at ATTACHMENT A.

Tools and Assistance

Information on best practice in complaints handling and dispute resolution, as well as contact details for external dispute resolution services, are provided with this standard.

What GRNSW Requires From Your Club

Clubs must have a Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy in place that, at a minimum, includes the best practice standards outlined in the policy template at ATTACHMENT A. Clubs must provide GRNSW with a copy of their Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy with evidence of Committee endorsement and adoption of the policy (copy of resolution from Committee meeting minutes).
What is Dispute Resolution?

Dispute resolution refers to the processes by which disputes are brought to an end. This can occur through:

- A negotiated outcome, where the parties concerned sort out things themselves;
- A mediated outcome, where the parties use the services of an independent mediator to help them arrive at their own agreement; or
- An arbitrated or adjudicated outcome, where an independent arbitrator or court determines how the dispute is to be resolved and makes a binding decision or order to this effect.

Problems and disputes can occur within any type of organisation. It is generally beneficial and preferable to solve disputes internally with as little fuss, disruption and distress as possible. Following a Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy can be a good way to take emotion out of workplace problems. Such a Policy will ensure problems are dealt with in a professional and structured way and will often enable problems within an organisation to be rectified with minimal impact and without the loss of money and damaging relationships.

Best practice dispute resolution outcomes should be:

- Quick – the issues should be resolved quickly rather than allowing them to escalate through inaction;
- Fair – all relevant parties should be consulted so that all sides of the story are taken into account;
- Handled sensitively – disputes should, where possible and appropriate, be resolved in a confidential context in order to minimise impact on employees not affected by the dispute; and
- Transparent – the procedure should be made known to every employee.

This standard provides clubs with a Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy template which sets out guidelines and procedures to effectively and fairly respond to complaints in a professional, timely and cost effective manner.

The Policy is based on best practice and is intended to cover all types of disputes that may occur in relation to the club’s operations, whether internal club disputes, disputes with clients or disputes with suppliers (including employees and volunteers).

The standard is applicable to all clubs, however, GRNSW accepts that the implementation of the Policy may vary between clubs of different complexity and capacity – therefore GRNSW notes that you may need to edit the Policy template to suit your club’s specific needs and situation.

The Committee must ensure that the club's Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy is communicated to club management, employees and volunteers, as well as to other users of the club’s facilities.
Complaint Handling Procedures for the Club

The procedures outlined in the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy template will help clubs to properly and effectively deal with complaints from club members and participants, or grievances from employees or volunteers. This will help reduce the incidence of more serious disputes.

Not dealing with complaints quickly and effectively often reflects on the integrity and reputation of the club concerned, and can have implications for greyhound racing as a whole. Employee or volunteer grievances about complaints often affect the morale and efficiency of a club organisation, particularly if management is slow to react.

You should view complaints as a type of performance indicator and use them constructively to improve the club’s services and relationships. Repeated complaints about similar issues or actions may indicate that there are underlying problems in the governance or management of the club.

The benefits of a defined Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy include:

- Prevents the focus of the Committee and management being diverted from more important strategic objectives;
- Disputes being dealt with quickly and controlled by the parties themselves at a lower cost overall;
- Encouraging clubs to develop appropriate solutions to industry problems;
- Allowing for more creative remedies and outcomes compared with litigation;
- Providing a self regulatory approach to dealing with disputes;
- The benefits of confidentiality that most dispute resolution processes provide; and
- Reducing the risk of bad publicity flowing from disputes and associated low morale.

You should use the attached Policy template as the foundation for an effective complaints handling and disputes resolution system, which will help your club to avoid or reduce incidence of actual disputes.

Best Practice in Complaints Handling Procedures

There are a number of features to consider:

- You should appoint one particular person as the club’s Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator who is responsible for receiving and investigating all complaints. Ensure he/she has appropriate authority to recommend results acceptable to the complainant and the club. Complaints should be in writing, preferably using a standard form. If necessary, help should be provided to complainants to express their complaints in an appropriate format;
- Clubs should adopt standard timeframes for dealing with complaints;
- Establish and maintain a complaints register to record:
  - The date the complaint was made;
  - The name, address and telephone number of the complainant;
  - The nature of the complaint;
  - The name of the person or persons who were the subject of the complaint; and
  - Any action taken to investigate a complaint, details of the findings and the date and manner by which the complainant was informed of the result.
If the complaint requires extensive investigation, the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator should develop a pro forma action sheet to include details of any interviews with the person or persons who were the subject of the complaint;

The Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator should keep the complainant informed of the progress of the complaint, particularly if time frames are exceeded;

Clubs should provide complainants with the reasons behind any decisions relating to their complaints;

If the club was at fault, steps should be taken to avoid a recurrence;

Clubs should take appropriate action where a particular individual has been the offender in more than one complaint;

Where the complaint resulted from false or misleading information being provided to the complainant, the club must accept full responsibility. If the person responsible continues to offend, appropriate disciplinary action must be taken;

Clubs should analyse complaints to reveal any recurrences or trends in the type of complaints received; and

The Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator should submit regular reports (at a minimum annually) to the club Committee summarising details of all complaints received and progress in their resolution.

Club Policy and Procedures for Resolving Disputes

For the purpose of these guidelines, a dispute is a complaint that has not been resolved. It is unlikely you will be able to resolve all complaints through the club’s complaint handling and dispute resolution process. Some issues may be too complex, or the parties may not be willing to deal with the club’s Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator for resolution of their complaint. For some complaints, (for example, those about the decisions of a club official) you may have to pursue external dispute resolution options or follow specific procedures according to the Greyhound Racing Rules.

Clubs should establish and document procedures to ease the resolution of disputes with different types of stakeholders. Again, these procedures should be well publicised to the parties concerned, particularly at the time when the outcome of an initial complaint is delivered to the person(s) involved.

Clubs should keep appropriate records of the subject matter of complaints and disputes and the method and nature of their resolution. Such information will help you in identifying and addressing significant causes of disputes. It will also assist in developing consistent approaches to dispute resolution.

Intra-club Disputes

Intra-club disputes or disagreements may involve the current Committee, former office bearers or Committee members, and/or the wider club membership. Most often they relate to matters such as the conduct of meetings, voting rights and alleged breaches of the constitution of the club.

Such disputes are generally disruptive and wasteful of the club’s resources. You must therefore ensure that your constitution provides a mechanism for resolving internal disputes within the membership of the club.
Where the specific procedures to be followed are not included in the constitution, you must develop them as a specific policy and procedure.

The mechanism and procedures should provide for:

- Appointment of an independent person (e.g., the club’s external Dispute Resolution Officer/Mediator) to deal with, or advise on the dispute;
- A process to bring the parties together to help resolve the dispute at an early stage;
- A process to ensure that all parties receive a full and fair opportunity of presenting their case;
- Referral of unresolved disputes to an external dispute resolution body for dispute settlement; and
- A review of policies and procedures which may have contributed to the dispute in order to minimise a recurrence (e.g., a review of the manner in which meetings are conducted, voting procedures, recording of minutes, election of office bearers, etc).

Your club should also formulate a policy on the payment of legal expenses of parties to a dispute, should all attempts to resolve the internal dispute fail and the parties decide to pursue it through arbitration or civil litigation.

**Disputes with Customers and Participants**

Disputes with persons, such as owners, trainers, punters or other users of the club’s facilities, need to be handled quickly and professionally to maintain goodwill and reduce the risk of repercussions or financial loss. Further to this, it is important that your club is fully aware of its obligations under the Greyhound Racing Rules, consumer laws or other relevant legislation.

**Tips in Dealing with Client Disputes**

To maximise the chance of a successful resolution the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator should:

- Listen to what the complainant has to say (look at the issue from the complainant’s perspective);
- Request documentary evidence if required to verify the facts;
- Negotiate face-to-face in a calm and professional manner;
- Understand the club’s legal obligations (seek advice from the relevant consumer organisation or GRNSW, depending on the nature of the dispute); and
- Provide accurate information on the options available to the complainant for resolution of the issue. These may include:
  - An appeal to GRNSW or the Tribunal in respect of certain racing related decisions by the club or its stewards.
  - Referral to the Consumer Claims Tribunal, a low cost resolution facility administered by the Department of Fair Trading.
You need to think about the types of disputes that may arise in these areas, and how you would deal with such disputes.

Club disputes with suppliers are similar to those experienced by small businesses, including:

- Financial disputes, involving provision of finance or settlement of accounts;
- Breaches of specific contract terms;
- The supply, quality or price of products and service;
- Leases and rental arrangements;
- Business relationships and partnerships;
- Deceptive and misleading conduct and/or abuse of (business) power; and
- Workplace relations.

While in many ways dealing with business or employment related disputes is similar to other types of disputes, the nature of such 'business' relationships lends itself to additional preventative measures.

**Dispute Provisions in Contracts or Letters of Engagement**

You should take action to minimise the potential for disputes with suppliers by using contracts or letters of engagement to set out the respective obligations and expectations of the club and its suppliers, rather than relying on verbal (or even unspoken) understandings. Such documentation will reduce potential misunderstandings and disputes. In addition, you should include specific clauses that address joint problem solving before issues become disputes. Appropriate elements in such clauses could include:

- Early notification of issues and informal discussion to seek a resolution;
- A process for raising continuing issues with the other party more formally in writing, setting out grounds and preferred solutions – and requiring the parties to make every effort to resolve disputes fairly;
- The use of an informal negotiator (such as an industry association, business adviser or employee representative) to assist in finding a solution; and
- Provision for the use of alternative dispute resolution, such as mediation or conciliation.

**Support Services**

A range of services are available to provide support for both consumers and small businesses, such as clubs, in understanding their legal requirements and, by doing so, allow successful face-to-face resolution of disputes. Providers include:

- Department of Fair Trading (NSW) ph 13 32 20;
- Consumer Claims Tribunal (NSW) ph 1300 135 399;
- Commonwealth Ombudsman (National) ph 1300 362 072; and

If a stalemate is reached and no other appropriate resolution forum is available, clubs should consider the use of (external) alternative dispute resolution such as mediation. This is further discussed below.
External Dispute Resolution Options

If a dispute cannot be resolved internally by following the procedures outlined in the club’s Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy or via the nominated external Dispute Resolution Officer/Mediator, the club should explore options for external dispute resolution.

Your club should make itself familiar with available options for external dispute resolution and the appropriate option for any particular dispute. Successful use of external dispute resolution involves a number of steps, as set out next.

**Step 1 - Understand the Dispute**

You need to understand why the dispute occurred, how it may have escalated, and why it has not been resolved through direct discussion or negotiation. You also need to know what the real issues are, both from your perspective and that of the other party (or parties). Furthermore, you should understand what the club wants to achieve by way of a ‘preferred’ result, whether this will resolve the dispute in the long term, and how this would affect the club’s operations. Finally, you should ask yourself how realistic the club’s expectations are, how it would affect the other party, and how an impartial observer would view such a result.

**Step 2 - Understand Dispute Resolution Options**

It’s a good idea before you start down the dispute resolution path to understand the differences between alternative dispute resolution and traditional 'adversarial' approaches such as litigation and arbitration. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches in terms of possible results, control by the parties, timeframe and costs. It's also advisable to take note of the characteristics of different types of alternative dispute resolution that may be available, such as assisted negotiation, mediation, facilitation or expert determination.

**Step 3 - Select the Appropriate Dispute Resolution Method**

Review the dispute to establish if it may be necessary to litigate (e.g. settle a legal issue or a criminal matter) or go to formal arbitration (e.g. if mandated in a contract or an industrial award). Consider the situations in which alternative dispute resolution is likely to provide better results and the circumstances when particular types of alternative dispute resolution will be of most assistance.

**Step 4 - Access an Alternative Dispute Resolution Provider**

You may obtain alternative dispute resolution services and advice from a number of sources, including:

- Industry associations or general business representative bodies such as the Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce;
- Specific Government or industry financed alternative dispute resolution advisers or providers such as the Banking Ombudsman, Community Justice Centres, NSW Ombudsman, Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW and Business Enterprise Centres; and
- Alternative dispute resolution providers that provide both advisory services and manage panels of dispute resolution specialists, including peak providers such as Australian Commercial Disputes Centre, the Resolutions Centre and Mediate Today, and organisations managing panels of mediators.

See **APPENDIX A** for the contact details of these organisations in NSW.
Step 5 - Prepare for the Alternative Dispute Resolution Process

To begin, you must decide who should represent the club at the dispute resolution meetings and whether the club needs assistance. Then you should prepare and document the club's case – the problem, related issues, and supporting information.

You need to consider possible outcomes: what are the club's real needs; what is the preferred outcome; and, which are the most important issues to resolve and which are less important?

Consider, too, the implications of not reaching agreement through alternative dispute resolution - the likely costs, time, impact on club business or the risk of losing a court case. You should also identify common grounds or mutually beneficial aspects of the club's relationship with the other party.

Finally, you should develop a negotiating strategy which:

- Understands the dispute from the other party's perspective;
- Identifies options the other party may find acceptable, and which considers how to present these;
- Sees the strengths and weaknesses in your case;
- Identifies trade-offs (such as short term financial benefit as against long term business relationships); and
- Considers how best to present your position and interest firmly, calmly, and in a clear and organised way.

Step 6 - Working Towards a Successful Resolution Outcome

A typical dispute resolution process such as mediation will normally proceed as follows.

Firstly, the alternative dispute resolution provider assists in selecting an agreed mediator (who is independent of both parties and has no conflicts of interest in the matter), and then arranges a mutually convenient time and neutral venue for the mediation meeting.

At the meeting, a mediation agreement is presented for signature by the parties. The agreement sets out the conditions under which the mediation will take place, including payment for mediation services, confidentiality provisions, enforceability issues and termination of mediation.

Agreement on confidentiality of the mediation ensures that any information provided at the mediation, including any settlement offers, cannot be revealed in any other proceedings. This encourages open and frank discussion 'without prejudice' or threat of adverse publicity.

The mediator manages the mediation process and assists the parties to find a mutually acceptable settlement, but does not provide legal or other advice or make judgements on any issues that arise during the mediation.

Both parties normally will be asked to make an opening statement to provide their perspective about the dispute. The mediator will summarise each party's case and identify the key issues in dispute. The parties can provide additional information if necessary and will be encouraged to discuss the issues to identify possible opportunities for resolution. The mediator generally also meets with each party separately, on a confidential basis, to discuss the issues in more detail and explore opportunities for resolving the dispute.
Either party may terminate the mediation if they consider the mediator is biased or the other party does not appear to be acting in good faith, or the mediator may recommend termination if a settlement appears unlikely.

If mediation is successful, the parties themselves determine the settlement terms, not the mediator. It may take the form of an action plan setting out dates to complete agreed actions or make payments.

Note that the signed settlement agreement can be enforced through the courts, if necessary, if a party fails to abide by any of the terms of the agreement.
## APPENDIX A

### Alternative Dispute Resolution Providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>E-mail / Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators Australia</strong></td>
<td>Level 9, 52 Phillip St, Sydney, 2000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.iama.org.au">www.iama.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: 02 9241 1188 Fax: 02 9252 2911</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nsw.chapter@iama.org.au">nsw.chapter@iama.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Commercial Disputes Centre</strong></td>
<td>Level 16, 1 Castlereagh St, Sydney, 2000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.acdcltd.com.au">www.acdcltd.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: 02 9239 0700 Fax: 02 9223 7053</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEADR (Association of Dispute Resolvers)</strong></td>
<td>Level 1, 13-15 Bridge St, Sydney, 2000</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leadr@leadr.com.au">leadr@leadr.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: 02 9251 3366 Fax: 02 9251 3733 Free call: 1800 651 650</td>
<td><a href="http://www.leadr.com.au">www.leadr.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mediate Today</strong></td>
<td>Suite 2, 90 Mona Vale Rd, Mona Vale, 2103</td>
<td><a href="mailto:medtoday@mediate.com.au">medtoday@mediate.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Accord Group</strong></td>
<td>Level 2, 370 Pitt St, Sydney, 2000</td>
<td>[<a href="mailto:codedisputes@accordgroup.com.au">codedisputes@accordgroup.com.au</a>](mailto: <a href="mailto:codedisputes@accordgroup.com.au">codedisputes@accordgroup.com.au</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: 02 9264 9506 Fax: 02 9264 8268</td>
<td><a href="http://www.accordgroup.com.au">www.accordgroup.com.au</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
<insert club name>

Complaint and Dispute Resolution Policy

Introduction
This Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy aims to provide a structured approach to resolving complaints and disputes that is fair and equitable, and that will lead to solutions that are acceptable to all parties.

Definitions

Complaint
A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, made to the club, related to the club’s activities, operations, policies, employees, volunteers or the complaints handling and dispute resolution process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complainant
A party that makes a complaint or files a formal charge, for example, a member of the public, club members, employees, registered greyhound participants, volunteers, suppliers and contractors.

Dispute
Means an unresolved complaint. In other words, it is a matter that has been dealt with as a complaint under this Policy, but where the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome.

Purpose of Policy
The purpose of this Policy is to outline a set of procedures to effectively and fairly respond to complaints and disputes in a professional and timely manner.

This Policy provides a process for handling and resolution of complaints and disputes between the <insert club name> and its members, employees, registered greyhound participants, volunteers, members of the public, suppliers and contractors relating to club activities and operations.

The objectives of this Policy are to establish a process to:

- Record, action and resolve complaints and disputes;
- Provide complainants, dissatisfied with a decision, a referral to an external process for resolution of their complaint; and
- Review and monitor the club’s performance against the procedures outlined in this Policy.
Overview

The complaint and dispute resolution process at the <insert club name> operates in two stages:

- An internal dispute resolution process under which the club will use its best efforts to resolve a complaint or dispute to the mutual satisfaction of the club and the complainant; and
- Failing resolution, an external dispute resolution process under which the complainant, dissatisfied with the club’s decision, can refer the complaint to the club’s external dispute resolution officer/mediator or other external mediation body/service for resolution.

Effective and Efficient Complaint and Dispute Resolution Process

The club will adopt an effective and efficient complaint and dispute resolution process that:

- Is documented;
- Is communicated to club members, employees, registered greyhound participants, volunteers, suppliers, contractors and members of the public;
- Has stated time limits for each stage of the process; and
- Is reviewed annually.

Committee and Management Commitment

The Committee of the <insert club name> and its club Secretary/Manager are committed to the implementation of this Policy, as evidenced by:

- Ensuring the public, club members, employees, registered greyhound participants, volunteers, supplier and contractors are aware of the club’s Policy; and
- Implementing management systems and reporting procedures to ensure timely and effective complaints handling and disputes resolution, and monitoring.

Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator

The club will appoint an internal Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator who will be responsible for managing and coordinating the implementation of this Policy.

<NOTE: to maintain transparency, GRNSW recommends that clubs appoint a Committee member as the coordinator instead of the club Secretary, as the majority of club complaints are usually directed at the Secretary and it would be inappropriate for them to deal with complaints relating to their role in the club> Delete this text before printing.

All complaints should be directed to the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator, <insert name and contact details>.

Communication

This Policy should be displayed in a public area within the club. In addition, all relevant employees, volunteers, suppliers and contractors should receive a copy of this Policy.

Periodically (at least annually), the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator must remind the abovementioned stakeholders about this Policy.
Internal Resolution of Complaints and Disputes

Procedures for Receiving Complaints

If a complaint is submitted to the <insert club name>, the club:

- Must, if the complaint is verbal, either resolve it "on the spot", or if that is not done, request the complainant to submit a written complaint to the Complaint Handling and Disputes Resolution Coordinator;
- Must, if the complaint is in writing, acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint as soon as practicable and in any event within 14 days from receipt, and enclose a copy of this Policy for the complainant's information;
- Must ensure that the complaint receives proper consideration resulting in a determination by the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator as the person designated by the club as appropriate to handle complaints;
- Must act in good faith in dealing with and resolving the complaint;
- Must investigate the complaint including by:
  - Seeking all relevant information from the complainant; and
  - Obtaining all relevant information from club employees.
- May in its discretion give any appropriate remedy to the complainant, including any of the following:
  - Information and explanation regarding the circumstances giving rise to the complaint;
  - An apology; and
  - Compensation for loss incurred by the complainant.
- Must communicate to the complainant in relation to the complaint as soon as practicable and in any event not more than 45 days after receipt by the club of the complaint:
  - The determination in relation to the complaint;
  - The remedies (if any) available to the complainant; and
  - Information regarding any further avenue for complaint.

When a Complaint will be Treated as Resolved by the Club

Written Complaints - where the complainant has been notified in writing of a decision and no response has been received, the complaint will be treated as resolved by the club.

Verbal Complaints - will be treated as resolved by the club where:
  - The complaint has been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction "on the spot"; or
  - Where the complainant has been notified of a decision about a complaint and no response has been received.

Confidentiality

The complaint handling and dispute resolution process will keep the complainant's identity private to guard against inconvenience or discrimination.
Sensitivity
The club will treat each complaint separately and on its merits.

Recording the Complaint

Complaints and Disputes Register
The Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator must ensure that a Complaints and Disputes Register is established, maintained and kept up-to-date.

The Register will be comprised of a copy of each Complaint Report (refer APPENDIX A).

At a minimum, the Register must include the following information about every complaint that is received:

- Date complaint is made;
- Nature of complaint / issue;
- Action taken to investigate the complaint;
- Date resolved; and
- How resolved.

The Complaint and Dispute Resolution Coordinator must periodically review the Register to check that complaints are being handled appropriately, including in accordance with this Policy, and within the required timeframes.

The Complaints Register must also be tabled annually at club Committee meetings.

Timetable for Complaints Handling
The club will attempt to resolve complaints and notify the complainant as soon as possible.

The clubs performance standards for complaints handling are at APPENDIX B.

Annual Review of this Policy
The Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator is responsible for ensuring this Policy is adhered to.

Periodically (at least annually), the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator will review this Policy and report the outcome of this review to the club Committee.

If an Individual asks about the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Procedures
If an individual asks for information about the club’s complaints handling and dispute resolution methods, employees or volunteers must refer the request to the Complaint Handling and Disputer Resolution Coordinator as soon as possible. The Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator must ensure the individual is provided with a copy of this Policy within seven business days of the request.
If an Individual asks for Assistance in Formulating or Lodging Complaint

If an individual asks for assistance in the formulation and lodgement of his/her complaint, employees and volunteers must refer the request to the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator as soon as possible. The Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator must ensure reasonable assistance is provided to the individual.

Where a Complaint is not Resolved to an Individual’s Satisfaction

For each complaint that cannot be resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction within the abovementioned 45 days, the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator must inform the complainant in writing that they have the option to pursue resolution of their complaint with the club’s external Dispute Resolution Officer / Mediator and provide details about how to access them.

External Resolution of Disputes

Failing resolution of a complaint through the club’s dispute resolution process as outlined in this Policy, complainants can refer their complaint to an external mediation body/service for resolution.
## Complaint Report

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Date of this Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Date complaint made / dispute notified</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Details of complainant (Name, address &amp; telephone number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nature of complaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Action taken to investigate the complaint</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Who is responsible for ensuring this action is carried out</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Date action completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The name of the person or persons who were the subject of the complaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Does complaint / dispute indicate a recurring or systemic issue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>If yes, what action was taken to ensure the issue does not recur / that systemic issue has been addressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Is the complaint / dispute significant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>If yes – date notified to club Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>How was the complaint / dispute resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Date complaint / dispute resolved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Timetable for Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action required</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send copy of the club’s Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy to anyone who asks for information about its complaints or disputes handling methods.</td>
<td>Within 7 business days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral complaints not resolved “on the spot” and written complaints to be referred to the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator.</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where client requests assistance in formulation/lodgement of a complaint – refer matter to the Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator.</td>
<td>As soon as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator to write to complainant acknowledging receipt of complaint and forwarding copy of the club’s Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy.</td>
<td>Within 14 days of receiving complaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator to advise complainant in writing of outcome and (if complaint not resolved to complainant’s satisfaction) advise complainant in writing of the availability of external dispute resolution mechanisms and how they may be accessed.</td>
<td>Within 45 days of receiving complaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints and Disputes Register – Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Coordinator to: (a) record complaint on Register; and (b) keep Register updated.</td>
<td>(a) Within 7 days of receiving complaint (b) Within 45 days of receiving complaint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>