



# MELBOURNE CAMERA CLUB

## MCC Complaint/disputes Handling Policy

### **Policy**

The Melbourne Camera Club (MCC) encourages a culture where all complaints are dealt with in confidence, respectfully, in a supportive environment and responded to in a timely manner. Complaints are of concern to MCC whether internal or from an external source, and discussion will be undertaken with all parties to reach a solution. There will be no discrimination against or towards any person/s or organisation/s for their part in presenting reliable and accurate information with respect to a complaint/dispute to an MCC Board Member. Any internal complaint received by MCC that is deemed to be vexatious or frivolous in nature will not be further dealt with by the MCC Board. The MCC welcomes and encourages valid verbal and/or written complaints and recognises that it is through this process that improvements in club functioning are achieved.

This policy is intended to ensure that the MCC handles complaint/disputes fairly, efficiently and effectively. It provides guidance to members and guests who wish to make a complaint/dispute. Complaint/disputes will be taken seriously and acted on promptly. All sides of the story will be listened to and people involved will be treated fairly. The MCC will stay neutral with respect to the complaint/dispute. Parties involved will be kept informed about the progress of the

complaint/dispute and confidentiality will be maintained if possible. The MCC will try and protect parties against victimization which might arise from the complaint/dispute. Accurate records will be kept and decision making will be based on information gathered not on personal views. Any disciplinary action taken will be relative to the breach and in line with the constitution. This policy applies to all categories of MCC membership as well as guests and contractors, with respect to any activities undertaken by the MCC.

## **Definitions**

Under this policy a complaint is defined as: an event, condition, rule or practice which the person lodging believes violates their rights, treats them unfairly, or causes them any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness in their role/association with the MCC.

- A minor (informal) complaint is an issue or occurrence that is resolved at the first point of contact, with all parties being in agreement and satisfied with the outcome.
- A significant (formal) complaint is an issue or occurrence that is not resolved at the first point of contact, and needs further investigation.
- A dispute is defined as a situation where two or more individuals or parties cannot agree on a particular matter or issue and have been unable to resolve their positions by communication and discussion.

Under this policy where the causal factor of a complaint is found to be a member's behaviour or performance the matter will be managed by the Complaint/Disputes Resolution Coordinator/s and appropriate MCC Board process.

## **Responsibilities**

The MCC will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaint/disputes, if possible within 5 working days from reception. Complaint/disputes will be assessed and prioritised in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the

issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

The MCC is committed to communicating with the complainant as soon as possible about:

- the complaint/disputes process
- the expected time frames for actions
- the progress of the complaint/dispute and reasons for any delay
- their likely involvement in the process, and
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint/dispute.

The MCC will advise people as soon as possible if any part of a complaint/dispute is unable to be dealt with, and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaint/disputes may be directed (if known and appropriate). The MCC will also advise people as soon as possible if and time frames for responding to complaint/dispute cannot be met, and the reason for the delay.

## **Procedures**

Complaint/disputes can be made orally or in writing to any MCC Board Member who will aim to resolve the complaint/dispute at the outset. If the complaint/dispute is not resolved at the outset, it will be reported to the Complaints/disputes Resolution Coordinator. Complainants will then be encouraged to provide their complaint in written form. Receipt of each complaint/dispute will be acknowledged, preferably within 5 working days, including a copy of this Policy for the complainant's information.

The record of the complaint/dispute will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint/dispute and the date received
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint/dispute and the outcome/s they want

- Any other relevant information
- Any additional support the person making a complaint/dispute requires.

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint/dispute, the following will be considered:

- Whether the issue/s raised in the complaint/dispute is/are within the MCC's control.
- How serious, complicated or urgent is the complaint/dispute.
- Whether the complaint/dispute raises concerns about people's health and safety.
- How the person making the complaint/dispute is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint/dispute is delayed.
- Where there is more than one issue raised, it will be determined whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.
- Whether a resolution of the complaint/dispute requires the involvement of other internal or external parties.

The complaint/dispute will then be registered and the Complaint/dispute's Resolution Coordinator will undertake the following:

- Assessment and possible investigation of the complaint/dispute and decision/s already made, and/or
- Facilitated resolution, where a person not connected with the complaint/dispute (either the MCC Board or the Complaints/disputes Resolution Coordinator) will undertake a review of the matter and attempt to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties.

### **Investigating the complaint/dispute**

After assessing the complaint/dispute management options include:

- Giving the person making a complaint/dispute information or an explanation.
- Gathering information about the issue, person or area that the complaint/dispute is about.
- Investigating the claims made in the complaint/dispute by:
  - Seeking all relevant information from the complainant;
  - Obtaining all relevant information from club members/person being complained against.

The person making the complaint/dispute will be kept up-to-date on progress, particularly if there are any delays. The outcome should be communicated to the complainant and the member/person complained against using the most appropriate medium. Actions taken will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

Each complaint/dispute will be addressed with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner with decision making based on information gathered not on personal views. The person handling a complaint/dispute will not involve anyone whose conduct or service is being complained about. Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly.

Each complaint/dispute will be assessed on its merits, and will involve the person/people making the complaint/disputes and/or their support persons, as far as possible. Accurate records will be kept and the identity of people making complaint/disputes will be kept confidential where this is practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

## **Outcome**

Following consideration of the complaint/dispute and any investigation into the issues raised, the outcome will be

communicated to all parties in relation to the complaint/dispute as soon as practicable and in any event, not more than 45 days after receipt of the complaint/dispute by the MCC. Both parties will be contacted and advised of:

- The outcome of the complaint/dispute and any action taken
- The reason/s for the decision
- The remedy or resolution/s proposed or put in place
- Any reason for delay greater than 45 days from receipt of the complaint

Records will be kept about how the complaint/dispute was managed and the outcome/s of the complaint/dispute including:

- Whether it, or any aspect, of it was substantiated
- Any recommendations made to address problems identified
- Decisions made on those recommendations
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or systemic causes.

Outcomes will be implemented, monitored and reported to MCC Board Meetings and/or to the Complaint/disputes Resolution Coordinator.

### **Recording Complaint/disputes**

The Complaint/disputes Resolution Coordinator must ensure that a Complaint/disputes Register is established, maintained and kept up-to-date. The Register will comprise a copy of each Complaint/dispute report (See below). At a minimum, the report should include the following information about every complaint/dispute that is received:

- Date complaint/dispute is made;
- Nature of complaint/dispute;
- Action taken to investigate the complaint/dispute;
- Date resolved;
- How resolved.

The Complaint/dispute Resolution Coordinator must periodically review the Register to check that complaint/disputes are being handled appropriately, including in accordance with this Policy, and within the required timeframes. **The Complaint/disputes Register must be tabled at club Board meetings.**

Approved by the MCC Board: December 2019  
For Review: December 2021

## MCC Complaint/disputes Report

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Date of this Report  |           |
| Date complaint/dispute was notified  |           |
| Is the complaint/dispute significant as defined by the MCC Complaints Policy?  | No<br>Yes |
| If yes – date notified to Board  |           |
| Action taken to investigate the complaint/dispute  |           |
| Who is responsible for ensuring this action is carried out?  |           |
| Date action completed  |           |
| The name of the person or persons who were the subject of the complaint/dispute  |           |
| Does complaint/dispute indicate a recurring or systemic issue?<br>If yes, what action was taken to ensure the issue does not recur / that systemic issue has been addressed? | No<br>Yes |
| How was the complaint/dispute resolved?  |           |
| Date complaint/dispute resolved  |           |