

## WARRINGAH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION MEMBER PROTECTION COMPLAINTS PROCESS



WHA aims to support all players so that they may participate in a safe environment, develop friendships and have fun. No person should be subjected to discrimination, harassment or abuse. If you believe this behaviour is occurring, you have every right to make a complaint.

Member clubs within WHA may have their own policies for complaint handling – please check with your Club Contact or contact your club President.

### **Step 1: Self-management**

The person with the complaint tries to resolve the problem directly with the person who has upset them. Self-management of complaints can quickly resolve many lower level and ‘accidental’ issues.

### **Step 2: Obtain information and support**

The WHA Member Protection Information Officer is available to provide assistance, to listen and provide options to the person with the complaint if the complainant:

- has not been able to sort out the problem themselves
- is not sure how to handle the problem
- wants to talk about the problem and get some more information about what to do
- continues to experience the problem after approaching the other person or people involved.

The name and contact details for the WHA MPIO can be obtained by contacting [info@warringah-hockey.com](mailto:info@warringah-hockey.com)

The MPIO will:

- Take confidential notes about your complaint
- Try to find out the facts of your complaint
- Ask how you would like the problem to be resolved and if you need support
- Seek to provide different options for you to resolve the problem
- Act as a support person, if you wish
- Refer you to an appropriate person (e.g. a mediator) to help you resolve the problem, if appropriate
- Inform the relevant government authorities and/or police, if required by law to do so
- Where possible and appropriate maintain confidentiality

*The MPIO is NOT a person who investigates matters, advises or advocates for the complainant*

### **Step 3: Decide how to resolve the problem**

Where possible, less serious complaints should be resolved informally at the level they occur (e.g. club). After talking with the MPIO, you may decide:

- There is no problem
- The problem is minor, and you do not wish to take the matter forward
- To try and resolve the problem yourself, with or without a support person
- To resolve the problem with the help of someone impartial, such as a mediator
- To resolve the matter through a formal process.

### **Step 4: Formal internal process (written complaint and internal investigation)**

If the complaint has not been resolved, the person with the complaint may decide to write a formal complaint to the management committee of the club (if it is a club matter) or WHA Board.

A formal procedure is most appropriate when:

- matters have not been satisfactorily resolved at the informal level
- matters involve serious allegations
- the other person denies the allegations
- the person or people being complained about are more senior than the person with the complaint

A formal internal complaint usually involves an investigation of the complaint and then recommendations about outcomes.

The Complaint Handlers may decide that an external body must be consulted for advice during the internal process e.g. Hockey NSW.

### **Step 5: An appeals process**

If the person with the complaint or the person complained about is not happy with the process or outcome of the investigation, or any recommended mediation does not result in a mutually acceptable solution, then either party is entitled to appeal.

In an appeals process, the complaint is reheard by a different investigator/decision maker and the decision is reviewed. A person has the right to one internal appeal.

### **Step 6: External options**

Escalating a complaint to an external agency is a good option when your organisation's policies or constitution directs that this type of complaint be dealt with at the state or national level, and:

- There is a possible conflict of interest (or close relationship) between the people on the management committee and any of the parties to the complaint
- It is beyond the skills of the committee and specific expertise or experience may be required to manage the complaint
- The complaint has not been able to be resolved at the club level
- The issue is more serious than first thought

The complainant can contact an external authority (e.g. an anti-discrimination agency) for advice or to lodge a complaint at any time during the complaint process. Similarly, it should be noted that the Complaint Handlers may also choose to contact an external authority at any stage.