

7. Grievance Process

Introduction.

The North Gold Coast Sub-Branch Inc RSL is aware that there may be times when members need to file an official complaint about unjust treatment, harassment, and/or health and safety concerns involving places and/or times when the Sub-Branch gathers or possibly at other times. This grievance procedure policy aims to clearly outline the process for these instances to ensure that all our members are heard and treated equally.

Purpose

The purpose of this process is to provide:

- A formal process to resolve individual grievances and/ or complaints,
- An effective and efficient means of resolving concerns, and
- Guidance for members of the North Gold Coast RSL Sub-Branch Inc.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all persons using this process to:

- Act in good faith.
- The North Gold Coast RSL Sub-Branch is committed to promoting a culture of open and honest communication at all levels of the organisation.
- Raise any grievance or complaint as soon as practical after the alleged behavior or incident has occurred.
- Attempt to resolve the matter promptly.

Principles of Natural Justice

Principles of natural justice means that:

- proceedings should be conducted honestly, fairly, without bias and as early as possible;
- the party(s) against whom the grievance/complaint is made should be provided with details of the allegation(s) and provided the opportunity to provide their side of the story before resolution is attempted; and
- all parties involved in the grievance/complaint are entitled to have a representative present at all stages of the process.

Examples of Grievances/Complaints

Examples of the types of grievances/complaints that this process covers are as follows:

- a. bullying/harassment;
- b. failure by Board member(s) to perform their duties;
- c. suspected criminal offence by member of the organization;

- d. behavior of a Sub-Branch member is contrary to the Sub-Branch Charter and values; or
- e. suspected undeclared conflict of interest for a member of the Board.

Filing a Grievance.

When filing a grievance, members have the option of reporting their complaints to the Secretary or to the President. In both cases, members will be required to complete and file a Grievance Complaint Form.

Once the complaint has been submitted Secretary and/or President, members have the right to attend meetings with a witness, appeal decisions and depending on the severity of the complaint, refuse to attend Sub-Branch meetings/events until the grievance is resolved.

When a grievance is filed against another member, the accused also reserves the right to:

- View and request a copy of the official grievance complaint.
- Formally respond to the complaint.
- Attend all formal meetings with a witness.
- Appeal the final decision.

Sub-Branch Responsibilities

It is the North Gold Coast Sub-Branch Inc RSL responsibility to:

- Accept and thoroughly investigate all grievance complaints.
- Ensure that the grievance is resolved within 10 days, depending on the severity of each case.
- Treat all parties fairly throughout the grievance process.
- Adhere to the no-retaliation policy when members file a complaint against the Board.
- Organize mediation meetings with the appropriate parties.
- Practice a high level of confidentiality throughout the grievance process.
- Accept and investigate all appeals.
- Ensure that the final decision is implemented.
- Maintain accurate and comprehensive records of each grievance.

Procedure

The Secretary and President should follow the following procedure:

- a. Ask the member to fill out a grievance form.
- b. Talk with the member to ensure the matter is understood completely.
- c. Provide the member who faces allegations with a copy of the grievance.
- d. Organize mediation procedures (e.g., arranging a formal meeting).
- e. Investigate the matter or ask the help of an investigator when needed.
- f. Keep members informed throughout the process.
- g. Communicate the formal decision to all members involved.
- h. Take actions to ensure the formal decision is adhered to.

- i. Deal with appeals by gathering more information and investigating further.
- j. Keep accurate records.

Dispute Resolution

Members shall initially attempt to informally resolve any grievance or complaint.

The grievance procedure set out in this part applies to disputes between:

- a. a member and another member; or
- b. a member and the Sub-Branch Board.

The parties to the dispute must meet and discuss the matter in dispute and if possible, resolve the dispute within 14 days after the dispute comes to the attention of all parties.

If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the meeting, or if a party fails to attend that meeting, then the parties must within 10 days, hold a meeting in the presence of a mediator.

Where the member raising the grievance or complaint is not satisfied with the response from the Sub-Branch Board or they believe that the complaint/grievance will not be handled correctly due to the complaint or grievance being against a member of the Board, they may raise the grievance directly to the RSL QLD District Branch.

Where the individual raising the grievance/complaint remains unsatisfied with the response from RSL QLD District Branch officials or feels that there may be a conflict of interest, they may raise the matter with RSL QLD State Office.

This may only occur after all avenues have been exhausted at both the Sub-Branch and District Branch levels have been exhausted.

Mediator

Where a mediator is used in the grievance/complaint resolution process, the mediator cannot be a party in the dispute.

The mediator must be:

- a. a person chosen by agreement between the parties; or
- b. in the absence of agreement where the dispute is between two (2) members of the Sub-Branch, a person appointed by the Board of the Sub-Branch

The mediator, in conducting mediation, must:

- a. give the parties to the mediation process every opportunity to be heard;
- b. all due consideration by all parties of any evidence submitted by any party; and
- c. ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties to the dispute.

The mediator must not determine the dispute but rather mediate the resolution between both parties.

Confidentiality

All grievances/complaints will be treated with confidentiality by all parties involved.

The only exception to this is where the grievance/complaint is related to a criminal offence, where the necessary authorities will be informed of any illegal activity.

Policy Violations

If a member is found to have violated the grievance procedure policy, they will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The severity of each case will determine the type of disciplinary action, which may include a verbal or written warning, suspension and/or termination.

If an member is unequivocally proven to have committed the grievance he/she is being accused of, The North Gold Coast Sub-Branch Inc RSL will adhere to its Constitution to ensure that the matter is resolved justly and according to The North Gold Coast Sub-Branch Inc RSL guidelines.

Records

Any records associated with the resolution of a grievance/complaint will be maintained in line with the North Gold Coast RSL Sub-Branch Record Management System and Sub-Branch guidelines.

Grievance/Complaint Form

MEMBER'S DETAILS

Members Name: _____

Date: _____

Contact details
(Phone or Email): _____

NATURE OF THE GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT

My grievance is or I am
complaining about:

DETAILS OF THE GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT

Please provide specific details of the grievance/complaint, including when, what, who, how, where and identify any witnesses (if you need more space, please attach another piece of paper)

HOW HAS THIS AFFECTED YOU?

Please advise how you have been affected:

Please list other ways you have attempted to resolve this:

OUTCOMES / RESOLUTION

I am looking for the
following resolution/s to this
grievance/complaint:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please give this completed form to the Secretary/Executive Member of the Sub-Branch Board. Please note that grievances/complaints will be dealt with according to our Grievance and Dispute Resolution Process and will be kept confidential.