



COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE HANDLING PROCEDURE

1. Policy Statement

The Australian Friesian Warmblood Horse Society (AFWHS) is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and transparent environment. This policy outlines the procedure for addressing grievances raised by members, staff, volunteers, or stakeholders, ensuring fair and timely resolution in accordance with best practice. This procedure is designed to support and uphold the principles of the AFWHS Constitution. Nothing in this procedure shall be interpreted or applied in a manner that overrides or contradicts the Constitution.

2. Purpose

To provide a clear framework for managing grievances related to:

- Conduct of members, committee members, or volunteers
- Decisions made by the Society or its committees
- Breach of Society rules, policies, or ethical standards

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All AFWHS members
- Committee members, paid representatives and volunteers
- Breeders, owners, and affiliated organisations
- Any individual or group with a legitimate interest in AFWHS activities

4. Guiding Principles

- **Confidentiality:** All grievances will be treated with discretion and privacy.
- **Impartiality:** Investigations and decisions will be free from bias or conflict of interest.
- **Timeliness:** Grievances will be acknowledged and resolved promptly.
- **Respect:** All parties will be treated with dignity and courtesy throughout the process.
- **Protection from Reprisal:** Individuals lodging grievances in good faith will not face retaliation.

5. Grievance Procedure

5.1 Informal Resolution

The complainant is encouraged to resolve the issue directly with the individual(s) involved. A committee member may facilitate informal mediation if appropriate.

5.2 Formal Grievance Submission

If unresolved, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the AFWHS Secretary.
The written grievance must include:

- Complainant's name and contact details
- Description of the grievance
- Relevant dates, events, and individuals involved
- Desired outcome or resolution

5.3 Acknowledgement

The Secretary will acknowledge receipt within 5 business days.
The complainant will be informed of the next steps and expected timelines.

5.4 Investigation

A Grievance Panel (minimum of 3 impartial committee members) will be appointed.
The panel may:

- Interview relevant parties
- Review documentation and evidence
- Seek external advice if necessary

5.5 Decision

A determination will be made within 21 business days of receiving the grievance. The decision will be communicated in writing to all parties. If upheld, appropriate remedial actions will be taken.

5.6 Appeal

Appeals must be lodged within 14 days of the decision. Appeals will be reviewed by an independent subcommittee or external mediator. The appeal decision is final.

6. Record Keeping

All grievances and outcomes will be documented and securely stored for a minimum of 5 years.
Records will be used to inform policy improvements and training.

7. Review and Amendment

This policy will be reviewed biennially or as required to ensure compliance with legal standards and organisational needs.

Created By	Date	Revised
A. Keogh	25 September 2025	