



GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1 Commitment to solving complaints.

Members and visitors are vital for our association, so it follows that member and visitor satisfaction is of extreme importance to the future of our association.

At POWERtalk Australia Inc we value our members and visitors and their feedback. All feedback is of value to us – whether positive or negative – and we greatly appreciate that a member or visitor who has had an unacceptable experience is one who must be taken seriously.

POWERtalk Australia Inc regards a complaint as an opportunity to improve our association. The complainant requires satisfaction with an acceptable remedy to the issue.

In order that the situation is handled to the satisfaction of the complainant, the following policy has been structured.

2. Scope of policy

This policy is intended to assist members: and visitors in making a complaint; and Club, Council and Association Board members dealing with complaints to the satisfaction of all involved.

3. Publicising this policy

This policy will be published on the Association website and added as an appendix to the Board Policy Book. It can be forwarded by post if requested.

4. How complaints may be made

Complaints may be made in a variety of ways through a variety of channels for example:

- In person to any Club, Council or Association Officer.
- By telephone to any Club, Council or Association Officer.
- By email to the Association President
president@powertalkaustralia.org.au

5. How we handle minor complaints

Complainants must always be thanked for bringing the matter to our attention. The member receiving the complaint must ensure that the complainant feels validated when making the complaint. Members are authorised to immediately clear up the error/problem if of a minor nature and, therefore, ensure the complaint is settled as soon as possible after it is made.

Email complaints will receive a response on the same day – even if that is only to make an appointment to discuss the matter.

6 How we will handle serious complaints

The definition of a serious complaint involves a breach of confidentiality, ethics, criminal codes, harassment or bullying, or any other complaint deemed above the scope of a simple issue. The initial respondent will ensure the complainant is



listened to, and should the complaint be serious, it will be referred to a Club, Council or Association Board member.

The Board member must remain calm and objective and will make every effort to gather as many facts as possible from the complainant. At this point, the respondent must assess the level of distress being caused to the complainant and respond appropriately.

An adequate amount of time must be allocated for this process, which is best carried out by appointment to allow the respondent to concentrate fully on the complaint without distractions. At the end of this interview, the respondent will make time for a follow-up contact with the complainant to fill them in on the progress of the complaint resolution process. Communication is of high importance in ensuring the complainant can see that their complaint is being taken seriously.

Further investigation must then be carried out to assess the validity of the complaint; any other complicating or contributing factors that may not have been addressed by the complainant; the follow-on effects of the action taken at the time; and possible consequences of options being considered as resolutions to the complaint.

Should the complaint contain legal implications, legal advice must be sought. Depending on the complaint's nature, the cost of such advice may be covered by member-to-member insurance.

An appropriate response to the complaint will be tailored specifically to that complaint. If a contributing factor is found to be a member's responsibility, it will need to be addressed appropriately and with haste to prevent recurrence.

In cases where resolution is unable to be reached, disputes between members (in their capacity as members), or disputes between a member or members and the Association, are to be referred to an approved community mediation centre for mediation. If a dispute is not resolved by mediation within 3 months of the referral, the dispute is to be referred to arbitration [as per Bylaw requirements].

7. Responding to and settling a complaint

Approval for response to minor complaints is not required, as members are all authorised to deal with minor complaints.

All complaints must, however, be reviewed at a Board meeting to evaluate the procedure and tailor the processes to ensure future complaints of this nature do not occur.

Serious complaint resolution must be approved by the Association President and if having legal repercussions must also have legal advice. The Association President, in alignment with such advice, must approve resolutions from serious complaints for which legal advice has been required.



The complainant will be phoned to notify them of the outcome, which will also be placed in writing, and either emailed or posted to them.

The complainant must fill in a grievance form stating they are satisfied with the outcome of the complaint. If they are not satisfied, a further interview may be arranged with the President in order that the issue may be further addressed to their satisfaction (within reason).

At the conclusion of the complaint, a small thank you note is to be sent to the complainant thanking them for their input and assistance with addressing the issue.

8 Our timeframes

Initial response to complaints received must take place within 24 hours of receipt of the letter, phone call, or email. This response will be to organise a time for an interview by telephone or email.

Full resolution of minor issues should take place on the same day.

More serious issues will require more time. Most complaints should be resolved within 5 business days, but more complex complaints involving legal ramifications can be drawn out. For complaints that take longer than 30 days to address, the complainant should be contacted and updated at a minimum every 4 weeks, either by telephone or email.

In any case, regardless of the complexity of the complaint, all complaints are treated as a matter of priority.

9. Confidentiality

All complaints are subject to constraints under confidentiality restrictions. The complaint's details will remain confidential and will not be shared without signed permission.

The details of the complaint will only be shared within the confines of the Board and are not to be discussed outside the Board, unless expert advice (e.g. legal or industry regulatory body) is being sought. Any consulted body will also be bound by a confidentiality agreement.

10 Recording complaint data

All complaints are to be recorded on a grievance form and signed by the complainant at the time of submission.

The grievance form must contain contact details of the person who made the complaint; all persons involved in the grievance, full details of the complaint itself (including date and time) and the signature of the complainant.

The resolution, acknowledgement of acceptability of the resolution, signatures of both the complainant and the Board member who achieved the resolution, and the grievance evaluation must appear on the grievance settlement form.



11. Continuous improvement

The President is to ensure all resolved complaints are reviewed at the next Board meeting, so that the members all learn by reflecting on the course of action and the outcome.

Recommendations for improvement are to be taken very seriously. Updating of procedures or policies may be necessary in response to a complaint, and this will be assessed and a ruling re implementation will be made at the Board meeting at which the complaint is reviewed.

In addition to reviewing the processes, the complaint handling performance will be reviewed to assess whether the best course of action was taken or if any areas could have been handled better to expedite satisfactory resolution, thus providing a learning opportunity for all members.