



Complaints Management Policy

1. Policy Statement:

WAPA affirms that people have a right to question and influence decisions made and the actions of the Association. WAPA takes complaints seriously and manages them in a timely, transparent and meaningful way.

2. Principles:

WAPA's complaints management is governed by the following principles:

- complaints are best handled promptly and as close to the source as possible.
- complaints will be handled objectively and confidentially and complainants will not suffer any reprisals from making a complaint.
- complainants will be treated with respect and will be provided with clear explanations of WAPA's decisions and actions taken.
- complaints will wherever relevant, contribute to the continuous improvement of the WAPA's policies, rules and charters.

3. Objectives:

This policy aims to provide an accessible, responsive and timely complaints management process.

4. Scope:

This policy applies to complaints received by WAPA committee members. It does not apply to:

- minor issues raised with officials during competition or normal interaction,
- matters currently being dealt with or previously dealt with by a court or under Clause 22 "Discipline" of the WAPA Constitution.

5. Responsiveness:

Allegations of suspected harm or risk of harm to a member will be actioned immediately by urgent referral or reporting to the relevant person with authority to rectify the situation.

All complaints will be acknowledged and responded to as soon as practicable. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and complainants will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint and anticipated timeframes.

Complaints about breaches of the law must be given priority.

6. Assessment and Action:

In the first instance, the complaint must be assessed as to whether it is a club issue or a WAPA issue. In many cases it is not possible or appropriate for WAPA to intervene in conflicts between a Club and its members. In these instances WAPA should attempt to clarify to the person the relative powers and responsibilities of the Club and the Association, without taking sides in the absence of all the information. The WAPA President or Secretary should be consulted about the interpretation of the WAPA Constitution.

Often listening, empathising and acknowledging can be enough to resolve a complaint, but that should not be a substitute for action where action is warranted.

Where a complaint is received by a committee person or any other person acting in a role with the authority of the committee, and that person is unable or unsure of how to resolve the complaint, it should be escalated to the WAPA President who may consult further.

In the case of complaints that cannot be easily be resolved, the WAPA Disputes Resolution Process must be initiated.

Complaints about breaches of the law should be referred to the relevant authority, but only with the agreement of the WAPA President.

It is important that the privacy of the individuals concerned be maintained by not communicating the complaint beyond those people who can help resolve it, or need to be aware of it. Complaints may be discussed at committee meetings and minuted where it is in the interests of transparency that problems and actions are disclosed, however names should be omitted from the minutes in most cases. The risk of defamation must be considered.

Complainants must also be mindful that WAPA is run by volunteers. Frivolous, exaggerated or excessive complaints may be ignored.

7. Outcome and System Improvement:

In providing meaningful feedback on the outcome of a complaint, the WAPA will clearly explain the outcome, the reasons for the outcome and the factors considered in the decision-making process, either verbally or in writing. Written complaints must be responded to in writing and records kept.

An important element of the complaint management process is the identification and implementation of systemic improvements. Changes to rules, policies and charters may be appropriate and the committee must action the changes in a reasonable timeframe.