



# QBLAI COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## Policy Statement

Queensland Blue Light Association Incorporated (QBLAI) is committed to being open and responsive to any complaints offered by our employees, volunteers, contractors, members, supporters or members of the public. QBLAI will endeavour to seek an outcome to a complaint which is satisfactory to all parties.

## Objectives

QBLAI will ensure the complaints process is consistent across the Association with any investigations being undertaken promptly, appropriately and confidentially. We will ensure appropriate action is taken to resolve any complaints and endeavour to seek an outcome which is satisfactory to all parties. We will seek to manage complaints in a timely manner and maintain appropriate communication with the complainant throughout the process.

## Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all complaints received by QBLAI from employees, volunteers (staff), contractors, members, or members of the public.

This Policy and Procedure does NOT apply to:

- Complaints made against Queensland Police Service (QPS) Employees. These complaints can be received by State Office but are then forwarded to the QPS State Coordinator, QPCYWA who will manage the complaint in line with the appropriate QPS Policy and Procedure. QBLAI will also determine whether a letter is to be provided to Ethical Standards Command regarding complaints received against QPS officers who are Agents of the Association.

## Guiding principles

- QBLAI will maintain a complaints register to ensure that all complaints are responded to in a timely and impartial manner;
- QBLAI will ensure that all complaints are appropriately recorded, considered and retained for record keeping purposes;
- QBLAI encourages all complaints to be expressed through the formal complaints procedure;
- QBLAI will ensure the complainant is informed of the process to be followed and maintain regular communication with the complainant throughout the process;
- QBLAI will provide assistance to those that wish to submit a formal complaint by verbal means by way of documenting the complaint on behalf of the complainant for them to sign off as an accurate reflection of their complaint;
- QBLAI will address complaints in a confidential and timely manner and will endeavour to acknowledge all complaints within 48 hours of receipt at State Office;
- QBLAI will ensure that the complaint investigation process is impartial with no assumptions being made or any action taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered;
- QBLAI will endeavour to ensure that complaints will be managed without retribution for the complainant and will take all necessary steps to ensure that no victimization occurs against anyone who makes a complaint;
- QBLAI will take reasonable steps to ensure that any complaints made are not vexatious and will take appropriate action (where appropriate) against anyone found to be making vexatious complaints;



- The State Coordinator is the main contact to whom complaints should be directed to through [admin@bluelightqld.org](mailto:admin@bluelightqld.org) ;
- QBLAI recognises the rights of individuals to approach an external agency if the formal complaints procedure has not resolved the issue to their satisfaction. Refer to the 'Raise a Concern About a Charity' webpage on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) site - <http://www.acnc.gov.au>

### **Roles and responsibilities Complainant**

The Complainant is expected to:

- Inform the Association about concerns in writing ensuring that as much detail as possible is provided in the complaint including what happened, dates and times of events (where possible), whether any witnesses were present, along with what outcome the complainant is seeking;
- Where a written complaint is not possible, the Complainant should provide as much information to the individual in receipt of the complaint to allow them to capture all information in the document for the complainant to sign as true and accurate.
- Participate in good faith and have regard to facts, relevant policies or procedures and the particulars of the circumstances;
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

### **QBLAI state coordinator/state administrator**

The State Coordinator and/or State Administrator are responsible for maintaining confidentiality throughout the process. They are expected to:

- Record the particulars of the complaint on the Complaints Register and endeavour to acknowledge the complaint within 48hrs of receipt;
- Review the details of the complaint and identify an appropriate Investigation Officer to undertake the investigation into the complaint;
- Maintain regular communication with the Complainant throughout the process;
- Review the findings of all investigations and make a determination on any proposed course of action.
- Advise the Complainant of the outcome of the complaint once the investigation has been finalised, as well as advising the Respondent (if applicable) of any proposed course of action.

### **Investigation officer**

The Investigation Officer is responsible for reviewing the complaint in the spirit of achieving resolution, procedural fairness, sensitivity and confidentiality to the parties involved. The Investigation Officer may be the State Coordinator or State Administrator, or other responsible person at a Branch level as appointed by State Office.

The Investigation Officer is expected to:

- Ensure the complainant is informed of the process and engaged in the resolution process;
- Meet with any identified witnesses, advise them of their right to a support person and document any information relevant to the complaint;
- Meet and interview the Respondent (if applicable);
- Provide a written document for review out-lining findings and recommendations of any proposed course of action.

### **Witnesses**

Witnesses may request a support person to be present during any investigation interview they are asked to attend. A Witness is expected to:



- Put forward any evidence relevant to the complaint during the investigation interview;
- Participate in good faith and have regard to facts, policies and procedures;
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

### **Respondent**

Respondents may request the right to a support person being present during any investigation interview they are asked to attend. A Respondent is expected to:

- Put forward version of events in response to the complaint and provide any relevant information during the investigation interview;
- Participate in good faith and have regard to facts, policies and procedures;
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

### **Qblai state board**

The QBLAI State Board is expected to:

- Ensure the Complaints Policy and Procedure is adhered to and is consistent with any applicable legislation;
- Review any serious complaints and findings on a monthly basis as an agenda item at an Association Board Meeting.

### **Procedure Submitting a Complaint**

For a Branch volunteer or a member of the public who wishes to make a complaint, the Complaints Policy and Procedure document will be made available at a Branch level for their reference. Where possible, complaints should be initially received by the Branch Coordinator in writing. Where a written complaint is not possible, the complainant may provide a verbal complaint which will be documented by the Branch Coordinator or nominated delegate with the complainant signing off the file note as a true and accurate reflection of their complaint.

### **Receiving and Recording a Complaint**

A complaint, once documented, is to be forwarded to [admin@bluelightqld.org](mailto:admin@bluelightqld.org) - QBLAI will acknowledge the complaint within 48hrs of receipt, where possible, and update the complaints register. Where the complaint is against a QPS employee, QBLAI will forward the complaint and any other documentation to the QPS State Coordinator, QPCYWA for forwarding onto QPS.

### **Assessing the Complaint**

QBLAI will identify whether the complaint can be investigated internally or whether consideration should be given for the complaint to be investigated by an external investigator. If it is to be investigated internally, it will then be determined whether the investigation will occur locally at a Branch level, or by State Office. Once this is determined, an appropriate Investigation Office will be identified, and the complaint and any other relevant documentation will be forwarded to the Investigation Officer for actioning. If the complaint is to be investigated externally, Terms of Reference will be developed, and the Complaints Officer will promptly forward these along with the original complaint to the appropriate external agency.

### **Investigating the Complaint**

The Investigating Officer will contact the Complainant and advise them of their role and the process to be followed, and obtain any additional information from the Complainant as required. After reviewing the



details of the complaint, the Investigating Officer will identify whether any witnesses need to be formally interviewed. The Investigating Officer will then meet with any Respondents to the Complaint and ensure that a Respondent has been provided the right to a Support Person being present at any meetings.

The Investigating Officer will review all evidence obtained, produce a report of findings including any recommendations on a proposed course of action. The Investigating Officer will then forward the report to QBLAI State Office, for further discussion with the State Board members as appropriate.

### **Finalising the Complaint**

QBLAI State Office (State Coordinator and/or State Administrator) will formulate a response to the Complainant advising them of the outcome and any action taken (where appropriate) to remedy their complaint. The Complainant will be advised that any decisions made by QBLAI are final. The QBLAI State Coordinator or State Administrator or delegated representative will then inform the Respondent (if applicable) of any proposed course of action. The Respondent will also be advised that any decisions made by QBLAI are final. The State Coordinator, State Administrator or delegated representative will update the Complaints Register and close off the complaint.

### **Monitoring Complaints for Improvement**

The Complaints Officer will analyse all complaints on a quarterly basis and provide reports to the Executive Management Team highlighting any trends or areas of concern that may require improvement.