

# COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

Approved by the Management Committee of U3A Ipswich & West Moreton Inc. on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## SCOPE

The Complaints and Grievance Policy applies to all members, committee members and volunteers of U3A Ipswich & West Moreton Inc. here-on referred to as U3A Ipswich. It is also available to members of the public in their interactions with U3A Ipswich, to committee members, tutors and volunteers during induction and is available electronically and in hard copy at the U3A Ipswich Office for any member to access.

## BACKGROUND

Conflict exists in every organisation and to a certain extent indicates a healthy exchange of ideas and creativity. However, counter-productive conflict can result in member dissatisfaction, reduced productivity for volunteers, increased volunteer and member turnover, increased stress, a hostile environment and possible litigation. A fair and consistent process for dispute resolution improves the culture and morale of an organisation.

## POLICY STATEMENT

U3A Ipswich is committed to an organisational culture that encourages collaboration, cooperation and communication. It is recognised, however, that on occasions inappropriate behaviours or matters may occur and that a complaints and grievance process may be required in order to resolve these matters. A dispute may arise from any action or inaction, behaviour, situation or decision impacting on a member that the member thinks is unfair or unjustified. It can relate to any aspect of a member or volunteer and can include but is not limited to member participation in courses and activities, volunteer engagement in delivery of services, general organisation environment, interpersonal conflicts or difficulties, safety in the organisation, misuse of resources or behaviour contrary to the Code of Conduct.

## PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL JUSTICE

- The person complained about is to be seen as acting in good faith while the complaint is investigated.
- Any complaint should be investigated promptly.
- The complaint must be put to the person complained against.
- The person complained against must be given the opportunity to provide a response to the complaint.

## **PROCEDURES**

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

1. A Negotiated Outcome, where the parties sort things out themselves.
2. A Mediated Outcome, where the parties use the services of a third person to help them arrive at their own agreement or
3. An Arbitrated Outcome where a decision maker outside the parties to a dispute determines how the dispute should be resolved. This may be internal to the organisation or may be taken to outside the organisation when there are legal obligations involved e.g. anti-discrimination or workplace health and safety legislation.

Every effort should be made to resolve the issue at the earliest possible stage and at each stage efforts will be made to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to resolve the issue amicably.

The flowchart in **Attachment A** will assist you with the Complaints and Grievance Procedure.

## **OUTCOMES**

### **Stage 1 Negotiated Outcome**

The parties to a dispute should seek to resolve the matter between themselves using different scenarios: an open discussion meeting between both parties, an invitation to write down discussion points from both parties, possible outcomes of resolving or not resolving issues.

Discussion points to include:-

1. Areas of concern
2. Reasons for their concerns
3. Suggestions on how these concerns could be resolved
4. Discuss positive outcomes if issues are resolved
5. Discuss outcomes if issues are not resolved

If issues are not resolved by this stage, list reasons why they could not be resolved so that the mediator can use as a starting point for Stage 2

### **Stage 2 Mediated Outcome**

A third party such as a fellow member, tutor or committee member may be asked to assist the parties to resolve the dispute. If the dispute is between two people where a power imbalance is present e.g. between a member and a tutor, or between a member and a committee member a person of higher authority, such as a coordinator or the President may be approached to mediate.

Discussion points to include:-

1. Mediator to meet with all parties separately to discuss issues, how they have tried to resolve them , why they could not be resolved , and their view on how it could be resolved
2. Mediator to meet with all parties together to give feed-back by reviewing all previous discussion points and putting forth ideas to resolve concerns.

If mediation is unsuccessful, a more formal process is required, go to Stage 3

### Stage 3 Arbitrated Outcome

1. The person making the complaint can initiate a more formal process. The complaint will be heard by the grievances sub-committee of the management committee. This sub-committee will consist of three members appointed by the management committee on a standing basis to hear complaints.
2. The complaint must be made in writing using the "*Formal Complaint or Grievance Form*" (**Attachment B**), with details of the event and suggestions for resolution.
3. The person complained against must be informed of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond. The sub-committee will meet with both parties either separately or together. If no agreement is reached, the sub-committee will make a determination which will be binding on both parties.
4. If either party remains dissatisfied the matter may be referred to the full management committee.
5. Nothing in this policy and procedure constrains the rights of a person to seek redress from outside the organisation in accordance with any relevant legislation.

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

[http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/qld/consol\\_act/aa1991204/](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/qld/consol_act/aa1991204/)

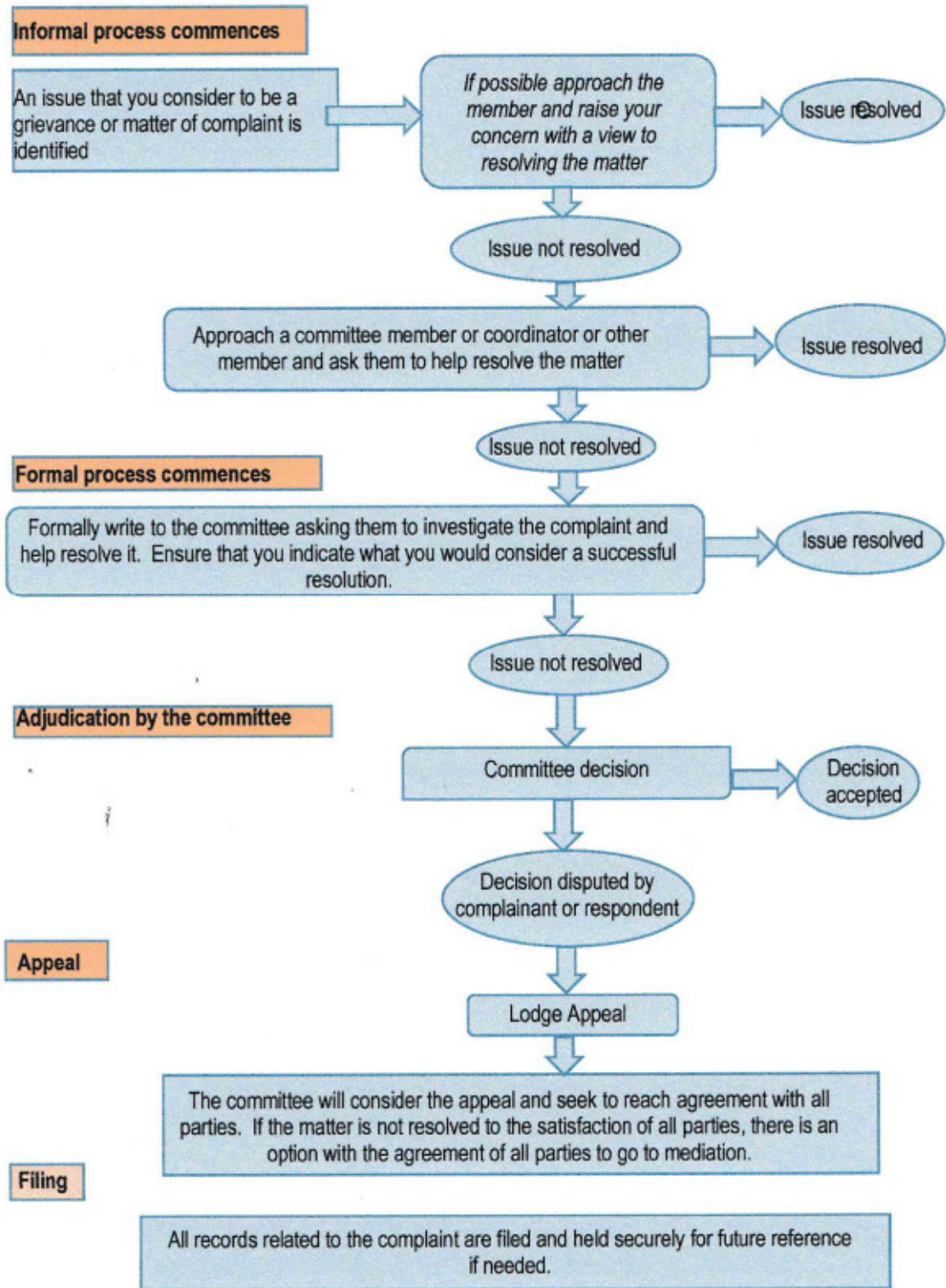
### AUTHORISATION

**President:** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Secretary:** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This policy is based on the work carried out by U3A Pine Rivers Inc. and U3A A.C.T. for which U3A Ipswich is very grateful.

**Complaints and Grievance Procedures Flowchart**



## U3A FORMAL COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE FORM

(*Complaint* is used throughout this form to mean either of the two types of concern identified above)

**Name of person lodging complaint:**

**Contact details: Phone**

**Email**

**Name or person or group against whom this complaint is lodged:**

**Please describe the details of the complaint** (Additional information can be attached to this document).

**Please indicate what you have already done to try to resolve this matter.**

(Please refer to informal processes identified in the *U3A-Ipswich & West Moreton Inc. Complaints and Grievances Policy*)

**What actions would indicate to you that the complaint has been resolved?**

**Additional information attached?** (Yes/No)

**Signed:**

**Name:**

**Date:**

Please forward this document to The Secretary U3A Ipswich & West Moreton Inc. at [contact@u3aipswich.org.au](mailto:contact@u3aipswich.org.au) or mail to 25 Eileen Street BOOVAL QLD 4304