

# 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 our constituent documents, rules and by-laws, to hear a complaint that has been referred to it by the CEO or MPIO.
2. The number of Tribunal panel members required to be present throughout the hearing will be 3.
3. The Tribunal panel members will be provided with a copy of all the relevant correspondence, reports or information received and sent by CEO or MPIO 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 CEO or MPIO 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 CEO or MPIO 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 complainant may be assisted by a support person at a Tribunal hearing. For example, where the complainant 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 CEO or MPIO 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 CEO or MPIO of the need to reschedule the hearing and the CEO or MPIO 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. The respondent(s) will have the opportunity to make submissions to the Tribunal in relation to any sanctions that may be imposed.
25. Within 48 hours of the Tribunal delivering its decision, the Tribunal chairperson will:
  - forward a notice of the Tribunal's decision to the CEO or MPIO, 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 Gridiron Australia 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 Chief Executive Officer within 7 days of the decision being made.
29. If the letter of appeal is not received by the CEO 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 board to review and to decide whether there are sufficient grounds for the appeal to proceed. The board 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.

