QUEENSLAND BLUE LIGHT ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

POLICY

Complaints

ABN 67 047 589 753

Incorporated Association No. 1478

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 will apply to all complaints received from employees, volunteers, contractors, members, or members of the public.

This policy 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 Policing Coordinator for QLD Blue Light 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.

A copy of this policy is available on the QBLAI website and on the branch dashboard.

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 complaint 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.
- Complains should be directed to the Business Manager 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

Managing Complaints

Where possible QBLAI will resolve complaints received at the first point of contact. Complaints will be dealt with promptly and impartially with an emphasis on solving the problem.

External complaints regarding staff behaviour, including discrimination, bullying and harassment will be treated seriously by QBLAI and managed promptly and confidentially, ensuring that all individuals, including the witnesses, are not victimised. At any time, an individual may withdraw a complaint, seek assistance or lodge a complaint with an external agency, as appropriate.

Where required by legislation, QBLAI will notify relevant external agencies and reporting bodies of the matter as necessary.

Complaints will be assessed and prioritised in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. Determination will be made whether it can be investigated internally, or an external agency/investigator is required.

Internally managed complaints will be addressed consistently and in a timely manner. QBLAI will:

1. Register the complaint.
2. Assess the complaint details.
3. Initiate an investigation.
4. Monitor the investigation.
5. Finalise the investigation/complaint.
6. Respond to the individual.
7. Record the investigation decision and appropriate case notes.

Receiving a Complaint

Wherever possible, complaints relating to a branch should be submitted in writing to the Branch Coordinator. If a written complaint is not feasible, the complainant may provide their concerns verbally. In such cases, the Branch Coordinator or a nominated delegate will document the complaint, and the complainant will be asked to sign the file note to confirm it is a true and accurate record of their complaint.

A complaint, once documented, is to be forwarded to 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 Policing Coordinator for QLD Blue Light forwarding onto QPS.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Review and Improvement

QBLAI are committed to reviewing and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaints and feedback management process. Monitoring (which may include the use of audits and complaint satisfaction surveys) will be undertaken to ensure:

- Effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints.
- Identification and correction of inefficiencies to ensure best practices in complaint handling.
- Regular review the overall process and complaint and feedback data.
- Implementation of appropriate changes arising from the analysis of data and continual monitoring of
- the process.

VERSION CONTROL		
Document Name	**Version**	**Date**
QBLAI Policy_Complaints v1_122024	V1	Dec 2024