

*‘Your Voice in the Valley’*

**2YAS**

Yass Community Radio Assn. Inc.

Policy No. 5 .1

**Policy for Handling Complaints.**

**Purpose.**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the most appropriate way for Yass Community Radio Association Inc., to respond to complaints, comments from members of the public and disputes between members or between members and the Association.

1. Yass Community Radio Assn. Inc acknowledges the right of its listeners, members and volunteers to comment and make complaints in writing concerning alleged non-compliance with licence conditions in the Act, the requirements outlined in the Codes and the rules of the Association.
2. We will broadcast at least one on-air announcement each week that contains information about the Codes and where listeners can get a copy.
3. The Association also acknowledges that there will be from time to time situations between members and between members and the Association which require resolution.
4. The Association will make every reasonable effort to resolve complaints.
5. The Association will ensure that-
	1. Written complaints received by mail or email, or by a presenter during studio hours, will be forwarded as soon as possible, by fax, email or personal delivery, to the President. The President will ensure that its receipt is acknowledged in writing to the complainant.
	2. Verbal complaints to any member of the Association, will be considered as feedback. Complainants must be in writing if they are to be considered further. Member to member disputes and complaints of non-compliance with Association rules or policies must also be in writing.
	3. The President will conscientiously consider complaints received and if he/she deems necessary, instigate a preliminary investigation. This may be carried out by the President alone or with others appointed by the President. If it is deemed by the investigation that there is no case to answer, this will be communicated to the complainant in writing.
	4. Where the preliminary investigation deems there is a case to answer with regard to the complaint, the Board will appoint a properly constituted committee of three to hear the complaint and recommend any action to the Board. One member of the above committee may be a nominee of the subject of the complaint.
	5. Complaints relating to potentially defamatory material must be immediately relayed to our insurance company, reported to the Board and an investigating committee set up.
	6. If a member of the Association is the subject of the complaint, that member must be given at least two weeks notice of the hearing, a copy of the complaint and must be given the opportunity to attend the hearing and offer his/her defence. A support person may attend the hearing with the subject, but should have minimal input or be moral support only.
	7. If the investigating committee finds there is a case to answer it may recommend to the Board that any or all of the following actions be taken,

i counselling,

ii retraining,

iii close supervision while on air,

iv suspension or permanent removal from presenter duties or,

v expulsion from the Association.

h. If the Board suspends or expels a member, the Secretary shall within seven days after the action is taken, cause notice to be given to the member, of the action taken, the reasons given by the Board for taking that action and the right of appeal. The member may appeal to the Association, in writing to the Secretary, within seven days of receiving the notice of the Board resolution.

i. The suspension or expulsion does not take effect until the expiry of the appeal time or the confirmation by the Association of the Board resolution.

6. Complaints will be responded to in writing within sixty days as required by the Act, and the response will include a copy of the appropriate Code if applicable. If the response is from the investigating committee, that committee will be responsible for that response.

1. Complainants will be advised in writing that they have the right to refer their complaints about a code matter to the Australian Communication and Media Authority, provided they have first:
	* 1. formally lodged their complaint with the licensee, and
		2. received a substantive response from the licensee and are dissatisfied with that response, or did not receive a response from the licensee within sixty days after making the complaint.
2. A written complaint or response can be a letter, fax or email.
3. Yass Community Radio Assn, Inc. will maintain a record of complaints and responses for a period of at least two years from the date of the complaint. The Secretary/Public Officer will be charged with the safe keeping of all documentation and audio copies of the subject material broadcast. This material must include-

a. the date and time the complaint was received.

b. the name and address of the complainant

c. the substance of the complaint, and

d. the substance and date of the Association’s response.

1. The record of complaints and responses will be made available to ACMA on request.
2. Refer to the policy on Internal Disputes for more detail on how to handle these.

**Authorisation**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Yass community Radio Association Incorporated, at its meeting held on 8th December 2009. .

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Secretary President

Yass Community Radio Assn. Inc.