



Albury Women's Shed Inc

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AWS Grievance Policy

Contents

1. Purpose and aims of the Albury Women's Shed	2
2. What is a grievance?	2
3. Grievance policy - purpose	2
4. Grievance policy - scope	2
5. Grievance procedure guidelines: Process and Outcomes.....	3
6. Appeal process.....	4
7. Review	4

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1. Purpose and aims of the Albury Women's Shed

Albury Women's Shed ('AWS', 'the Shed') is a community-based, non-commercial organisation accessible to all women. It seeks to provide a safe, friendly, and healthy environment where women can work on meaningful projects at their own pace, in their own time, in the company of other women.

Albury Women's Shed aims to:

- Provide a supportive environment for women to gather, volunteer, work, teach, learn, and seek friendship with other like-minded women.
- Maintain an open-door policy and not reject any woman on the basis of race, sexual preference, disability, religion, or age. However, special conditions, or participation restrictions may apply if:
 - There's a risk to the physical, emotional, or social safety of the member or other Shed users;
 - The member requires assistance from a carer (to be provided by the member);
 - The member, or other person, has, at any time, been prohibited from attending the facility or participating in Shed activities for any reason.
- Promote and maintain the mental, physical, social, emotional, and economic wellbeing of people in the community.
- Nurture and sustain a fruitful and positive relationship with the Thurgoona Men's Shed (TMS) that encourages the long-term sustainability and growth of both organisations.

2. What is a grievance?

A grievance is any type of complaint, concern or problem related to the Women's Shed environment, particularly relationships within the Shed. A grievance may be about any act, omission, situation or decision that you think is unfair, discriminatory or unjustified.

A grievance is brought to the attention of the Committee by a 'member' who perceives another member, the 'impacted member', to have behaved inappropriately and against the instruction and intent of the Albury Women's Shed Code of Conduct guidelines.

3. Grievance policy - purpose

The Grievance policy outlines the process to be followed if there is grievance against the Code of Conduct by a member of the Shed.

4. Grievance policy - scope

This Grievance policy covers:

- 5 Grievance procedure guidelines: Process & Outcomes
- 6 Appeals process.
- 7 Review process.

5. Grievance procedure guidelines: Process and Outcomes

The grievance procedure will remain:

Completely Confidential

- The fewest number of people possible will be made aware of the personal information contained in the complaint.

Impartial

- Both sides will have an opportunity to detail the complaint. No assumptions will be made and no action will be taken until all relevant information has been collected and assessed.

Free From Repercussions

- No action will ever be taken against anyone for making a complaint in good faith, especially where their concerns have been dealt with promptly and discreetly.

Timely

- All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The Women's Shed will resolve all complaints within 4 weeks. In exceptional circumstances a complaint may require additional time to resolve, however, all relevant volunteers and/or participants will be informed of developments.

The process for lodging a grievance is outlined below.

Reporting a potential breach of the code by another member

- If a member believes that another member has breached the Code of Conduct in a minor way, and is comfortable doing so, they may attempt to provide informal feedback to the member regarding the behaviour as a first step. Direct, respectful feedback between adults is strongly encouraged and prompt, informal, amicable resolution of concerns is always the preferred option.
- If the impacted member dismisses this feedback, does not address the alleged breach, responds in a combative or hostile manner, or for more major breaches, the member should alert the Operations Manager or a President of the alleged breach (via email or in person in the first instance). The Operations Manager or President will then notify other Committee members if necessary, regarding the alleged breach and address the behaviour following one of the steps outlined below.
- The core decision-making group will consist of the President, Secretary and Operations Manager, who will be privy to all details of the complaint.
- If the complaint is made against a member of the Committee, including the President, Secretary or Operations Manager, that member must exclude themselves from the decision-making. In this instance a third Committee member will be included to replace the excluded member.

Step 1: Initial discussion and information gathering

This step aims to promote fairness and ensure that potential transgressions of the Code of Conduct are handled in an unbiased and transparent way.

Parts a, b, c, and d of this step seek to provide all members with equal opportunity to respond to any alleged breaches.

- a. The impacted member will be contacted by email, via the Secretary, to make them aware of the alleged breach. This email will invite them to provide a response outlining their version of events and/or provide additional context and information before next steps and/or the outcome is decided.
- b. The impacted member may provide their response via email to the decision-making group, or meet with a minimum of two nominated Committee members in person in a private discussion. If the impacted member elects to meet in person, they may bring along another member to the meeting as a support person.

- c. Once the impacted member has provided their response, the nominated Committee members should hold a private and confidential meeting to determine the appropriate next step and/or follow-up actions.
- d. Any recommended actions should be commensurate with: the seriousness of the breach; risks to the impacted member themselves or other members; risks to the Albury Women's Shed or the Thurgoona Men's Shed; risks to the community or other stakeholders.

OUTCOMES

Step 2: Verbal warning - for initial and minor breaches

If the Committee (per Step 1) determines that the code has been breached in a minor way, or in circumstances where the impacted member has *not* received a prior warning:

- A verbal warning will be issued, in private, to a member who has breached the code by at least two Committee members.

Step 3: Written warning - for repeated and more serious breaches

If the Committee (per Step 1) determines that the code has been breached in a more serious way, or in circumstances where the impacted member *has* received prior warning(s):

- The Committee will write and approve a written warning which will be provided to the impacted member via email or by a hand-delivered letter.

Step 4: Membership suspension - for persistent, repeated, and major breaches

If the Committee (per Step 1) determines that the code has been breached in a major way, or in circumstances where the member *has* received repeated warning(s) and has persisted with the problematic behaviour or action:

- The Committee may suspend the individual's membership for a specified period of time. The Committee will approve the duration of the suspension in a private meeting and inform the member of this decision in writing (via email or hand-delivered letter).

Step 5: Membership cancellation - for ongoing, persistent, repeated, and major breaches and where a member demonstrates no sign of compliance

If the Committee (per Step 1) determines that the code has been breached in a major way, or in circumstances where the member *has* received ongoing and repeated warning(s) and has persisted with the problematic behaviour without seeking to address it:

- The Committee may approve that the member's membership be cancelled in a private meeting.
- The Committee will inform the member of the cancellation in writing (via email or by a hand-delivered letter).

Step 6: Feedback to the complainant

The Committee will provide feedback to the complainant once a decision has been made.

6. Appeal process

The Committee's decision is final; but if either party feels that the committee has failed to consider something relevant, or new information becomes available, the member can ask the Committee to review the decision on that basis.

7. Review

The Grievance Policy to be reviewed by the Committee or a sub-committee as decided by the Committee, as required.