



HBWN COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The **HBWN Code of Ethics** (see Appendix I below, or the HBWN website: www.hbwn.com.au) is a guideline for encouraging a positive experience for all of its members equally, during their involvement with the HBWN. When a member feels another member has breached the HBWN Code of Ethics, they are asked to use the **HBWN Complaints Procedure** outlined below in the first instance and as soon as possible, to resolve their concerns – not only for their own benefit, but potentially for the benefit of other members as well.

The current President can also assign a committee member to support a member in completing the Complaints Procedure and in finding a resolution, should that be wanted.

PROCEDURE

Step 1 – Seeking Resolution via Verbal, Informal Means:

The first step is to speak directly with the person you feel has engaged in behaviour which is undesirable and is in breach of the HBWN Code of Ethics.

Please see Appendix II.

Hopefully this will enable an agreement to be found which is satisfactory to all parties concerned.

If an agreement cannot be reached by these methods, or the verbal agreement to change the undesirable behaviour is not honoured, or when a member feels intimidated by the party concerned and/or feels unable to complete Step 1, then go straight to Step 2.

Step 2 – Seeking Resolution by Submitting a Written Complaint:

Complete and submit a written **HBWN Complaints Form** (see page 3 below). If assistance is required to complete the Complaints Form, then please ask a committee member and this will be made available.

The submission will then be assessed in confidence, by the HBWN Executive Committee (i.e. the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer), who will then decide the next course of action.

Note: if the complaint involves a committee member, that committee member will be excluded from the initial assessment of the submitted complaint.

If it is determined that the complaint does not involve a breach of the HBWN Code of Ethics, the complainant will be contacted by a committee member and notified in writing of this decision.

If it is determined that the complaint does involve a breach of the HBWN Code of Ethics, the complainant will be contacted by a committee member and whenever possible, assisted to follow Step 1 (if not already attempted), either alone or supported by the presence of a committee member.

When resolution to a valid complaint cannot be reached by following Steps 1 and 2, then Step 3 will be implemented.

Step 3 – Seeking Resolution of a Written Complaint Unresolved by Steps 1 & 2:

When a written complaint submitted by a member is determined to be valid by the committee and remains unresolved by implementing Step 1 as outlined above, then the Secretary will write to the member/s whose behaviour has allegedly been in breach of the Code of Ethics. A committee member will then, preferably in person, deliver this letter to the member/s involved.

The letter will inform them of the complaint received and state the alleged breach of the Code of Ethics.

It will also invite this member to provide a written statement in reply, to be submitted to the committee, either agreeing with the alleged breach or stating why they feel the alleged breach is invalid.

The committee will then use their best judgement to reach a conclusion, based on the evidence provided by both parties and the HBWN Code of Ethics. The committee will then suggest a recommended course of action to bring about an amicable resolution.

All parties involved will be notified in writing of the committee's decision and the recommended course of action. For example, for complaints of a less serious nature, which have been found to be a breach of the Code of Ethics, the member/s involved will receive a written reminder of the Code of Ethics and a request that they abide by them.

A committee member will, when necessary, be available to support the fulfilment of the recommended action and will follow-up with all members involved, to ensure the best possible outcome has been reached.

Should the breach of the Code of Conduct be repeated, or of a serious nature, the committee will request the member to resign from membership of the HBWN and no longer attend HBWN events.

HBWN COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – COMPLAINTS FORM

I am presenting a complaint for consideration by the HBWN Executive Committee because I believe a breach of the HBWN Code of Ethics has occurred.

1. The complaint involves the following HBWN member/s:

2. When did the alleged event/s occur?

(Note: the committee may decide **not** to consider complaints received more than 12 months after the alleged event/s occurred.)

3. What happened?

Please give details of what you say happened, where it happened, who was involved or present, etc. (If more room is needed, please attach other pages.)

If applicable, please provide any documents or other evidence which support your complaint.

4. What would you like to see happen to resolve this complaint?

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date form submitted: _____

Return by post to: HBWN Secretary, PO Box 5458, Port Macquarie NSW 2444

Or by email to: HBWN Secretary – hbwnsecretary@gmail.com

HBWN COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Appendix I – HBWN Code of Ethics

An organisation's reputation for ethical practices is one of its most valued assets.

This reputation is achieved through the efforts of all its members and their avoidance of any activity that might reflect unfavourably on their own or the organisation's integrity and good name.

The following principles are applied by our members when carrying out membership activities.

- We do not use hard-sell tactics on any member or guest of the organisation.
- We keep the membership list and directory private and confidential.
- We will follow up on contacts courteously, with integrity and in a non-threatening manner.
- We will support others through referrals, advice and information.
- We will use the network to build relationships, make friends and build trust with other members.

Appendix II – A Conflict Resolution Technique

A useful format for approaching someone to express how you feel is the Conflict Resolution technique called “PNA”, that is: “Positive, Negative, Alternative”.

If this approach is unfamiliar to you, best to prepare what you are going to say ahead of time. Avoid blaming, accusing or defensiveness. Be clear, concise and respectful as you stand up for your rights.

Here is an example:

[Positive] “It’s really great that you’ve found something you’re so passionate about!”

[Negative] “It’s not something I am personally interested in...”

[Alternative] “What I can do, is refer people to you, whom I think might like what you are offering!”

There are no guarantees as to how the other person will respond, but this technique provides a clear way to state how you feel, without blame or defensiveness.