

# Sunraysia Community Radio Association Inc

ABN: 19 305 406 312

## 106.7 HOT FM

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“PLAYING THE BEST SONGS OF YOUR LIFE”

## STAFF/ VOLUNTEER GRIEVANCES AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Open communication and feedback are regarded as essential elements of a satisfying and productive work environment.

Sunraysia Community Radio Association Inc (SCRA) encourages its employees and volunteers to resolve any issues or concerns that they may have at the earliest opportunity with each other or, failing that, a member from the Committee.

The preferred process involves employees and volunteers resolving issues to their satisfaction internally, without feeling they have to refer to external organisations or to authorities for assistance.

### PURPOSE

In accordance with the Community Broadcasting Codes of practice CODE 1:

**Our responsibilities in broadcasting to meet our community interest**

**1.5 We will have written policies and procedures in place to effectively deal with internal conflict.**

The purpose of this document is to provide an avenue through which employees and volunteers, can resolve work-related complaints as they arise.

### POLICY

**SCRA** will establish mechanisms to promote fast and efficient resolution of workplace issues.

Employees and volunteers should feel comfortable discussing issues with the Station Coordinator or a member/ members of the Committee in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

All formal avenues for the handling of grievances will be fully documented and the employee/volunteer's wishes will be taken into account in determining the appropriate steps and actions.

No employee/ Volunteer will be intimidated or unfairly treated in any respect if they utilise this policy to resolve an issue.

This policy applies to permanent and part-time paid employees and volunteers.

**Policies** can be established or altered only by the Committee: **Procedures** may be altered by the Station Coordinator following committee approval.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of **the Station coordinator** to ensure that:

- They identify, prevent and address potential problems before they become formal grievances;
- They are aware of and committed to the principles of communicating and information sharing with their employees and volunteers;
- All decisions relating to employment practices are made with consideration given to the ramifications for the individual, as well as the organisation in general;
- All grievances will be dealt with in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity;
- All employees and volunteers are treated fairly and without fear of intimidation or any future work place discrimination.

It is the responsibility of **Employees and Volunteers** to ensure that:

- They attempt to resolve any issues through their Station Coordinator and through internal processes at the earliest opportunity.

It is the responsibility of the **Station Coordinator/ Committee** to ensure that:

- All employees and volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to communication and information sharing with their employees;
- Ongoing support and guidance will be provided to all employees in relation to employment and communication issues;
- All managers, supervisors, employees and volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to handling grievances;
- Any grievance that comes to the attention of managers or supervisors is handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity.

## PROCEDURES

### Employment Practices

The Station Coordinator should be aware of the possible ramifications of their actions when dealing with employee/volunteer issues. They must ensure that all employees and volunteers are treated with fairness, equality and respect. Best efforts at all times will be made to keep issues/grievances confidential.

It complies with the Codes of Practice and in accordance with **CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA Associations Incorporation Act 2012 MODEL RULES For an INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION.**

### PART 3—MEMBERS, DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND GRIEVANCES

#### Division 1—Membership

### Grievances and Dispute Resolution

An employee or volunteer who considers that they have a dispute or grievance that they have not been able to resolve directly with any other involved party should raise the matter with the Station Coordinator or member of the Committee (*if the matter relates to the Station*

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*Coordinator*) as a first step towards resolution. The two parties should discuss the matter openly and work together to achieve a desired outcome.

The Station Coordinator or Committee member should follow the steps outlined below:

- Make sure that the employee/ Volunteer feels listened to and supported. You don't have to agree with what they say, but you must make sure that they know you will act on their concerns.
- If more than one person is present, establish the role of each person.
- Outline the process that is to be followed.
- Inform the parties that any information obtained in the conduct of the review is confidential.
- Listen to the complainant. Obtain a chronology of events (who, what, why, when, how etc).
- Run through the applicable policies and procedures (e.g. the organisation's anti-discrimination policy) with the complainant.
- Ask the complainant what kind of outcome they are hoping for (best case scenario) and then talk them through next steps: e.g. you will discuss the matter confidentially with the Station coordinator or Committee member to determine a way in which to deal with the issue and report back to them within a set timeframe.
- Provide the complainant with the organisation's confidentiality and non-victimisation agreement. Explain that they cannot be adversely affected because they have made a complaint, and explain who to report matters to internally if they do feel that they are being adversely affected.
- Provide the complainant with plenty of time to ask questions.
- Offer the complainant assistance (such as counselling through an Employee Assistance Program) or a way to get home safely if they are visibly upset.
- Provide the complainant with a direct contact number that they can call if they have any concerns or queries.
- Take accurate and detailed notes of all conversations (including dates, people involved) and attach any supporting documentation.
- If deemed necessary, provide the employee/volunteer with a written summary of the meeting and clarification of the next steps to be taken.

The Station Coordinator/ Committee member must ensure that the manner in which the meeting is conducted will be conducive to maintaining positive working relationships, and will provide a fair, objective and independent analysis of the situation.

All parties are to maintain complete confidentiality at all times.

If the matter is not resolved and the employee/ volunteer wishes to pursue it, the issue should be discussed with additional members from the Committee, then, if necessary, the Station Coordinator. Again, the matter is to be discussed openly and objectively with management to ensure it is fully understood. If the grievance/dispute is one of a confidential or serious nature involving the employee or volunteer's Manager, the complainant may discuss the issue with the Committee seeking support for an external arbitrator.

### **Investigating a Grievance or Dispute**

Procedural fairness and transparency can make or break a workplace investigation.

Maintaining procedural fairness means that you can:

- protect the interests of the participants in the investigation;

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- enhance the credibility of the investigation process;
- rely on the investigation (and your findings) when making employment decisions; and
- defend your employment decisions in a court or tribunal.

Following are some pointers to ensure that a workplace investigation is procedurally fair. The investigator should ensure that:

- the respondent is aware of all the allegations made against them in sufficient detail;
- the respondent is allowed a reasonable opportunity, including adequate time, to respond to each of the allegations;
- the investigation is carried out in a reasonable time frame;
- all participants are given the opportunity to have a support person in the interviews pertaining to the investigation;
- all participants are required to maintain confidentiality and sign a confidentiality agreement;
- the investigator has no personal interest or bias in the matter being investigated;
- all participants are given the opportunity to respond to any contradictory evidence;
- the investigator makes reasonable and diligent enquiries to ensure that there is sufficient evidence before making findings on the balance of probabilities.

### **The Importance of Impartiality**

It is critical to ensure that the person responsible for carrying out an investigation is impartial. The investigator must not have a vested interest in the outcome of the matter. Employees/ Volunteers will often consider that the President or Station Coordinator is not sufficiently impartial because of their involvement and role in the workplace/ organisation. If such a concern is raised, it's important to consider:

- whether the use of an external investigator is necessary to ensure impartiality;
- whether any conflicts of interest need to be disclosed (e.g. if any individuals are friends outside the workplace); and
- whether the investigator has handled any previous disciplinary matters.

If there is the possibility that a person's employment/or role as a Volunteer are terminated if the allegations against that person are proven as part of an investigation, then you should seriously consider the use of an external investigator to ensure that your investigation and the process followed will stand up in any potential court proceeding.