

	Title: <b>Feedback and Complaints Policy</b>	
	Policy number: <b>7.2</b> Date Adopted: 1 June 2020	Approved by: CEO
	Date reviewed: 1 June 2020 Date of next review: 1 June 2023	Reviewed by: EMT

## 1 Purpose

Sporting Wheelies seeks to maintain and enhance our reputation of providing high quality services. We value feedback and complaints as they assist us to improve our services and customer service and is vital when striving for fair and reasonable outcomes for all stakeholders.

Sporting Wheelies is committed to being responsive to the needs and concerns of our members, staff, volunteers and stakeholders and or potential members, staff, volunteers and stakeholders and to addressing feedback and resolving any complaint as quickly as possible. This policy provides the framework for the Association's complaints management and resolution system.

This policy has been designed to provide guidance to our members, staff, volunteers and stakeholders on the manner in which the Association receives and manages your feedback or complaint. We are committed to being consistent, fair and impartial when handling any complaint.

## 2 Scope

This Policy applies to members, staff, volunteers and stakeholders who wish to provide feedback or lodge a complaint regarding Association services and performance.

This policy applies to all circumstances except in where there is:

- a suspected risk of harm or harm to a child which is addressed via the Association's Child and Youth Risk Management Policy (5.10)
- a performance management situation, as these matters are managed in accordance with the Association's Performance Management Policy (8.15).

This policy is implemented by using the included procedures. This Policy and Procedures are to be made accessible to all members, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

Sporting Wheelies will ensure:

- all staff and volunteers are well trained in the Sporting Wheelies' Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedures through its induction process, incidental and annual training and information sessions
- staff handling feedback and complaints will be supported by management and should receive effective supervision, guidance and feedback on their work
- Health and Fitness Centre clients will receive information regarding the policy as part of their Service Agreement
- that information about and copies of the association's Feedback and Complaints Policy and Feedback and Complaints Form are easily accessible for all members, staff, volunteers and stakeholders, by placing access to this policy and associated forms in easily accessible locations, for example, Associations website, social media platforms, at event registration tables and reception just to name a few.

### 3 Policy Statement: Our commitment

Sporting Wheelies is committed to effective feedback and complaints management by addressing feedback, and by managing complaints in an open, transparent, accountable, timely, fair, accessible, responsive and efficient manner, in compliance with the Australian Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling.

Supporting people with a disability is at the centre of the Sporting Wheelies feedback and complaints management framework. The guiding principles that people with disability have a right to have a say about and be involved in decisions affecting their lives informs our approach to complaints management and resolution.

The Association is committed to:

- recognising a member, staff member, volunteer and stakeholder right to provide feedback and make complaints, comments or suggestions about the standard and quality of services and programs provided
- providing an efficient, fair and accessible mechanism for resolving complaints and addressing feedback
- ensuring that all complaints are heard and equitably resolved as soon as possible
- monitoring complaints to improve the quality of services
- providing members, staff members, volunteers and stakeholders with information about the complaint management process
- promoting a positive attitude towards resolving complaints
- providing assistance to complainants who may be disadvantaged in any way and require additional assistance i.e. regional or remote location, language or other impairment, children and young persons.

#### 3.1 Principles

Sporting Wheelies demonstrates its commitment to providing an effective feedback and complaint management system by adopting the following principles for good practice:

- **Customer focus** – the department is committed to effective complaint management and values feedback through complaints.
- **Visibility** – information about how and where to complain is well publicised to a member, staff member, volunteer, stakeholder other interested parties. We do this by providing a direct link to 'complaints' on our website, social media platforms and strategic locations throughout our business premises.
- **Accessibility** – the process for making a complaint is easy to access and use and interpreters are provided when needed.
- **Responsiveness** – receipt of complaints are acknowledged to the complainant within five working days and the complainant is kept informed throughout the process.
- **Objectivity and fairness** – complaints are dealt with in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner applying the principles of natural justice.
- **Confidentiality** –personal information collected in relation to a complaint is confidential and only used for the purposes of addressing the complaint and any follow up actions.
- **Remedy** – if a complaint is upheld, the organisation provides a remedy.
- **Review** - there are opportunities for internal and external review and/or appeal about the department's response to the complaint, and complainants are informed about these avenues.
- **Accountability** – complaint management processes are clearly established and complaints and responses to them are recorded, monitored and reported to management.
- **Continuous Improvement** – complaint data will be analysed to identify and address recurring or systemic issues and used to improve service and program satisfaction and performance.

## 4 Procedures

### 4.1 Feedback

There are a number of ways people can provide feedback to the Association including:

- **Talk** directly to the staff member or volunteer you are in contact with or ask to speak with a more senior staff member.
- **Phone** our Administration team on 07 3253 3333
- **Email** us at [feedback@sportingwheelies.org.au](mailto:feedback@sportingwheelies.org.au).
- **Contact** us through the [Contact Us](#) page on the Sporting Wheelies website.
- **Submit** an online [compliment, or suggestion](#)
- **Drop** a written compliment, complaint or suggestion in the *Feedback Box* at Reception at 31 Dover St Albion.
- **Write** to us at PO Box 318, Newstead QLD 4006

### 4.2 Employment related complaints

For employment related complaints, these procedures supplement the grievance resolution procedures available under applicable Awards for employees.

### 4.3 Complaints

The initial complaint can be made anonymously, person, by phone, email, fax, on-line or in writing.

When a complaint is received, we will:

- attempt to resolve the complaint by talking to the complaint manager or business area, or if this is not satisfactory escalate the complaint in accordance with this Complaint Handling Policy
- acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days
- where a complaint is not fully understood, telephone the complainant to ensure we understand the issue correctly
- aim to resolve the complaint and respond to the complainant within:
  - 15 working days for minor complaints
  - up to 60 days for more complex complaints
- where timeframes cannot be met the complainant will be contacted to negotiate a revised response date and provide reasons for the delay

The person making the complaint, and any person with disability affected by issues raised in a complaint, will be included throughout the process to the extent possible.

A person with disability may be affected by an issue raised in a complaint, but may not necessarily be the person making the complaint directly to the Association. To ensure that the needs of people with disability are addressed in relation to complaints or issues that affect them, the Association will ensure that both the person involved in the complaint and any affected person with a disability are:

- appropriately involved in the resolution of the complaint, and
- kept informed of the progress of the complaint, including:
  - any action taken,
  - the reasons for decisions made, and
  - options to have decisions reviewed.

If a person with disability affected by an issue raised in a complaint has a decision maker, advocate or substituted or informal decision maker, these people may need to be and will be included as necessary and recognised in the complaints management and resolution process, depending on their role in the life of the person with disability.

Sporting Wheelies will take all necessary steps to ensure that the involvement of the person making the complaint, and any person with disability affected by issues raised in a complaint, are communicated throughout the complaint management and resolution process in an appropriate way that meets their needs.

Sporting Wheelies will as far as reasonable conduct a risk assessment, to assess and mitigate any negative impact a person with a disability may inadvertently be exposed to as a result of their complaint.

Sporting Wheelies complaints management systems supports a wide range of communication formats and languages appropriate to the needs of people with disability who engage with our services. This support ensures:

- our website is accessible to people using screen readers and or audio formats for people with sight impairment.
- our premises are accessible for wheelchairs and to people with mobility impairment.
- that we have mechanisms in place to help complainants with reading or writing difficulties to formulate and lodge complaints.
- we accept complaints on behalf of people with intellectual impairment from representatives.
- We provide a text telephone (TTY) service for people with a hearing impairment.

## 4.2 Making and receiving complaints

We anticipate that most complaints will be resolved informally.

### 4.2.1 Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally

#### Member complaint

- the complaint will be put in writing (complaint form) then given to a Member of the Executive Management Team, e.g. the Health and Fitness Centre Manager, Sport and Recreation Manager, Human Resource Manager, General Manager Services or CEO who will manage the complaint:
  - a complaint may be made anonymously by completing the Association's Complaint Form and ticking the section for Anonymous.
  - anonymous complaints may be sent to the Association by any means necessary, e.g. via a third party or mailed in.
- The manager will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:
  - assessing the seriousness of the complaint
  - assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
  - keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

### 4.2.2 All complaints

If the complaint is against a **staff member or a member of the leadership team**:

- The complaint will be put in writing (complaint form) then given to the head of services or administration to which that staff member or team leader belongs (complaints manager). They will manage the complaint.
- The manager will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:
  - assessing the seriousness of the complaint
  - assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
  - keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

If the complaint is against a **member of the executive management team**

- The complaint will be put in writing (complaint form) then given to the CEO (complaints manager). They will manage the complaint.
- The CEO will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:
  - assessing the seriousness of the complaint
  - assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
  - keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

If the complaint is against the CEO:

- The complaint will be put in writing (complaint form) then given to a member of the executive management team who will then pass the complaint to the Board (complaint manager). They will manage the complaint.
- The Board will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:
  - assessing the seriousness of the complaint
  - assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
  - keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

If the complaint is against the Board member:

- The complaint will be put in writing (complaint form) then given to a member of the executive management team who will then pass the complaint to the CEO and another designated Board member (complaint manager). They will manage the complaint.
- The CEO and the designated Board member will establish a process to deal with the complaint by:
  - assessing the seriousness of the complaint
  - assessing appropriateness of each option for resolution
  - keeping the resolution as close to the source of the complaint as possible

In some situations, having assessed the complaint, the complaints manager may direct that an alternative or external person is best suited to deal with a particular set of circumstances.

### **4.3 Assessing and referring complaints**

The complaint manager will assess and decide on the appropriate option for resolution of the complaint. Assessment of a complaint will be guided by Assessing and Referring Complaints Table.

The options for resolution of the complaint are:

#### **Informal options**

- self-resolution – handle the issue personally
- assisted resolution – seek to reach resolution with the help of a colleague, support person or complaint manager
- facilitation of communication, options and resolution
- mediation

#### **Formal options**

- Intervention Procedure
- Investigation Procedure
- System Improvement Procedure

Detailed information about these options is found in the 7.2b Assessing and Referring Complaints Table.

#### **4.4 Obtaining advice and delegation**

The complaint manager may obtain advice and, based on assessment, delegate the responsibility for handling the complaint to completion.

#### **4.5 Access to support**

The person who made the complaint and the person responding may access support. If meetings with the parties are held, the parties may have a support person present.

Persons under the age of 18 who make a complaint are to be offered the support of an adult support person. This may be a parent, guardian, friend or other significant person.

A complainant who may require support in putting their complaint in writing will be offered appropriate assistance.

#### **4.6 Natural justice integral to complaint management**

The principles of natural justice apply to all complaints. However, the extent to which principles of natural justice apply will depend upon the seriousness of the matter.

Natural justice is also known as procedural fairness and applies in situations where a decision is to be taken which could have a detrimental effect on the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of a person.

The more serious a complaint the more important it is to ensure procedural fairness. Procedural fairness requires that parties to a complaint are:

- treated impartially – this means that investigations are conducted impartially, and decisions are made without bias
- informed of concerns or allegations being made – this means that the person about whom the complaint is made will be informed of the content of the complaint and, in most cases of the identity of the complainant at a point in time when it is clear what the issues are and who needs to respond to them
- given the opportunity to respond – this means that where a concern is raised which may result in action being taken against a person, that person will normally be given an opportunity to respond
- informed of complaints process and review process

Other key aspects of procedural fairness are:

- timeliness
- records of complaints must be maintained

#### **4.7 Confidentiality**

To maintain confidentiality in so far as that is reasonable all participants in the process should restrict the information about the complaint to those who need to know of the complaint in order to:

- refer the complaint
- manage the complaint
- provide advice and support in the process
- review and decide upon appropriate complaint mechanisms
- manage the workplace
- apply the process

## 4.8 Record keeping

Complaint managers will keep written records of the complaint resolution process and outcomes.

- Complaint records will be filed and stored appropriately.
- Complaint data will be recorded on the centralised Complaints Management Register.
- Complaints will be categorised to enable the Association to identify policies, practices, facilities and areas that may be in need of review and that will enable improved customer focus and outcomes.

## 4.9 Reviews

Either party may request a review of a decision. The review will be undertaken by the decision maker's supervisor. Where that person should be excluded on the grounds of procedural fairness, the executive director of schools will nominate an appropriate person to conduct the review.

The request for a review must be made within 10 days from the date of the finding and detail the grounds for the request.

The person conducting the review will:

- review all relevant material
- make further inquiries, if necessary
- decide whether further action is necessary
- make a decision
- advise parties in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision

The person conducting the review will decide whether or not the decision that is being reviewed will be put on hold until the review is complete.

- There is no option of review if the matter has been resolved by agreement of the parties.
- The reviewer will record action taken.
- The reviewer's decision is final.

## 4.10 Accountability and continuous improvement

- Information from the Complaints Management Register will be regularly reviewed and analysed to assess its efficiency and effectiveness.
- Any actual or proposed improvements to services and programs will be followed up and acted on.
- Reports on complaint handling and resolution will be presented to the Board on a monthly basis.

### 4.10.1 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Commission

The Association is an NDIS provider that takes pride in delivering quality services to people with disability, but issues can occur. This Complaints Handling Policy aims to make the potential lodgement of a complaint relaxed and accessible in a supportive environment. We hope that should a situation arise a person will feel comfortable enough to raise an issue or concern via any of the outlines options, as this is often the best way to have your issue resolved quickly. However, if you are in New South Wales, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria or Tasmania, a complaint can be made to the NDIS Commission by:

- Phoning: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.
- National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a complaint contact form via their [website](#).

## 5 Other related policies and procedures

- 5.13 Anti-harassment Bullying and Discrimination policy
- 9.1 Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- 7.2a Feedback and Complaints Register
- 7.2b Feedback and Complaints Form
- 7.2c Assessing and Referring Complaints Table
- 8.15 Performance Management Policy
- 5.10 Child and Youth Risk Management Policy

## 6 Review process

Policy review frequency: <b>Every three years</b>	Responsibility for review: <b>EMT</b>
Review process: <b>EMT</b>	