

# GRIEVANCE, DISPUTE AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY

Policy number	CDR1	Version	004 – June 2021
Drafted by	Head Office	Approved by board on	August 2021
Responsible person	General Manager	Scheduled review date	July 2022

## PURPOSE

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 NSW GBOTA 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.

## DEFINITIONS

Grievance means any type of problem, concern or complaint relating to a staff member's employment conditions and may include but not limited to an act, omission, situation, or decision in which the staff member perceives to be unfair or unjustified.

Grievance handler is normally the supervisor or manager of the staff member lodging a grievance; this person is responsible for reviewing the grievance in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

Where the supervisor/ manager is the focus of the grievance, an alternative grievance handler will be appointed.

## 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
- Employers should be aware of, and familiarise themselves with, any dispute resolution procedure that applies to their workplace.
- 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.

## POLICY

## **Overview**

The complaint and dispute resolution process at the NSW GBOTA is a 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.

### **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 NSW GBOTA and the Managers of its track operations 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 Lead and Track Coordinators**

Complaint and Dispute Resolution Officers at each venue shall be the appointed Venue Manager. The Lead Complaint and Dispute Resolution Co-Ordinator for the Venue shall be the Management Committee.

In the event that a complaint or dispute involves any of the aforementioned Complaint and Dispute Resolution Track Co-Ordinators, or the complainant is uncomfortable in raising their complaint with the aforementioned Complaint and Dispute Resolution Track Co-Ordinators, then the complainant may contact or lodge the complaint with the Association's General Manager.

### **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 NSW GBOTA, 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/volunteers
- 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 ASSOCIATION

**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.

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 NSW GBOTA will attempt to resolve complaints and notify the complainant as soon as possible.

### **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 Management 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 Dispute 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 lodgment 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.

### **How will the Complaint and Dispute Resolution Co-Ordinator progress the complaint?**

The NSW GBOTA Complaint and Dispute Resolution Co-Ordinator will adopt a 'step' process to resolving disputes which includes:

- Systematically work through the issues, help identify alternatives and facilitate final agreement by:
  - Listing the sequence of events leading up to the dispute.
  - Documenting the facts.
  - Ascertaining if the dispute escalated and why?
  - Ascertaining why the dispute hasn't been settled?
  - Documenting the most important issues to resolve in order of priority.
  - Ensuring the preferred outcome will resolve the dispute in the long-term.
  - Ensuring that anger or disappointment does not cloud perspective in resolving an outcome.
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#### 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, external options such as independent mediation may at this point be considered.

#### 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.

#### AUTHORISATION

NSW Greyhound Breeder, Owners and Trainers Association