

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield Inc.

Complaint Handling Guidelines

1. Objectives

This guideline outlines the provisions available to members when resolving a grievance.

2. Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

- 2.1. Association means Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield Inc.
- 2.2. BOM means the Association's Board of Management
- 2.3. Complainant- the member or members lodging a grievance or complaint.
- 2.4. Complaint or Grievance is a complaint by a member under the Code of Conduct and Safe Behaviour Policy or otherwise about a problem or concern affecting the Complainant's membership of the Association and for which the member wants a resolution.
- 2.5. Respondent(s) - one or more persons who are the subject of the member's grievance or complaint.

3. Policy Scope/Coverage

This guideline applies to all Association members.

Grievances and complaints should be raised or lodged as soon as possible after the date when the problem or concern arose and usually no later than six months from the date of the most recent incident the subject of the complaint.

4. Policy Statement

The Association and the BOM is committed to maintaining a harmonious, fair and productive environment. By this policy the Association endeavours to

- 4.1. outline the means for early grievance/complaint resolution through informal means if possible
- 4.2. Prevent personal conflicts from becoming entrenched
- 4.3. Resolve grievances without unreasonable delay and if possible in a conciliatory and effective manner; and
- 4.4. Determine the matters in question if conciliation is effective or possible.

Grievance resolution is an integral part of the BOM's (or if the BOM has appointed a sub-committee under clause 17 of the Association's Constitution, then the sub-committee's) duties.

It is the responsibility of the BOM or sub-committee to identify, respond to, and address problems in the Association and to take all reasonable steps to ensure that victimisation of either a complainant or a respondent does not take place.

The BOM or subcommittee may appoint one or more of its members to assist it in making determinations of fact in relation to a complaint (to determine whether the conduct alleged did in fact take place). It will be for the BOM or subcommittee to determine and implement appropriate action.

So far as reasonably practicable, a BOM or sub-committee member should recognise the early signs of disharmony and if possible, take early and positive steps to prevent and resolve potential or actual grievances between Association members.

Nothing in this policy prevents or restricts the right of a member to refer their grievance to an external authority at any time.

5. **Policy Principles**

It is important that any complaint is dealt with as promptly as possible, professionally and with sensitivity.

Less formal and early resolution of grievances is encouraged if possible. If a member has a complaint the member should speak to a BOM member.

If the member is comfortable doing so, the member should first tell the other person, verbally or in writing, what conduct is unacceptable. Focus on the behaviour not the person.

If the members does not believe they can speak to the person directly, then they should speak to a member of any appointed sub-committee or to a member of BOM.

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times by all parties but of course, this is subject to the need to properly investigate a grievance and subject to any legal requirements for disclosure. The process must endeavour to apply and be consistent with the principles of natural justice.

Parties to a grievance should engage in the procedures for grievance resolution in good faith and focus on achieving resolution to the concerns raised.

The principles of procedural fairness (natural justice) will apply to all parties.

The term procedural fairness refers to the processes by which an outcome is reached. For example, procedural fairness requires that a respondent to a complaint must be provided with:

- the relevant facts of the complaint so that the respondent can properly respond;
- information about the process by which the matter is to be resolved; and
- be given the opportunity to put their case and respond to the complaint during an investigation.

In addition:

- any decision-maker must act impartially and without bias;
- all relevant submissions and evidence must be considered;
- irrelevant matters must not be taken into account; and
- the complaint must be dealt with in a timely manner.

Victimisation of either a complainant, respondent or any other person with a legitimate involvement in a grievance resolution process will not be tolerated. The Association will not tolerate frivolous or vexatious grievances.