

AUSTRALIAN CHEER UNION LTD

NATIONAL MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

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REVIEW HISTORY OF ACU MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY (FORMERLY ACSA MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY)

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date reviewed</i>	<i>Date endorsed</i>	<i>Content reviewed/purpose</i>
<i>One</i>	<i>5 November 2022</i>	<i>5 November 2022</i>	<i>Final for release to ACSA members</i>
<i>Two</i>	<i>November 2023</i>	<i>November 2023</i>	<i>Review for release to ACSA Members</i>
<i>Two . one</i>	<i>18 February 2025</i>	<i>18 February 2025</i>	<i>Adopted by ACU for ACU members</i>

PREFACE

Member Protection is a very important part of the Australian Cheer Union's activities. The ability for us all to compete, officiate and enjoy our sport requires a clear awareness of the responsibility we have to ourselves, our members, and others around us.

Australian Cheer Union has formalised these basic tenets into a Member Protection Policy:

We seek to prevent all forms of harassment, discrimination, and abuse and to promote positive behaviour and values.

We will not tolerate inappropriate or unlawful behaviour.

We expect that everyone associated with Australian Cheer Union will abide by the policy's codes of behaviour

We will ensure that disciplinary action is taken against individuals if there is a breach of the policy.

On first glance, members may view the policy as being merely a formality. However, I commend the document to you as a blueprint for the way we participate in our sport. Particularly important is the responsibility for children under our care and now there are specific requirements for gym owners, coaches and others working with children.

No matter what your role is in cheer sport please review this Member Protection Policy thoroughly. It is very important.

We welcome your feedback which can be sent to the Secretary.

Dena Piro

Secretary

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Australian Cheer Union

14 November 2022

PART A: NATIONAL MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

o I. Introduction

Nothing is more important than safety. Part of the Australian Cheer Union (ACU) mission is to ensure that every person involved in our sport is treated with respect and dignity, and is safe and protected from abuse. In order to support this objective, we need everybody to be aware of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities, and to be active in making our sport a safe space for all. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

Australian sporting organisations have legal obligations under Australian law regarding harassment, discrimination, and child protection. We also have moral obligations in relation to establishing standards of appropriate member behaviour and providing safe, respectful, and appropriate training and sporting environments.

ACU endeavours to conduct all activities in a positive environment where participants have equal rights and opportunities to foster and develop their passion for the sport of cheer sport. Through this Member Protection Policy and in all other areas ACU will continue to work to promote positive and respectful behaviours and to meet obligations relating to harassment, discrimination, and child protection

2. Purpose of this policy

This National Member Protection Policy ("policy") aims to assist ACU ("our", "us" or "we") to uphold its core values and create a safe, fair, and inclusive environment for everyone associated with our sport. It sets out our commitment to ensure that every person bound by the policy is treated with respect and dignity and protected from discrimination, harassment, and abuse. It also seeks to ensure that everyone involved in our sport is aware of their key legal and ethical rights and responsibilities, as well as the standards of behaviour expected of them.

The attachments to this policy describe the practical steps we will take to eliminate discrimination, harassment, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour from our sport. As part of this commitment, the policy allows ACU to take disciplinary action against any person or organisation bound by this policy if they breach the policy.

This policy has been endorsed by the ACU Board and has been incorporated into our constitution. The policy starts on 1 December 2022 and will operate until replaced. As of 18 February 2025 this policy was adopted by ACU and will operate until replaced.

The current policy and its attachments can be obtained from our website at:
www.australiancheerunion.org.

3. Who is bound by this policy

This policy applies everyone involved in any activity as a member or authorised representative of ACU, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity including:

- persons appointed or elected to ACU boards, committees and sub-committees;
- employees, contractors and volunteers of ACU;

- members of ACU (including all recognised membership categories, whether voting or non-voting);
- support personnel, including managers, physiotherapists, psychologists, masseurs, sports trainers and others;
- coaches and assistant coaches;
- judges and other officials;
- athletes;
- athletes, coaches, officials and other personnel participating in events and activities, including competitions, camps and training sessions, held or sanctioned by ACU; and
- any other person including spectators and parents/guardians.

Club and event producer membership (whether voting or non-voting) will be conditional on the club or event producer implementing and complying with this Policy. ACU may refuse to admit or terminate a member that fails to comply with its obligations under this Policy.

This policy will continue to apply to a person even after he or she has stopped their association or employment with ACU, if disciplinary action against that person has begun.

o **4. ACU's responsibilities**

ACU must:

- adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- ensure that this policy is enforceable;
- publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any breaches of the policy;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- deal with any complaints made under this policy in an appropriate manner;
- deal with any breaches of this policy in an appropriate manner;
- recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
- ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to all people and organisations to whom this policy applies;
- use appropriately trained people to receive and manage complaints and allegations of inappropriate behaviour;
- monitor and review this policy at least annually.

o **5. Individual responsibilities**

Individuals bound by this policy must:

- make themselves aware of the contents of this policy;
- comply with all relevant provisions of the policy, including the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy;
- consent to the screening requirements set out in this policy, and any state/territory Working with Children Checks if the person holds or applies for a role that involves regular

unsupervised contact with a child or young person under the age of 18 or where otherwise required by law;

- place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- treat other people with respect;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour;
- follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour; and
- comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this policy.

6. Position statement: Child protection

ACU is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people who participate in our sport or access our services. We support the rights of the child and will act at all times to ensure that a child-safe environment is maintained.

We acknowledge the valuable contribution made by our staff, members and volunteers and we encourage their active participation in providing a safe, fair, and inclusive environment for all participants.

▪ 6.1. Identify and analyse risk of harm

We will develop and implement a risk management strategy, including a review of our existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe our organisation is and to identify any additional steps we can take to minimise and prevent the risk of harm to children because of the actions of an employee, volunteer, or another person.

▪ 6.2. Develop codes of behaviour

We will develop and promote a code of behaviour that sets out the conduct we expect of adults when they deal and interact with children involved in our sport, especially those in our care. We will also implement a code of behaviour to promote appropriate conduct between children.

These codes will clearly describe professional boundaries, ethical behaviour, and unacceptable behaviour. (Refer to the attachments in Part B of this policy.)

▪ 6.3. Choose suitable employees and volunteers

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our organisation engages suitable and appropriate people to work with children, especially those in positions that involve regular unsupervised contact with children. This will include using a range of screening measures.

We will ensure that Working with Children Checks are conducted for all employees and volunteers who work with children, where an assessment is required by law. If a criminal history report is obtained as part of their screening process, we will handle this information

confidentially and in accordance with the relevant legal requirements. (Refer to the attachments in Part C of this policy.)

▪ **6.4. Support, train, supervise and enhance performance**

We will ensure that all our employees and volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision, support, and training. Our goal is to develop their skills and capacity and to enhance their performance so we can maintain a child-safe environment in our sport.

▪ **6.5. Empower and promote the participation of children**

We will encourage children and young people to be involved in developing and maintaining a child-safe environment for our sport.

▪ **6.6. Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect**

We will ensure that all our employees and volunteers are able to identify and respond appropriately to children at risk of harm and that they are aware of their responsibilities under state laws to make a report if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected. (Refer to the attachments in Part E of this policy.)

Further, if any person believes that another person or organisation bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child, or is in breach of this policy, he or she may make an internal complaint to us. (Refer to the attachments in Part D of this policy.)

7. Position statement: Taking images of children

There is a risk that Images of children may be used inappropriately or illegally. ACU requires that individuals and associations, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own. They should also make sure the parent/guardian understands how the image will be used.

To respect people's privacy, we do not allow camera phones, videos and cameras to be used inside changing areas, showers and toilets which we control or are used in connection with our sport.

When using a photo of a child, we will not name or identify the child or publish personal information, such as residential address, email address or telephone number, without the consent of the child's parent/guardian. We will not provide information about a child's hobbies, interests, school, or the like, as this can be used by paedophiles or other persons to "groom" a child.

We will only use images of children that are relevant to our sport and we will ensure that they are suitably clothed in a manner that promotes participation in the sport. We will seek permission from the parents/guardians of the children before using the images. We require our member associations and clubs to do likewise.

○ **8. Position statement: Anti-discrimination and harassment**

ACU is committed to providing an environment in which people are treated fairly and equitably and that is, as far as practicable, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

We recognise that people may not be able to enjoy themselves or perform at their best if they are treated unfairly, discriminated against, or harassed.

▪ **8.1. Discrimination**

Unlawful discrimination involves the less favourable treatment of a person on the basis of one or more of the personal characteristics protected by state or federal anti-discrimination laws.

The personal characteristics protected by anti-discrimination laws include attributes such as race, age, disability, gender, and race. The full list of protected personal characteristics is in the “Definitions” set out in the Dictionary of Terms.

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect.

- **Direct discrimination** occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that will disadvantage a person with a protected personal characteristic and that requirement, condition or practice is not reasonable.

For the purposes of determining discrimination, the offender’s awareness and motive are irrelevant.

▪ **8.2. Harassment**

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, offends, or humiliates another person and which happens because a person has a certain personal characteristic protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination legislation.

The offensive behaviour does not have to take place a number of times, a single incident can constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment is one type of harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct, remarks, or innuendo of a sexual nature. It covers a wide range of behaviours and can be verbal, written, visual or physical. Sexual harassment is not limited to members of the opposite sex.

▪ **8.3. Prohibition against discrimination and harassment**

We prohibit all forms of harassment and discrimination based on the personal characteristics listed in the “Definitions” set out in the Dictionary of Terms.

Any person who believes they are being, or have been, harassed or discriminated against by another person or organisation bound by this policy is encouraged to raise their concerns with us. A person may make an internal complaint, and in some circumstances, they may also be able to make a complaint to an external organisation. (Refer the attachments in Part D of this policy.)

○ **9. Position statement: Intimate relationships**

ACU understands that consensual intimate relationships (including, but not limited to sexual relationships) between coaches or officials and adult athletes may take place legally. However, this

policy will help ensure that the expectations of coaches or officials are clear and, to ensure that if an intimate relationship does exist or develop between a coach or official and an adult athlete, that relationship will be managed in an appropriate manner.

Coaches and officials are required to conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner in all interactions with athletes. In particular, they must ensure that they treat athletes in a respectful and fair manner, and that they do not engage in sexual harassment, bullying, favouritism or exploitation.

ACU take the position that consensual intimate relationships between coaches or officials and the adult athletes they coach should be avoided as they can have harmful effects on the athlete involved, on other athletes and coaches and on the sport's public image. These relationships can also be perceived to be exploitative due to the differences in authority, power, maturity, status, influence, and dependence between the coach or official and the athlete.

We recommend that if an athlete attempts to initiate an intimate relationship with a coach or official, the coach or official should discourage the athlete's approach and explain to the athlete why such a relationship is not appropriate.

If a consensual intimate relationship does exist or develop between an adult athlete and a coach or official, the coach or official is expected to ensure that the relationship is appropriate and that it does not compromise impartiality, professional standards, or the relationship of trust the coach or official has with the athlete and/or other athletes.

In assessing the appropriateness of an intimate relationship between a coach or official and an adult athlete, relevant factors include, but are not limited to:

- the relative age and social maturity of the athlete;
- any potential vulnerability of the athlete;
- any financial and/or emotional dependence of the athlete on the coach or official;
- the ability of the coach or official to influence the progress, outcomes or progression of the athlete's performance and/or career;
- the extent of power imbalance between the athlete and coach or official; and
- the likelihood of the relationship having an adverse impact on the athlete and/or other athletes.

It will often be difficult for a coach or official involved in an intimate relationship with an adult athlete to make an objective assessment of its appropriateness and accordingly they are encouraged to seek advice from the Member Protection Information Officer to ensure that they have not involved themselves in inappropriate or unprofessional conduct.

If it is determined that an intimate relationship between a coach or official and an adult athlete is inappropriate or unprofessional, we may take disciplinary action against the coach or official up to and including dismissal. Action may also be taken to stop the coaching relationship with the athlete. This could include a transfer, a request for resignation or dismissal from coaching duties.

If a coach, official or athlete believes they are being, or have been, harassed they are encouraged to seek information and support from the Member Protection Information Officer. Our complaints procedure is outlined in Part D of this policy.

○ **10. Position statement: Pregnancy**

ACU is committed to treating pregnant women fairly and to removing any unreasonable barriers to their full participation in our sport. We will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment against pregnant women.

ACU will take reasonable care to ensure the continuing safety, health, and wellbeing of pregnant women. We will advise pregnant women that there may be risks involved with their continuing participation in sport, and we will encourage them to obtain medical advice about those risks. Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn child, is of utmost importance in their decision-making about the extent they choose to participate in our sport.

We encourage all pregnant women to talk with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport and ensure that they make informed decisions about their participation in our sport. Pregnant women should make these decisions themselves, in consultation with their medical advisers and in discussion with ACU.

We will only require pregnant women to sign a disclaimer in relation to their participation in our sport whilst they are pregnant if all other participants are required to sign one in similar circumstances. We will not require women to undertake a pregnancy test.

If a pregnant woman believes she is being, or has been, harassed or discriminated against by another person or organisation bound by this Policy, she may make a complaint. (Refer to the attachments in Part D of this policy.)

○ **11. Position statement: Gender identity**

Gender identity means the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person. This includes the way people express or present their gender and recognises that a person's gender identity may be an identity other than male or female. Some terms used to describe a person's gender identity include trans, transgender and gender diverse.

Please refer to the ACU Trans and Gender Diverse Athletes in Australian Cheerleading Policy for more information.

▪ **11.1. Gender identity discrimination and harassment**

Federal, state and territory anti-discrimination laws provide protection from discrimination against people on the basis of their gender identity. (See definition in Dictionary of terms).

ACU is committed to providing a safe, fair, and inclusive sporting environment where all people can contribute and participate. We will not tolerate any unlawful discrimination or harassment of a person because of their gender identity.

All persons, regardless of gender identity, are entitled to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect at all times. We will not tolerate any unlawful discrimination or harassment of a person because of their gender identity. This includes discrimination or harassment of a person who is transgender or transsexual, who is assumed to be transgender or transsexual or has an association with someone who has or is assumed to be transgender or transsexual. (Refer to the attachments in Part D of this policy.)

We expect all people bound by this policy to act with sensitivity when a person is undergoing gender transition/affirmation.

If any person believes that they are being, or have been, harassed or discriminated against by another person or organisation bound by this policy because of their gender identity, they may make a complaint.

▪ **11.2. Participation in sport**

ACU recognises that excluding people from participating in sporting events and activities because of their gender identity may have significant implications for their health, wellbeing and involvement in community life. We are committed to supporting participation in our sport on the basis of the gender with which a person identifies.

If issues of performance advantage arise, we will consider whether the established discrimination exceptions for participation in sport are relevant in the circumstances. Discrimination is unlawful unless an exception applies.

ACU is aware that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has established criteria for selection and participation in the Olympic Games. Where a transgender person intends to compete at an elite level, we will encourage them to obtain advice about the IOC's criteria which may differ from the position we have taken.

Drug testing procedures and prohibitions also apply to people who identify as transgender. A person receiving treatment involving a Prohibited Substance or Method, as described on the World Anti-Doping Agency's Prohibited List, should apply for a standard Therapeutic Use Exemption.

▪ **11.3. Intersex status**

Federal anti-discrimination law, and some state and territory anti-discrimination laws, provide protection from discrimination against a person on the basis of their intersex status. (See Dictionary of terms).

ACU is committed to providing a safe, fair and inclusive sporting environment where all people can contribute and participate. We will not tolerate any unlawful discrimination or harassment of a person because of their intersex status.

○ **12. Position statement: Responsible service and consumption of alcohol**

ACU is committed to conducting sporting and social events in a manner that promotes the responsible service and consumption of alcohol. We also recommend that Club and Event Producer Members follow strict guidelines regarding the service and consumption of alcohol.

In general, our policy is that:

- alcohol should not be available or consumed at sporting events involving children and young people under the age of 18;
- alcohol-free social events be provided for young people and families;
- food and low-alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks be available at events we hold or endorse where alcohol is served;
- a staff member is present at events we hold or endorse where alcohol is served to ensure appropriate practices in respect of the consumption of alcohol are followed;

- safe transport options be promoted as part of any event we hold or endorse where alcohol is served.

o **13. Position statement: Smoke-free environment**

ACU is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment at all sporting and social events that we hold or endorse.

In general, our policy is that:

- no smoking shall occur at or near sporting events involving children and young people under the age of 18 – this policy shall apply to coaches, players, trainers, officials and volunteers;
- social events shall be smoke-free, with smoking permitted at designated outdoor smoking areas; and
- coaches, officials, trainers, volunteers, and players will refrain from smoking while they are involved in an official capacity in our sport, both on and off the field.

o **14. Position statement: Bullying**

ACU is committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying. We understand that bullying has the potential to result in significant negative consequences for an individual's health and wellbeing, and we regard bullying in all forms as unacceptable in our sport.

Bullying is characterised by repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person, or group of persons, that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviour is that which a reasonable person in the circumstances would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend, or intimidate a person. Bullying behaviour can include actions of an individual or a group.

Whilst generally characterised by repeated behaviours, one-off instances can amount to bullying.

The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, would be considered bullying:

- verbal abuse including shouting, swearing, teasing, making belittling remarks or persistent unjustified criticism;
- excluding or isolating a group or person;
- spreading malicious rumours; or
- psychological harassment such as intimidation.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying which occurs through the use of technology. New technologies and communication tools, such as smart phones and social networking websites, have greatly increased the potential for people to be bullied through unwanted and inappropriate comments. ACU will not tolerate abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements being made online. Frustration at a referee, teammate, coach, or sporting body should never be communicated on social networking websites. These issues should instead be addressed – in a written or verbal statement or a complaint – to the relevant controlling club, league or the ACU Chairperson.

If any person believes they are being, or have been, bullied by another person or organisation bound by this policy, he or she may make a complaint. (Refer to the attachments in Part D of this policy.)

o **15. Position statement: Social networking**

ACU acknowledges the enormous value of social networking to promote our sport and celebrate the achievements and success of the people involved in our sport.

Social networking refers to any interactive website or technology that enables people to communicate and/or share content via the internet. This includes social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter.

We expect all people bound by this policy to conduct themselves appropriately when using social networking sites to share information related to our sport.

In particular, social media activity including, but not limited to, postings, blogs, status updates, and tweets:

- must not contain material which is, or has the potential to be, offensive, aggressive, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory, obscene, profane, harassing, embarrassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, hateful, racist, sexist or otherwise inappropriate;
- must not contain material, which is inaccurate, misleading or fraudulent;
- must not contain material which is in breach of laws, court orders, undertakings or contracts;
- should respect and maintain the privacy of others; and
- should promote the sport in a positive way.

Please refer to the ACU Communication and Social Media Policy Guidelines for more information.

o **16. Complaints procedures**

▪ **16.1. Handling complaints**

ACU aims to provide a simple, confidential, and trustworthy procedure for resolving complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness.

Any person (a complainant) may report a complaint about a person, people or organisation bound by this policy (respondent) if they feel they have been discriminated against, harassed, bullied or there has been any other breach of this policy.

In the first instance, complaints should be reported to the Member Protection Information Officer via email to danielle@australiancheerunion.org

A complaint may be handled informally or formally. The complainant may indicate his or her preferred option and the Member Protection Information Officer should consider whether that is an appropriate way to handle the particular complaint. For example, the law may require that the complaint/allegation be reported to an appropriate authority.

All complaints will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively, and confidentially. Our procedures for handling and resolving complaints are outlined in Attachment D1.

Individuals and organisations may also seek to have their complaint handled by an external agency under anti-discrimination, child protection, criminal, or other relevant legislation.

▪ **16.2. Improper complaints and victimisation**

ACU aims to ensure that our complaints procedure has integrity and is free of unfair repercussions or victimisation against any person making a complaint.

We will take all necessary steps to make sure that people involved in a complaint are not victimised. Disciplinary measures may be undertaken in respect of a person who harasses or victimises another person for making a complaint or supporting another person's complaint.

If at any point in the complaint handling process the Member Protection Information Officer considers that a complainant has knowingly made an untrue complaint, or the complaint is malicious or inappropriately intended to cause distress to the respondent, the matter may be referred in writing to the Chairperson for review and appropriate action, including possible disciplinary action against the complainant.

▪ **16.3. Mediation**

ACU aims to resolve complaints quickly and fairly. Complaints may be resolved by agreement between the people involved with no need for disciplinary action.

Mediation is a confidential process that allows those involved in a complaint to discuss the issues or incident in question and come up with mutually agreed solutions. It may occur before or after the investigation of a complaint.

If a complainant wishes to resolve the complaint with the help of a mediator, the Member Protection Information Officer will, in consultation with the complainant, arrange for an independent mediator where possible. We will not allow lawyers to participate in the mediation process.

More information on the mediation process is outlined in Attachment D2.

▪ **16.4. Tribunals**

In accordance with ACU rules a Tribunal may be convened to hear a proceeding:

- referred to it by the Chairperson or other designated official
- for an alleged breach of this policy.

Our Tribunal procedure is outlined in Attachment D4.

A respondent may lodge an appeal to the Appeal Tribunal in respect of a Tribunal decision. The decision of the Appeal Tribunal is final and binding on the people involved. Our appeals process is outlined in Attachment D4.

Every organisation bound by this policy will recognise and enforce any decision of a Tribunal or Appeal Tribunal under this policy.

○ **17. What is a breach of this policy?**

It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation bound by this policy to do anything contrary to this policy, including but not limited to:

- breaching the codes of behaviour (see Part B of this policy);

- bringing the sport and/or the NSO into disrepute, or acting in a manner likely to bring the sport and/or the NSO into disrepute;
- failing to follow ACU policies (including this policy) and procedures for the protection, safety and well-being of children;
- discriminating against, harassing or bullying (including cyber-bullying) any person;
- victimising another person for making or supporting a complaint;
- engaging in an inappropriate intimate relationship with a person that he or she supervises, or has influence, authority or power over;
- verbally or physically assaulting another person, intimidating another person or creating a hostile environment within the sport;
- disclosing to any unauthorised person or organisation any ACU information that is of a private, confidential or privileged nature;
- making a complaint that they know to be untrue, vexatious, malicious or improper;
- failing to comply with a penalty imposed after a finding that the individual or organisation has breached this policy; and
- failing to comply with a direction given to the individual or organisation as part of a disciplinary process.

o **18. Disciplinary measures**

ACU may impose disciplinary measures on an individual or organisation for a breach of this policy.

Any disciplinary measure imposed will be:

- fair and reasonable;
- applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
- be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach; and
- be determined in accordance with our constituent documents, by-laws, this policy and/or the rules of the sport.

▪ **18.1. Individual**

Subject to contractual and employment requirements, if a finding is made by a Tribunal that an individual has breached this policy, one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed by the Tribunal:

- a direction that the individual make a verbal and/or written apology;
- a written warning;
- a direction that the individual attend counselling to address their behaviour;
- a withdrawal of any awards, scholarships, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by ACU;
- a demotion or transfer of the individual to another location, role or activity;

- a suspension of the individual's membership or participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- termination of the individual's membership, appointment or engagement;
- a recommendation that ACU terminate the individual's membership, appointment or engagement;
- in the case of a coach or official, a direction that the relevant organisation de-register the accreditation of the coach or official for a period of time or permanently;
- a fine; and/or
- any other form of discipline that the Tribunal considers appropriate.

▪ **18.2. Organisation**

If a finding is made that ACU or affiliated organisation has breached its own or this Member Protection Policy, one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed by the Tribunal:

- a written warning;
- a fine;
- a direction that any rights, privileges and benefits provided to that organisation by ACU be suspended for a specified period;
- a direction that any funding granted or given to it by ACU cease from a specified date;
- a direction that ACU cease to sanction events held by or under the auspices of that organisation; and/or
- any other form of discipline that the Tribunal considers reasonable and appropriate.

▪ **18.3. Factors to consider**

The form of discipline to be imposed on an individual or organisation will depend on factors, such as:

- the nature and seriousness of the breach;
- if the person knew, or should have known, that the behaviour was a breach of the policy;
- the person's level of contrition;
- the effect of the proposed disciplinary measures on the person, including any personal, professional or financial consequences;
- if there have been any relevant prior warnings or disciplinary action;
- the ability to enforce disciplinary measures if the person is a parent or spectator (even if they are bound by the policy); and/or
- any other mitigating circumstances.

o 19. Dictionary of terms

This Dictionary sets out the meaning of words used in this policy and its attachments, without limiting the ordinary and natural meaning of the words. Further detail or definitions that are specific to different states and territories can be sourced from the relevant child protection authorities or equal opportunity and anti-discrimination commissions.

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human or civil rights through the act or actions of another person or persons. Types of abuse include physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, constraints and restrictive practices, financial abuse, legal or civil abuse and systemic abuse.

Child means a person who is under the age of 18.

Child abuse involves conduct which puts a child at risk of harm and may include:

physical abuse, which occurs when a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental physical trauma or injury. This may include, but is not limited to, hitting, shaking or other physical harm; giving a child alcohol or drugs; or training that exceeds the child's development or maturity.

sexual abuse, which occurs when an adult, other child, or adolescent uses their power or authority to involve a child in a sexual activity or any other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature (e.g. sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, pornography, including child pornography, or inappropriate touching or conversations).

emotional abuse, which occurs when a child's social, emotional, cognitive, or intellectual development is impaired or threatened. Emotional abuse can include, but is not limited to, emotional deprivation due to persistent rejection or criticism, hostility, teasing/bullying, humiliation, taunting, sarcasm, yelling, name-calling or placing unrealistic expectations on a child.

neglect, which occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected. Basic needs include food, water, shelter, adequate clothing, personal hygiene, timely provision of medical treatment and adequate supervision.

Complaint means a complaint made under clause [7] of this policy

Complainant means the person making a complaint.

Complaint handler/manager means the person appointed under this policy to investigate a complaint.

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated (or is proposed to be treated) unfairly or less favourably than another person in the same or similar circumstances because of one of the personal characteristics covered by anti-discrimination laws. This is known as direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs when there is (or is proposed) an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that seems to treat everyone equally, but which has or is likely to have the effect of disadvantaging persons with a personal characteristic covered by anti-discrimination laws.

In Australia, it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of:

- age
- sex or gender
- gender identity
- intersex status
- race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, nationality, ethno-religious origin, immigration

- disability, mental and physical impairment
- family/carer responsibilities, status as a parent or carer
- marital status
- pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding
- sexual orientation and gender identity
- physical features
- irrelevant medical record
- irrelevant criminal record, spent convictions
- political beliefs or activities
- religion, religious beliefs, or activities
- national extraction or social origin
- lawful sexual activity
- profession, trade, occupation or calling
- member of association or organisation of employees or employers, industrial activity, trade union activity
- defence service
- personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of the above characteristics

Examples of discrimination are available on the Play by the Rules website:

www.playbytherules.net.au/legal-stuff/discrimination

Some exceptions to state, territory and federal anti-discrimination law apply, including exceptions for sporting activities, such as:

- holding a competitive sporting activity for a specific age or age group (e.g. only those who are under the age of 15 years);
- excluding people on the basis of their sex and/or gender identity status from participation in a competitive sporting activity where the strength, stamina or physique of competitors is relevant to the specific activity (note that this does not apply to activity by children who are under the age of 12 years); and
- not selecting a participant if the person's disability means he or she is not reasonably capable of performing the actions reasonably required for that particular sporting activity.

Harassment is any type of unwelcome behaviour which has the effect of offending, humiliating, or intimidating the person harassed. Unlawful harassment can be based on any of the personal characteristics covered by anti-discrimination law, such as a person's race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, or sexual orientation (see the list under "Discrimination").

Public acts of racial hatred which are reasonably likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate are also prohibited. This applies to spectators, participants or any other person who engages in such an act in public. Some states and territories also prohibit public acts that vilify people on other grounds such as homosexuality, gender identity, HIV/AIDS, religion, and disability (see also "Vilification").

Member means Full and Associate Membership of the Company which are Australian registered competition Cheer Sport Event Producers

Member Protection Information Officer means a person appointed by us to be the first point of contact for a person reporting an issue or a complaint under, or a breach of, this policy.

Procedural fairness requires that:

- the respondent knows the full details of what is being said against him or her and they have the opportunity to respond;
- no person may judge their own case; and
- the decision-maker(s) must be unbiased, fair and just.

Police check means a national criminal history record check conducted as a pre-employment, pre-engagement or current employment background check on a person.

Policy, policy and this policy means this Member Protection Policy.

Respondent means the person whose behaviour is the subject of the complaint.

Role-specific codes of conduct (or behaviour) means standards of conduct required of people holding certain roles in our organisation (e.g. coaches, officials, umpires).

Sexual harassment means unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which could reasonably be expected to make a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Sexual harassment can take many different forms and may include unwelcome physical contact, verbal comments, jokes, propositions, displays of pornographic or offensive material or other behaviour that creates a sexually hostile environment. Sexual harassment does not have to be intentional.

Sexual offence means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or acts of indecency. Because of differences under state and territory laws, this can include but is not limited to:

- rape
- indecent assault
- sexual assault
- assault with intent to commit sexual acts
- incest
- sexual penetration of child under the age of 16 years
- indecent act with child under the age of 16 years
- sexual relationship with child under the age of 16 years
- sexual offences against people with impaired mental functioning
- abduction and detention
- procuring sexual penetration by threats or fraud
- procuring sexual penetration of child under the age of 16 years
- bestiality
- soliciting a child under the age of 16 years to take part in an act of sexual penetration, or an indecent act

- promoting or engaging in acts of child prostitution
- obtaining benefits from child prostitution
- possession of child pornography
- publishing child pornography and indecent articles.

Transgender ‘Transgender’ is an umbrella term that refers to a person whose gender identity is different to their physical sex as recorded at birth. Transitioning refers to the process where a transgender person commences living as a member of another sex. This is sometimes referred to as the person ‘affirming’ their gender because transitioning means they start living in what they identify as their true gender. For people who are transitioning/affirming their gender, having their identity fully recognised in all areas of life is a crucial part of the experience of living as their affirmed gender.

Sexual orientation: The term ‘sexual orientation’ refers to a person’s emotional or sexual attraction to another person, including, amongst others, the following identities: heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or same-sex attracted.

Gender identity: The term ‘gender identity’ refers to a person’s deeply held internal and individual sense of gender.

Gender expression: The term ‘gender expression’ refers to the way in which a person externally expresses their gender or how they are perceived by others.

Intersex: The term ‘intersex’ refers to people who have genetic, hormonal, or physical characteristics that are not exclusively ‘male’ or ‘female’. A person who is intersex may identify as male, female, intersex or as being of indeterminate sex.

Victimisation means treating someone unfairly or unfavourably, or threatening to do so, because that person has, or intends to, pursue their right to make any complaint, including a complaint under government legislation (e.g. anti-discrimination legislation) or under this policy, or for supporting another person to make complaint.

Vilification means behaviour that occurs in public which incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or revulsion or severe ridicule of a person or group of people because that person or persons have a particular personal characteristic. Anti-discrimination laws in Australia make it unlawful to vilify a person or group of persons on the basis of race, religion, homosexuality, transgender status and HIV/AIDS status.

PART B: CODES OF BEHAVIOUR

We seek to provide a safe, fair, and inclusive environment for everyone involved in our organisation and in our sport.

To achieve this, we require certain standards of behaviour by players/athletes, coaches, officials, administrators, parents/guardians (of child participants) and spectators.

Our codes of behaviour are underpinned by the following core values:

- to act within the rules and spirit of our sport;
- to display respect and courtesy towards everyone involved in our sport and prevent discrimination and harassment;
- to prioritise the safety and well-being of children and young people involved in our sport; and
- to encourage and support opportunities for participation in all aspects of our sport.

Attachment BI: ACU Code of Conduct – Members and Affiliated Organisations

1. Purpose

The purpose of Code of Conduct (code) is to describe the type of behaviour that Australian Cheer Union (ACU) is seeking to promote and encourage its members and supporters to adopt. ACU has adopted this code to assist defining what is appropriate (and inappropriate) conduct. ACU is committed to the promotion of cheer sport as a positive active and healthy lifestyle choice. This code will assist to guide this promotion and encourage all members and affiliated organisations

2. Application

The code shall apply to all persons formally associated with cheer sport in Australia. In particular, it shall apply to:

- 2.1. Persons acting for or on behalf of ACU;
- 2.2. Athletes, coaches, managers and support staff of ACU whilst in Australia or travelling abroad;
- 2.3. All persons participating in ACU sanctioned events.
- 2.4. Officials, Commissaires and support personnel assisting in or conducting ACU events.
- 2.5. ACU appointed delegates and employees of ACU.

3. Key Principles

The key principles of the code of conduct are outlined below.

- 3.1. ACU wishes to operate in an environment where people show respect for others and their property. (Respect is defined as consideration for another's physical and emotional wellbeing and possessions, to ensure no damage or deprivation is caused to either.)
- 3.2. ACU wishes to operate in an environment that is free from harassment. (Harassment is defined as any action directed at an individual or group that creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.)
- 3.3. ACU wishes to operate in a non-discriminatory environment. Respect the right, dignity and worth of every human being - within the context of the activity, treat everyone equally regardless of gender, ethnic origin or religion.
- 3.4. Persons to whom this Code applies acknowledge and agree to comply with the disciplinary and grievance procedures as outlined in the Member Protection Policy.

4. Key Elements

All persons who are bound by this code shall:

- 4.1. Act in a manner that is compatible with the interests of ACU;
- 4.2. Accord people involved in cheer sport with the appropriate courtesy, respect and regard for their rights and obligations;
- 4.3. Treat people's property with respect and due consideration of its value;
- 4.4. Show a positive commitment to ACU's policies, rules, procedures, guidelines and agreements;
- 4.5. Respect the law and customs of the places they visit;
- 4.6. Respect the confidentiality of information that they receive in the course of fulfilling their duties;
- 4.7. Uphold the standing and reputation of cheer sport within Australia;
- 4.8. Not misuse provided funds or property belonging to another party; and
- 4.9. Observe and comply with the Anti Doping Rules set out in the ACU Doping Policy.

5. Unacceptable Behaviour

This list provides examples of behaviour deemed to be unsuitable and not in the best interests of the sport.

- 5.1. 'Sledging' other athletes, officials, or event organisers. (Sledging is defined as a statement that is deemed to denigrate and/or intimidate another person, or behaviour likely to constitute emotional abuse.)
- 5.2. Excessive use of alcohol, acting in a way that becomes a public nuisance, or creating a public disturbance.
- 5.3. Damaging another person's property or depriving them of that property.
- 5.4. Sexual relations between an appointed official and a junior athlete (under the age of consent), irrespective of the wishes and desires of the athlete. In all other cases such relations are strongly discouraged.
- 5.5. Any physical contact with athletes shall be appropriate to the situation and be necessary for the further development of the athlete's skill.
- 5.6. The use or encouragement of the use of banned substances. (The banned substance list is as outlined under current doping listings.)
- 5.7. Statements that are deemed to denigrate the group that an individual is representing.
- 5.8. Any type of gambling, betting, or organisation of betting at any ACU event, while competing, officiating or undertaking a management role.
- 5.9. Any form of harassment.

6. Officials Code of Ethics

The responsibility for the ethical conduct of cheer sport events rests equally with officials and participants as well as coaches, media, and spectators. The duty of an official carries with it an obligation to perform those duties with accuracy, consistency, objectivity, and a high sense of integrity. To preserve and encourage confidence in the professionalism and integrity of cheer sport officiating all officials are expected to follow ethical behaviour.

ACU officials expect that:

- 6.1. Their health and safety will be considered of paramount importance;
- 6.2. They will be treated with respect and openness;
- 6.3. They will be appointed to a level of event appropriate to their level of competence; and
- 6.4. They will have access to self-improvement opportunities.

ACU officials will observe and adhere to the following code of ethics:

- 6.5. Place safety and welfare of the participants above all else;
- 6.6. Accept responsibility for their actions;
- 6.7. Be impartial;
- 6.8. Avoid and conflict of interest;
- 6.9. Be courteous, respectful and open to discussion and interaction;
- 6.10. Value the individual;
- 6.11. Seek continual self-improvement through study, performance appraisal and regularly updating of competencies;
- 6.12. Encourage inclusivity and access to all potential participants;
- 6.13. Be a positive role model in behaviour and personal appearance;
- 6.14. Refrain from any form of personal abuse to others;

- 6.15. Refrain from any form of sexual harassment to others; and
- 6.16. Show concern and caution towards sick and injured participants.

Attachment B2: ACU Codes of Behaviour

1. Spectator's code of behaviour

Applaud and support every team.

Remember that people participate in Cheer and Dance for their enjoyment, not yours.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.

Congratulate all participants upon their performance regardless of their placing.

Respect officials' decisions and teach athletes to do the same.

Never ridicule or scold a person for making a mistake.

Condemn the use of violence in any form be it by spectators, coaches, officials, or athletes.

Encourage athletes to do their best, positive comments are motivational.

Do not use foul language or harass athletes, coaches, event and venue staff or other spectators

Refrain from engaging in negative or destructive discussion or postings on social media about athletes, coaches, spectators, officials, administrators, other programs, and teams that may be viewed as abusive, harassing or offensive in nature.

2. Coaches code of behaviour

Remember that people participate for pleasure and winning is only part of the fun.

Never ridicule or yell at an athlete for making a mistake or not coming first.

Be reasonable in your demands on athlete's time, energy, and enthusiasm.

Operate within the rules and spirit of Cheer and Dance and teach your athletes to do the same.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all athletes regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.

Ensure that the time athletes spend with you is a positive experience. All athletes are deserving of equal attention and opportunities.

Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of all athletes.

Display control, respect, and professionalism to all involved with Cheer and Dance. This includes other programs, teams, coaches, event and venue staff, administrators, the media, parents, and spectators.

Encourage your athletes to do the same.

Show concern and caution toward sick and injured athletes. Follow the advice of a physician when determining whether an injured athlete is ready to recommence training or competitions.

Obtain appropriate qualifications and keep up to date with the latest coaching practices and the principles of growth and development of young people.

Any physical contact with an athlete should be appropriate to the situation and necessary for the athlete's skill development.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.

Refrain from engaging in negative or destructive discussion or postings on social media about athletes, coaches, spectators, officials, administrators, other programs, and teams that may be viewed as abusive, harassing, or offensive in nature.

3. Club owner's code of behaviour

Provide a safe environment for training.

Ensure coaches are appropriately qualified.

Educate coaches on child safety, communication and allow for technical skill update and advancement.

Promote a culture of respectful communication between athletes, teams, coaches, and supporters.

Operate within the rules and spirit of Cheer and Dance and teach your coaches and athletes to do the same.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all coaches and athletes regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.

Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of all athletes.

Display control, respect, and professionalism to all involved with Cheer and Dance. This includes other programs, teams, coaches, event and venue staff, administrators, the media, parents, and spectators.

Encourage your coaches, parents, and athletes to do the same.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.

Refrain from engaging in negative or destructive discussion or postings on social media about athletes, coaches, spectators, officials, administrators, other programs, and teams that may be viewed as abusive, harassing, or offensive in nature.

4. Athlete's code of behaviour

Be a good sport. Applaud every team.

Never argue with an official. If you disagree, discuss your concerns with your coach.

Control your temper. Verbal abuse (in person or on social media) of event staff, other athletes, coaches, and teams is not acceptable. Deliberately provoking athletes from another program is not permitted.

Work equally hard for yourself and your team. Your team's performance will benefit, so will you.

Treat all participants as you like to be treated. Do not bully or ridicule other athletes.

Cooperate with your coach, teammates, and teams from other programs. Without them there would be no competition.

Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit, not just to please parents and coaches.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.

Refrain from engaging in negative or destructive discussion or postings on social media about athletes, coaches, spectators, officials, administrators, other programs, and teams that may be viewed as abusive, harassing, or offensive in nature.

PART C: EMPLOYMENT SCREENING / WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK REQUIREMENTS

ACU's recruitment and screening requirements have been developed to provide a fair, consistent and comprehensive recruitment process across our sport. Our sport takes child protection seriously and ensures that we recruit staff and volunteers who are suitably qualified and committed to providing professional, safe, and enjoyable programs and services to children and young people.

ACU's Members are responsible for undertaking recruitment and ensuring that our organisation's recruitment and screening procedures are followed.

ACU's key recruitment and screening requirements consist of:

- including our commitment to child safety in all advertised positions
- providing our safe sport guidelines to all shortlisted applicants prior to interview
- ensuring that either a face-to-face or video interview is conducted with each applicant
- whenever possible no applicant is to be offered a position until after completion of their 'working with children' check or 'national criminal history record' check
- successful applicants having the relevant working with children check for their jurisdiction
- checks will be verified and sighted by the hiring manager and if applicable in their jurisdiction successful applicants will be required to complete a national criminal history record check (also known as a police check)
- criminal or police record checks being obtained for applicants who have resided in an overseas country for 12 months or more in the last ten years
- maintaining a WWCC (or equivalent e.g. Blue Card) register and ensuring staff and volunteers undergo periodic re-validation
- sighting original proof of identity documents for successful applicants
- undertaking a minimum of two reference checks for all shortlisted applicants to gather information about the applicant's suitability to work in the role for which they have applied

Please refer to the ACU Child Safe Sport Safe Recruitment and Screening Requirements for more detailed information about our Child Safe Recruitment and Screening.

See also ACU's other child safe policies:

- Australian Cheer Union Safe Sport Guidelines for Children and Young People
- ACU Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Policy
- ACU Child Safe Induction and Training Guidelines

Attachment C1: Member Protection Declaration

MEMBER PROTECTION DECLARATION

ACU has a duty of care to all those associated with our organisation and to the individuals and organisations to whom this policy applies. It is a requirement of our National Member Protection Policy that we check the background of each person who works, coaches, or has regular unsupervised contact with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

I (name) of

..... (address) born/...../.....

sincerely declare:

1. I have been provided a copy, have read, and understood the Member Protection Policy
2. I do not have any criminal charge pending before the courts.
3. I do not have any criminal convictions or findings of guilt for sexual offences, offences related to children or acts of violence or use narcotics.
4. I have not had any disciplinary proceedings brought against me by an employer, sporting organisation or similar body involving child abuse, sexual misconduct or harassment, other forms of harassment or acts of violence or narcotics use.
5. I am not currently serving a sanction for an anti-doping rule violation under an Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) approved anti-doping policy applicable to me.
6. I will not participate in, facilitate, or encourage any practice prohibited by the World Anti-Doping Agency Code or any other ASADA approved anti-doping policy applicable to me.
7. To my knowledge, there is no other matter that ACU may consider to constitute a risk to its members, employees, volunteers, athletes, or reputation by engaging me.
8. I will notify the ACU Board or other relevant official of the organisation/s engaging me immediately upon becoming aware that any matter set out above has changed.

Declared in the state/territory of

on/...../.....(date) Signature

Consent of parent/guardian (on behalf of a person under the age of 18 years)

I have read and understood the declaration provided by my child. I confirm and warrant that the contents of the declaration provided by my child are true and correct in every particular.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

PART D: COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURES

We will deal with all complaints in a fair, timely and transparent manner. All complaints will be treated seriously.

We will provide individuals with an informal and informal process to resolve the matter, along with access to an external complaint handling body, based on the nature of the complaint and our rules and regulations.

We also provide an appeals process for those matters.

We will maintain confidentiality where possible and as provided in this policy and seek to ensure that no one is victimised for making, supporting, or providing information about a complaint.

Attachment D1: Complaints Procedure

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

ACU is committed to supporting people associated with our sport to make and resolve any complaints they may have in a fair, timely and effective way.

We will endeavour to deal with complaints on a confidential basis. We will not provide information about the complaint to another person without the complainant's consent, except if the law requires us disclose this information or it is necessary to properly deal with the complaint. To ensure fairness for everyone involved, we will provide the full details of the complaint to the person or people against whom the complaint has been made and ask for their response. As a result, it may be difficult for us to resolve complaints made anonymously.

We will provide **informal and formal procedures** to deal with complaints. Individuals and organisations can also make **complaints to external organisations** under anti-discrimination, child protection and other relevant laws.

Informal approaches

Step 1: Talk with the other person (if safe, reasonable, and appropriate)

If you feel confident and comfortable to do so, you can approach the other person to discuss the issues and try and resolve the problem directly.

Step 2: Contact a Member Protection Information Officer

We encourage you to talk with our Member Protection Information Officer (MPO) if:

- step 1 (above) is not appropriate;
- you are not sure how to handle the problem by yourself;
- you want to talk confidentially with someone and find out what options are available to address your concern; or
- the concern continues after you approached the other person.

The MPO can be contacted by email at danielle@australiancheerunion.org

The MPO will:

- ask how you would like your concern to be resolved and if you need support
- seek to provide different options for you to address your concern
- act as a support person, if you wish
- refer you to an appropriate person (e.g. a mediator) to help you address your concern, if appropriate
- inform the relevant government authorities and/or police, if required by law to do so
- where possible and appropriate, maintain confidentiality.

Step 3: Decide how to address your concern

After talking with the MPO, 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; or
- to resolve the matter through a formal process.

Formal approaches

Step 4: Making a formal complaint

If it is not possible or appropriate to resolve your complaint through an informal process, you may:

- make a formal complaint in writing to the Member Protection Officer or
- approach a relevant external agency, such as an anti-discrimination or equal opportunity commission, for advice and assistance.

After receiving a formal complaint, and based on the material you provide, the Member Protection Officer will decide whether:

- he or she is the most appropriate person to receive and handle the complaint;
- the nature and seriousness of the complaint requires a formal resolution procedure;
- to refer the complaint to **mediation**;
- to appoint a person to **investigate** the complaint;
- to refer the complaint to a **tribunal hearing**;
- to refer the matter to the **police or other appropriate authority**; and/or
- to implement any interim arrangements that will apply until the complaint process is completed.

In dealing with your formal complaint, the Member Protection Officer will take into account:

- whether he or she has had any personal involvement in the circumstances and if so, whether it is appropriate someone else should handle the complaint;
- your wishes, and the wishes of the respondent, regarding how the complaint should be handled;
- the relationship between you and the respondent (e.g. an actual or perceived power imbalance between you and the respondent);
- whether the facts of the complaint are in dispute; and
- the urgency of the complaint, including the possibility that you might face further unacceptable behaviour while the complaint process is underway.

If the Member Protection Officer is the appropriate person to handle the complaint, he or she will, where appropriate and/or necessary:

- provide the information received from you to the other person(s) involved and ask for a response;
- decide if there is enough information to determine whether the matter alleged in your complaint did or did not occur; and/or
- determine what, if any, further action to take, including referring the matter for investigation or disciplinary action in accordance with this policy.

Step 5: Investigating the complaint

In some cases, an investigation may be required to determine the facts surrounding the complaint. Our investigations procedure is outlined in Attachment D3.

Following the investigation, a written report will be provided to the Member Protection Officer.

- If the complaint is referred to **mediation**, we will follow the steps outlined in Attachment D2 or as agreed by you, the respondent, and the mediator.
- If the complaint is referred to a **tribunal hearing**, the hearing will be conducted according to the steps outlined in Attachment D4.
- If the complaint is referred to the **police or another external agency**, we will endeavour to provide all reasonable assistance required by the police or the agency.

Step 6: Reconsidering a complaint or appealing a decision

If the matter is referred to mediation and is not resolved at mediation, you may request that Member Protection Officer reconsider the complaint in accordance with Step 3.

In accordance with ACU rules you or the respondent(s) may also appeal a decision made at a tribunal hearing. The grounds and process for appeals are set out in Attachment D4.

Step 7: Documenting the resolution

The Member Protection Officer will record the complaint, the steps taken to resolve it and the outcome. This information will be stored by ACU in a confidential and secure place.

Approaching external organisations

If you feel that you have been harassed or discriminated against, you can seek advice from your state or territory anti-discrimination or equal opportunity commission. There is no obligation to make a formal complaint. However, if the commission advises you that the issues appear to be within its jurisdiction, you may choose to lodge a formal complaint with the commission.

The commission may investigate your complaint. The commission may also attempt to conciliate the complaint on a confidential basis. If this fails, or if it is not appropriate, the complaint may go to a formal hearing. The tribunal will make a finding and decide what action, if any, will be taken.

If you do lodge a complaint with the commission, an appropriate person from our organisation (e.g. an MPO) will be available to support you during the process. You may also wish to have a legal representation, particularly if the complaint goes to a formal hearing.

Contact details for the state and territory anti-discrimination and equal opportunity commissions are available on the Play by the Rules website:

<http://www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/quick-reference-guide>.

Serious incidents, such as assault or sexual assault, should be reported to the police.

Attachment D2: Mediation

MEDIATION

Mediation is a process that seeks to resolve complaints with the assistance of an impartial person – the mediator.

The mediator does not decide who is right or wrong and does not tell either side what they must do. Instead, he or she helps those involved to discuss the issues and seeks to facilitate a mutually agreeable solution.

Our approach to mediation follows the steps set out below.

The Chairperson will appoint an appropriate mediator to help resolve the complaint. This will be done under the direction of ACU and in consultation with the complainant and the respondent(s). The mediator will be an independent person in the context of the complaint; however this does not preclude a person with an association with ACU acting as mediator.

The mediator will talk with the complainant and respondent(s) about how the mediation will take place and who will participate. At a minimum, the mediator will prepare an agenda of issues to be discussed.

All issues raised during mediation will be treated confidentially. We also respect the rights of the complainant and the respondent(s) to pursue an alternative process if the complaint is not resolved.

If the complaint is resolved by mediation, where appropriate the mediator may seek to ensure the parties execute a document that sets out the agreement that has been reached. This agreement will be signed by the complainant and the respondent(s). We expect the parties involved to respect and comply with the terms of the agreement.

If the complaint is not resolved by mediation, the complainant may:

- write to the MPO to request that the MPO reconsider the complaint; and
- approach any relevant external agency, such as an anti-discrimination or equal opportunity commission, to resolve the matter.

We recognise that there are some situations where mediation may not be appropriate, including:

- when the people involved have completely different versions of the incident;
- when one or both parties are unwilling to attempt mediation;
- when there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the people involved;
- matters that involve serious allegations.

Attachment D3: Investigation Procedure

INVESTIGATION PROCESS

There will be times when a complaint will need to be investigated and information gathered.

An investigation helps determine the facts relating to the incident, if requested, recommendations as to possible findings and next steps.

Any investigation we conduct will be fair to all people involved. The investigation process will be undertaken by an unbiased person.

If we decide that a complaint should be investigated, we will follow the steps outlined below.

We will provide a written brief to the investigator that sets out the terms of engagement and his or her roles and responsibilities.

The investigator may:

- interview the complainant and record the interview in writing;
- provide full details of the complaint to the respondent(s) so that they can respond
- interview the respondent(s) to allow them to answer the complaint and record the interview in writing;
- obtain statements from witnesses and collect other relevant evidence;
- make a finding as to whether the complaint is:
 - **substantiated** (there is sufficient evidence to support the complaint)
 - **inconclusive** (there is insufficient evidence either way);
 - **unsubstantiated** (there is sufficient evidence to show that the complaint is unfounded);
 - **mischievous, vexatious, or knowingly untrue.**
- provide a report to the MPO documenting the complaint, the investigation process, the evidence,) and, if requested, any findings and recommendations.

We will provide a report to the complainant and the respondent(s) documenting the complaint, the investigation process and summarising key points from the investigation.

The complainant and the respondent(s) will be entitled to support throughout this process from their chosen support person or adviser.

Attachment D4: Tribunal Procedure

TRIBUNAL PROCEDURES

We will follow the steps set out below to hear formal complaints made under our Member Protection Policy.

Preparing for a Tribunal hearing

1. A Tribunal panel will be established, according to the rules set out in below to hear a complaint that has been referred to it by the MPO.
2. The number of Tribunal panel members required to be present throughout the hearing will be 3 members.
3. The Tribunal panel members will be provided with a copy of all the relevant correspondence, reports or information received and sent by the MPO relating to the complaint/allegations.
4. The Tribunal hearing will be held as soon as practicable. However, adequate time must be provided for the respondent(s) to prepare for the hearing.
5. The MPO will inform the respondent(s) in writing that a Tribunal hearing will take place. The notice will outline:
 - that the person has a right to appear at the Tribunal hearing to defend the complaint/allegations;
 - the details of the complaint and of all allegations, as well as the provision or clause of any policy, rule or regulation that has allegedly been breached;
 - the date, time and venue of the Tribunal hearing;
 - that verbal and/or written submissions can be presented at the Tribunal hearing;
 - that witnesses may attend the Tribunal hearing to support the position of the respondent/s;
 - an outline of any possible sanctions that may be imposed if the complaint is found to be true;
 - That legal representation will not be allowed. *[The respondent may be assisted by a support person at a Tribunal hearing. For example, where the respondent is a minor, he or she should have a parent or guardian present. However a person cannot be a support person if he or she has been admitted to the practise as a lawyer or worked as a trainee lawyer.]* A copy of any investigation report findings will be provided to the respondent(s).
6. The MPO will notify the complainant in writing that a Tribunal hearing will take place. The notice will outline:
 - that the person has a right to appear at the Tribunal hearing to support their complaint;
 - the details of the complaint, including any relevant rules or regulations the respondent is accused of breaching;
 - the date, time and venue of the Tribunal hearing;
 - that verbal and/or written submissions can be presented at the Tribunal hearing;
 - that witnesses may attend the Tribunal hearing to support the complainant's position;
 - that legal representation will not be allowed. *[The respondent may be assisted by a support person at a Tribunal hearing. For example, where the respondent is a minor, he or she should have a parent or guardian present. However, a person cannot be a support person if he or she has been admitted to practice as a lawyer or worked as a trainee lawyer.]*

A copy of the investigation report findings will be provided to the complainant.

7. If the complainant believes the details of the complaint are incorrect or insufficient, he or she should inform the MPO as soon as possible so that the respondent(s) and members of the Tribunal panel can be properly informed of the complaint.
8. If possible, the Tribunal panel should include at least one person with knowledge or experience of the relevant laws/rules (e.g. anti-discrimination).

Tribunal hearing procedure

9. The following people will be allowed to attend the Tribunal hearing:
 - Tribunal panel members;
 - the respondent(s);
 - the complainant;
 - any witnesses called by the respondent(s);
 - any witnesses called by the complainant;
 - any parent/guardian or support person required to support the respondent or the complainant.
10. If the respondent(s) is not present at the set hearing time and the Tribunal chairperson considers that no valid reason has been presented for this absence, the Tribunal hearing will continue subject to the chairperson being satisfied that all Tribunal notification requirements have been met.
11. If the Tribunal chairperson considers that there is a valid reason for the non-attendance of the respondent(s), or the chairperson does not believe the Tribunal notification requirements have been met, then the Tribunal hearing will be rescheduled to a later date.
12. If the Tribunal chairperson wishes to reschedule the Tribunal hearing date, the Tribunal chairperson will inform the MPO of the need to reschedule the hearing and the MPO will arrange for the Tribunal to be reconvened.
13. The Tribunal chairperson will read out the complaint, ask each respondent if he or she understands the complaint and if he or she agrees or disagrees with the complaint.
14. If the respondent agrees with the complaint, he or she will be asked to provide any evidence or witnesses that should be considered by the Tribunal when determining any sanctions.
15. If the respondent disagrees with the complaint, the complainant will be asked to describe the circumstances that lead to the complaint being made.
 - Reference may be made to brief notes.
 - The complainant may call witnesses.
 - The respondent may question the complainant and any witnesses.
16. The respondent will then be asked to respond to the complaint.
 - Reference may be made to brief notes.
 - The respondent may call witnesses.
 - The complainant may ask questions of the respondent and any witnesses.
17. The complainant and respondent(s) may be present when evidence is presented to the Tribunal hearing. Witnesses may be asked to wait outside the hearing until they are required.
18. The Tribunal may:
 - consider any evidence, and in any form, that it deems relevant;
 - ask questions of any person giving evidence;

- limit the number of witnesses (including limiting witnesses to those persons who only provide new evidence);
 - require (to the extent it has power to do so) the attendance of any witness it deems relevant; and
 - act in an inquisitorial manner in order to establish the truth of the issue/complaint before it.
19. Video evidence, if available, may be presented. Arrangements for the viewing of this evidence must be made entirely by the person(s) wishing to offer this type of evidence.
 20. If the Tribunal panel considers that at any time during the hearing there is any unreasonable or intimidatory behaviour from anyone, the Tribunal chairperson may deny further involvement of that person in the hearing.
 21. After all the evidence has been presented, the Tribunal will make its decision in private. The Tribunal must decide whether the complaint has, on the balance of probabilities, been substantiated.
 22. All Tribunal decisions will be by majority vote.
 23. The Tribunal chairperson may announce the decision of the Tribunal at the conclusion of the hearing. Alternatively, he or she may reserve the decision of the Tribunal at the conclusion of the hearing and deliver the decision at a later time.
 24. If the Tribunal finds that one or more allegations has been proven, it shall
 - inform the parties of its decision;
 - provide the respondent(s) with an opportunity to make submissions in relation to any sanctions that may be imposed;
 - impose such penalty as it considers appropriate.
 25. The Tribunal chairperson will:
 - forward a notice of the Tribunal's decision to the MPO, including details of any sanction imposed.
 - forward a letter reconfirming the Tribunal's decision to the respondent(s), including any sanction imposed. The letter should also outline the process and grounds for an appeal, if allowed.
 26. The Tribunal does not need to provide written reasons for its decision.

Appeals procedure

27. A complainant or a respondent(s) may lodge with ACU an appeal in relation to the decision of a Tribunal on one or more of the following grounds:
 - that a denial of procedural fairness has occurred;
 - that the sanction imposed is unjust and/or unreasonable;
 - that the decision was not supported by the information/evidence provided at the mediation or to the Tribunal Hearing;
28. A person wanting to appeal must lodge a letter setting out the basis for their appeal with the Chairperson within 28 days of the decision being made
29. If the letter of appeal is not received by the Chairperson within this time, the right of appeal will lapse.

30. The letter of appeal and the notice of the Tribunal's decision (clause 24) will be forwarded to the MPO to review and to decide whether there are sufficient grounds for the appeal to proceed. The MPO may invite any witnesses to the meeting that he or she believes are required to make an informed decision.
31. If the appellant has not shown sufficient grounds for an appeal in accordance with clause 26, then the appeal will be rejected. The appellant will be notified in writing, including the reasons for the decision.
32. If the appeal is accepted, an Appeal Tribunal with new panel members will be convened to rehear the complaint,
33. The Tribunal hearing procedure shall be followed for the Appeal Tribunal.
34. The decision of the Appeal Tribunal will be final and binding.

PART E: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND DOCUMENTS/FORMS

We will ensure that all the complaints we receive, both formal and informal, are properly documented. This includes recording how the complaint was resolved and the outcome of the complaint.

This information, and any additional records and notes, will be treated confidentially (subject to disclosure required by law or permitted under this policy) and stored in a secure place.

We will treat any allegation of child abuse or neglect promptly, seriously and with a high degree of sensitivity.

We will ensure that everyone who works with our organisation in a paid or unpaid capacity understands how to appropriately receive and record allegations of child abuse and neglect and how to report those allegations to the relevant authorities in their state or territory.

Attachment E1: Record of informal complaint

RECORD OF INFORMAL COMPLAINT

Name of person receiving complaint		Date: / /
Complainant's Name	☐ Over 18 ☐ Under 18	

Role/status	☐ Administrator (volunteer) ☐ Athlete/player ☐ Coach/Assistant Coach ☐ Employee (paid) ☐ Official
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When/where did the incident take place?	
What are the facts relating to the incident, as stated by complainant?	
What is the nature of the complaint? (category/basis/grounds) Tick more than one box if necessary	☐ Harassment or ☐ Discrimination ☐ Sexual/sexist ☐ Selection dispute ☐ Coaching methods • Sexuality ☐ Personality clash ☐ Verbal abuse • Race ☐ Bullying ☐ Physical abuse • Religion ☐ Disability ☐ Victimisation • Pregnancy ☐ Child Abuse ☐ Unfair decision • Other
What does the complainant want to happen to resolve the issue?	
What other information has the complainant provided?	

What is the complainant going to do now?	
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This record and any notes must be kept confidential and secure. If the issue becomes a formal complaint, this record is to be given to Member Protection Officer.

Attachment E2: Record of formal complaint

RECORD OF FORMAL COMPLAINT

Complainant's Name	☐ Over 18 ☐ Under 18		Date Formal Complaint Received: / /
Complainant's contact details	Phone: Email:		
Complainant's role/position	☐ Administrator (volunteer) ☐ Athlete/player ☐ Coach/Assistant Coach ☐ Employee (paid) ☐ Official	☐ Parent ☐ Spectator ☐ Support Personnel ☐ Other	
Name of person complained about (respondent)	☐ Over 18 ☐ Under 18		
Respondent's role/position	☐ Administrator (volunteer) ☐ Athlete/player ☐ Coach/Assistant Coach ☐ Employee (paid) ☐ Official	☐ Parent ☐ Spectator ☐ Support Personnel ☐ Other	
Location/event of alleged incident			
Description of alleged incident			
Nature of complaint (category/basis/grounds) Tick more than one box if necessary	☐ Harassment or ☐ Discrimination ☐ Sexual/sexist ☐ Selection dispute ☐ Coaching methods ☐ Sexuality ☐ Personality clash ☐ Verbal abuse ☐ Race ☐ Bullying ☐ Physical abuse ☐ Religion ☐ Disability ☐ Victimisation ☐ Pregnancy ☐ Child Abuse ☐ Unfair decision ☐ Other		

Methods (if any) of attempted informal resolution	
Formal resolution procedures followed (outline)	
If investigated:	Finding
If heard by Tribunal:	Decision Action recommended
If mediated:	Date of mediation: Both/all parties present Agreement Any other action taken
If decision was appealed	Decision Action recommended
Resolution	 Less than 3 months to resolve  Between 3 – 8 months to resolve  More than 8 months to resolve

Completed by	Name: Position: Signature: _____ Date / /
Signed by:	Complainant: Respondent:

This record and any notes must be kept confidential and secure. If the complaint is of a serious nature, or if it is taken to and/or dealt with at the national level, the original record must be provided to *ACU* and a copy kept with the organisation where the complaint was first made.