

# Australian War Widows (SA) Inc

## Complaints and Dispute Resolution Policy

### 1. Introduction

The Australian War Widows (SA) Inc. (AWW) is dedicated to providing members with support and a friendly, supportive environment. It is important to us that you are satisfied with these objectives. However, in spite of our best efforts, there may be occasions when our service does not meet the high standards we set out for ourselves, or that you as a member might reasonably expect of us. This complaints and dispute resolution policy governs how we handle complaints that you may wish to raise with us in these situations.

#### 1.1. Policy Objective

This policy applies to all members, staff and volunteers. The objective of this policy is to embed an effective, fair and efficient complaint handling process.

#### 1.2. Organisational Commitment

AWW expects its members, staff and volunteers to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling and to providing the necessary support and resources for that process.

#### 1.3. Accessibility

We will ensure that our complaints handling processes are easily accessible to all who may wish to make a complaint, including through:

- making this policy freely available on our website;
- providing free copies of this policy on request;
- cross-referencing this policy in other AWW documents, including our Constitution and our Code of Conduct Policy;
- providing a range of methods through which complaints can be lodged, including online, by phone, email and post.

### 2. Guiding Principles

Our complaint handling system is modelled on principles of fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and integration into organisational culture.

If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making or in the resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent.

#### 2.1. What happens when a Complaint is received?

When a complaint is received:

- We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.
- we will listen to or consider the complaint, provide relevant information to the complainant and take all responsible steps to resolve the complaint;

- we will access and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If the matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately;
- we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf;
- we will accurately record the details of the complaint, give it fair and genuine consideration and seek to achieve a fair outcome;
- we will investigate and enquire into the complaint within a reasonable timeframe, having regard to the nature and complexity of the complaint;
- we will keep you informed of any progress and seek to resolve the complaint quickly and directly in a way that is fair and reasonable;
- if appropriate, we will recommend changes or actions to remedy the situation to prevent the situation recurring;
- we will promptly inform you of the outcome of the complaint and the reasons for the outcome;
- we will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

## **2.2. Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints**

We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect efficiency of our complaint process. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us in accordance with this policy.

## **2.3. Complaint handling**

If a person is dissatisfied with a decision or outcome, we will inform them that they can:

- request to have the outcome or decision reviewed internally;
- If deemed appropriate the Committee can, at their discretion engage an external mediator.

## **3. Review**

This policy will be regularly reviewed to assess its performance and updated to ensure it complies with the relevant laws and statutes. A copy of this policy is available for download on our website ([www.warwidowssa.org.au](http://www.warwidowssa.org.au)), and we are happy to provide copies on request.