

Hunter Region Landcare Network Inc.  
PO Box 447  
Maitland NSW 2320

Mob: 0478 214 498  
Email: [hunterregionlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:hunterregionlandcare@gmail.com)  
[www.hunterlandcare.org.au](http://www.hunterlandcare.org.au)

ABN: 99 087 274 913



## Grievance Policy

**INTRODUCTION** This document provides information on handling grievances at Hunter Region Landcare Network, including how to make a complaint, how to deal with a complaint / grievance and how to support persons through the grievance process. It is inevitable that conflict can occur in the workplace. It is important that there are established procedures to deal with such occurrences quickly to protect the people involved and also to protect our organisation.

**WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?** A complaint is an expression of concern, dissatisfaction or frustration with the quality or delivery of a service, a policy or procedure, or the conduct of another person.

**WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?** Any person can make a complaint. This can include staff, volunteers, customers, community members or committee members.

**HOW CAN COMPLAINTS BE MADE?** Most complaints are reported as verbal grievances about minor matters that can be resolved informally. Ideally, these should be resolved informally with the relevant person.

If there is a feeling that the complaint needs to be formalised, the complaint must be lodged within 20 business days of the source of the cause or trigger for the complaint.

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A COMPLAINT IS RECEIVED?** With an initial complaint, the Chairperson is able to provide initial advice on how an issue is to be dealt with + to assist with resolution, if necessary.

If a formal complaint is lodged, the Chairperson or Network Committee will determine whether it is a matter that can be resolved informally, or whether it should be dealt with by the Network Committee. The Chairperson will set up a process to facilitate this, if necessary. After initial consultation with differing parties, the Network Committee will convene a meeting of the persons involved. All parties are entitled to have a support person present including the Chairperson (if desired). Detailed minutes of these meetings together with the original complaint and other documentation will be kept. Copies of documents related to all formal complaints will be kept securely by Hunter Region Landcare Network.

All parties to a complaint must treat the matter confidentially. This means

that all parties ensure that information is restricted to those engaged in the resolution.

The person managing the complaint is responsible for monitoring the well-being of all parties involved in, or affected by, the complaint. Complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible. It is reasonable that informal attempts to resolve a complaint should take place within a week.

**DEFINITIONS** **Grievance**—an actual or perceived wrong considered as grounds for complaint.

**Complaint**—an expression of concern, dissatisfaction or frustration with the quality or delivery of service, a policy or procedure, or the conduct of another person.

**Harassment**—any form of ongoing behaviour that is not welcome, not asked for or not returned, and that offends, intimidates or humiliates a person. It includes sexual harassment.

**Workplace Bullying**—an employee is subject to workplace bullying if the person is subjected to repeated behaviour by another person, including the employee’s supervisor, a co-worker, committee / Board member or a member of the community that:

- is unwelcome + unsolicited;
- the person considers to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening; and
- a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

#### AUTHORISATION:

This version was approved on: 19/04/2018  
This version takes effect on: 19/04/2018  
Authorised by: The Network Committee  
Chairperson: Leslie Pearson  
Chairperson signature:

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of December 2013. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Landcare NSW or the user’s independent advisor.

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