

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Complaint Policy for Disciplinary Matters Directional Guidance to Member Organisations</b>
<b>Overview</b>	This Directional Paper supports Member Organisations to implement and apply the Complaints Policy and Complaint Form consistently. It outlines practical steps for receiving, assessing and resolving complaints fairly, confidentially and in accordance with procedural fairness, helping protect volunteers, participants and Member Organisations while strengthening governance and community trust.
<b>Review Date</b>	1 March 2027
<b>For</b>	Member Organisations
<b>Related Policies</b>	<a href="#">Complaints Policy</a> , <a href="#">Complaint Form</a>

### Using the Complaints Policy and Complaint Form

This guide helps Member Organisations manage complaints in a fair, consistent and confidential way. The Complaints Policy and Form provide a clear process to protect volunteers, participants and Shows, while supporting good governance.

#### 1. Purpose

Every Member Organisation must have a documented complaints process.

The Complaints Policy explains:

- Who can complain
- What issues are covered
- How complaints are handled
- Response timeframes
- Roles and responsibilities
- Possible outcomes

The Complaint Form is used to record complaint details and supporting information. Together, these documents help ensure consistency, fairness and legal compliance across NSW Shows.

#### 2. What Complaints Cover

Complaints may involve:

- Behaviour of volunteers, officials, contractors, exhibitors or patrons
- Operational or governance matters
- Breaches of policies or codes
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination or misconduct

Serious matters (e.g. violence or criminal behaviour) may be referred externally. Personal or domestic disputes are not included.

### 3. Getting Ready

Committees should:

- Formally adopt the Complaints Policy
- Nominate who receives complaints (usually President or Secretary)
- Keep a secure Complaints Register (date, issue, action, outcome)
- Make the Complaint Form available
- Brief Committee members on fairness, confidentiality and conflicts of interest

### 4. Receiving a Complaint

Complaints must be in writing and include:

- Contact details
- Description of the issue
- People involved, dates and locations
- Evidence where available

Anonymous complaints are generally not accepted.

Once received:

- Acknowledge within 5 working days
- Record in the Register
- Check the matter is in scope

### 5. Handling Complaints

#### Stage 1 – Acknowledge and Assess

Confirm receipt and decide if action is needed.

#### Stage 2 – Informal Resolution

Minor issues may be resolved through discussion or mediation.

#### Stage 3 – Formal Committee Process

If needed:

- Provide written details of allegations
- Allow at least 7 days to respond
- Offer a support person
- Remove conflicted Committee members

The Committee decides outcomes such as warnings, behaviour agreements, suspension or expulsion. Decisions must be provided in writing.

#### Stage 4 – Escalation

Unresolved or serious matters may be referred to AgShows NSW or authorities.

### 6. Procedural Fairness

Organisations must ensure:

- Both sides are heard
- Decisions are impartial
- Evidence is considered
- Conflicts are managed
- Reasons are documented

## **7. Confidentiality and Records**

All complaints are confidential. Information is shared only when required.  
Records must be kept securely for 7 years.  
Retaliation is not permitted.

## **8. Timeframes**

- Acknowledgement: 5 working days
- Investigation: usually within 1 month
- Resolution: usually within 3 months

Delays must be explained in writing.

## **9. Possible Outcomes**

May include:

- Apology
- Process changes
- Training
- Written warnings
- Behaviour plans
- Suspension or expulsion
- Referral to AgShows NSW or external bodies

## **10. When to Contact AgShows NSW**

Refer matters where:

- Serious misconduct is involved
- Impartiality cannot be assured
- Safety or reputation is at risk
- Internal processes fail

## **11. Responsibilities**

### **President / Secretary**

- Receive and record complaints
- Acknowledge receipt
- Manage the process

### **Committee**

- Decide outcomes
- Ensure fairness
- Manage conflicts

### **Final Reminder**

Complaints handling is a key governance duty. Done properly, it protects people, Committees and Shows, and supports a respectful, trusted Show environment.