

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Members have a right to complain. The purpose of this policy is to provide members with a process to resolve a dispute or grievance they have arising out of their union membership and the ASU's commitment to complaint handling and creating a culture that encourages feedback and complaints. The Branch is committed to learning from any complaints in order to improve service to members.
- 1.2 This Policy aims to:
- 1.2.1 Put in place an open and transparent complaint handling system
 - 1.2.2 Specify key indicators to which we hold ourselves accountable
 - 1.2.3 Establish timeframes for resolving complaints
 - 1.2.4 Ensure the Branch handles complaints fairly and objectively
 - 1.2.5 Set out how the Branch records and analyses complaint data to identify where we can make improvements

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Branch officers and employees. It also applies to any third party contractors who may carry out services on the Branch's behalf.

3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 This policy is based on seven principles:
- 3.2 Commitment: We are committed to resolving complaints and have a culture that recognises an individual's right to complain. We value complaints and recognise them as being part of serving our members and improving service delivery.
- 3.3 Accessibility: People with a range of needs can easily complain and staff actively assist them to navigate the complaints process.
- 3.4 Transparency: We make it clear how to complain, where to complain and how the complaint will be handled. The steps taken to respond to a complaint are recorded and will stand up to scrutiny.
- 3.5 Objectivity and fairness: Complaints are dealt with courteously, impartially, within established timeframes and are assessed on merit.

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3.6 Privacy: Complaint information is handled according to privacy laws and other relevant legislation. We provide clear information about how we handle personal information. Complaint data is de-identified if reported on more widely.

3.7 Accountability: We are accountable internally and externally for our decision making and complaint handling performance. We provide explanations and reasons for decisions, and ensure that our decisions are subject to appropriate review processes.

3.8 Continuous improvement: Acting on, learning from and using complaint data helps us identify problems and improve services

4 PROCEDURE

4.1 A member can make a complaint in a number of ways:

Mail: Branch Secretary, Level 1, 116 Queensberry Street, Carlton South Vic 3053

Telephone: (03) 9342 3400

Email: info@asuvictas.com.au

In person: Level 1, 116 Queensberry Street, Carlton South Vic

Internet: <https://www.asuvictas.com.au/contact/>

Any financial member of the branch who has been affected by a decision or action (including a failure to make a decision or take action) can make a complaint.

4.2 Complaint handling procedure

Overview

We take a four-tiered approach to complaint handling, as follows:

1. frontline resolution: frontline staff (organiser, industrial support officer) receive the complaint, assess it, and resolve it immediately, if possible
2. investigation, if required: if frontline staff cannot resolve the complaint, they will refer it to a relevant line manager for investigation
3. internal review: if the member is aggrieved with the process or outcome of the frontline resolution/investigation, they can request an internal review
4. access to branch executive review: if the member is aggrieved with the process or outcome of the internal review, a three person member of the Branch Executive will be formed to review the complaint.

Procedures

Frontline resolution

- We will acknowledge all complaints within 10 days of receipt.
- Frontline staff will receive the complaint.
- Frontline staff will clarify the complaint and the outcome the complainant is seeking.
- Frontline staff will assess the complaint to determine how it should be dealt with.

Investigation

- If frontline staff cannot resolve the complaint, it will be assigned to a relevant line manager for investigation.

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- The manager handling the complaint will advise the complainant who the contact person is and how long it will take to respond to the complaint.
- Complaint handling staff will aim to resolve all complaints within 28 days.
- If it takes longer than 28 days to resolve a complaint, the contact person will contact the member prior to or at this time and explain why.
- Complaints that are not resolved within 28 days may be escalated if necessary to ensure that a resolution is expedited.
- The officer responsible for handling the complaint will write to the complainant to advise them of the outcome. The outcome correspondence will contain reasons for the decision made and the contact information for the responsible officer.
- The officer handling the complaint may contact the complainant to discuss the outcome of their complaint prior to sending the outcome correspondence.

Internal review

- The Branch Secretary or Branch Executive President is responsible for internal reviews – an internal review should be escalated to an officer not involved in the original decision/action/investigation.
- Internal review will aim to resolve all complaints within 28 days.
- If it takes longer than 28 days to resolve a complaint, the contact person will contact the member prior to or at this time and explain why.
- The officer responsible for handling the complaint will write to the complainant to advise them of the outcome. The outcome correspondence will contain reasons for the decision made and the contact information for the responsible officer.
- The officer handling the complaint may contact the complainant to discuss the outcome of their complaint prior to sending the outcome correspondence.
- An outcome letter signed by the senior officer responsible for the internal review will be provided to the complainant at the conclusion of every internal review.
- The outcome letter will advise the complainant of any avenues of branch executive review options available in relation to the matter.

Complaints about allegations of corrupt conduct

- Where a complaint involves allegations of corrupt conduct, it will be handled in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Policy or Whistleblower Policy.

4.3 Remedies

Where we have found that we have made an error, we will take steps to redress the situation. Possible remedies include, but are not limited to:

- an explanation of why the error occurred and the steps taken to prevent it happening again
- a reversal of a decision
- disciplinary action taken against a staff member
- providing the means of redress requested by the complainant.

Where we identify an error, we will consider offering a genuine apology to the member, in addition to any other remedies offered, irrespective of whether the complainant specifically requests this.

4.4 Privacy

When gathering information to respond to a complaint, we will only:

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- use it to deal with the complaint or to address systemic issues arising from the complaint
- share it with staff on a need to know basis.

4.5 Recording complaints

All complaints are recorded centrally by Branch Executive Assistant.

We will analyse our complaint data and provide regular reports to senior leadership and Branch Executive on how we can reduce complaints and improve services. Salaried elected officers are responsible for acting on the recommendations in these reports.

5 DEFINITIONS

Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of an action taken, decision made, or service provided by the Branch or its contractor, or a delay or failure in providing a service, taking an action, or making a decision by the Branch or its contractor.

Branch

Australian Services Union, Victorian & Tasmanian, Authorities & Services Branch

Elected Officials

Branch Executive (Committee of Management) which includes Branch President, Vice Presidents and industry representatives and salaried Elected Officer positions of Branch Secretary and Branch Executive President

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

- Code of Conduct Policy,
- Branch Whistleblower Policy
- Conflict of Interest and Gift Policy
- Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act
- Australian and Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union Rules
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

7 REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed after a period not exceeding three years. The branch secretary is responsible for overseeing the review.

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