

# Complaint Handling and Mediation

## Member Protection Policy

It is prudent for all sports to have a Member Protection Policy (MPP) in place before a complaint or grievance arises. This policy provides guidance on how to manage complaints and grievances. It also identifies the rights of individuals involved in the dispute.

Most state sporting organisations (SSO) adopt policies drafted by their national sporting organisation (NSO). Check with the relevant SSO if the club is unsure which policies apply.

If the club wants/needs to develop its own policy, a club MPP template is available from [Play by the Rules](#). An NSO MPP template is available from [Sport Australia](#).

## Member Protection Information Officers

It is advisable that each club has access to a Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) who can advise members on their rights and provide guidance on the complaint handling process.

There are three steps to becoming a nationally accredited MPIO:

1. Complete the online MPIO training course on the Play by the Rules website:  
<https://www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses>
2. Complete a face-to-face MPIO workshop. For more information, or to register your interest in upcoming workshops, contact Communities, Sport and Recreation on 1800 252 476 or by email [sportrec@communities.tas.gov.au](mailto:sportrec@communities.tas.gov.au)
3. Register on the Play by the Rules database following completion of the course and workshop.

## What to do if a complaint is lodged

It is important that any complaint is dealt with appropriately and within a reasonable time period. Ignoring or mishandling the complaint is likely to exacerbate the issue.

The Play by the Rules website provides advice to assist in dealing with a complaint and offers a free online complaint handling course. When dealing with a complaint the club must follow the grievance procedure outlined in the MPP.

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If there is uncertainty about how to deal with the complaint, clubs should contact their SSO for assistance.

Where the complaint gives rise to the reasonable suspicion that a child is or has been abused or neglected, it must be reported to the Advice and Referral Line on 1800 000 123 and/or police.

## Mediation Resources

When grievances and disputes become difficult to manage internally by sporting organisations, or if the procedures undertaken by the club have not managed to resolve the issue, assistance in the form of mediation services may be a realistic and cost effective alternative. There are several service providers who specialise in mediation services. Mediation can often prevent escalation of a dispute and give all parties the opportunity to speak openly in a safe environment.

- Positive Solutions – (03) 6223 5612 <http://positivesolutions.com.au/>
- Peopleworks – (03) 6210 6800 <https://www.peopleworks.biz/>
- Resolve Dispute Management <http://www.resolvedispute.com.au/>
- Cann Legal – (03) 6425 3334 <https://www.cannlegal.com.au/>

## Other Help Available

Elevating complaints and requesting the support of the relevant SSO and/or NSO taps into the resources and expertise that are available at upper levels within the sport. It can also provide the SSO and NSO with information to inform future strategies in training and policy development.

Play by the Rules has developed a number of resources and provides essential information about complaints handling and mediation.

- Complaints handling: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/complaints-handling>
- Mediation: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/complaints-handling/mediation>
- On-line training: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses>