

OVENS LANDCARE NETWORK



Grievance Procedure

Version 2 | 01.12.21

1. OVERVIEW

This procedure applies to:

- persons appointed or elected to the Ovens Landcare Network committee or the committees of our member groups
- employees, contractors, and volunteers/members
- Any person participating in events or activities held by the Ovens Landcare Network or its member groups

2. RELATED POLICY

Ovens Landcare Network Grievance Policy
Ovens Landcare Network Work Health and Safety Policy
Ovens Landcare Network Conflict of Interest Policy
Ovens Landcare Network Code of Conduct

3. DEFINITIONS

A **grievance** refers to a formal complaint raised due to a violation of legalities (e.g. policies, contracts, performance standards).

A **complaint** can be more informal – it refers to any accusation, allegation, or charge (oral or written).

4. HOW TO LODGE A GRIEVANCE

A person can make a complaint by contacting either the secretary:

Email: olnsec17@gmail.com
Online: ovenslandcarenetwork.org.au/contact
Phone: 0428 360 787

Or the president:

Email: ovenslandcarenetwork@gmail.com
Online: ovenslandcarenetwork.org.au/contact
Phone: 0432 448 673

The Ovens Landcare Network encourages the complainant(/s) to first discuss the situation with a representative from the relevant Group or Network, e.g. Committee President, Secretary or employee, in an attempt to resolve the issue informally. If this is not possible, the Group or Network would encourage the complainant to lodge a formal written grievance with the committee.

Complaints or grievances that are made verbally or by email to employees, contractors, or other members of the Group or Network will be referred to the relevant committee as per the Ovens Landcare Network Complaints Policy and Procedure.

The Ovens Landcare Network will accept and respond to anonymous complaints and grievances, provided enough information is received. The committee will

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contact anonymous complainants (where possible) if insufficient information has been provided to discuss the grievance further.

5. FORMAL GRIEVANCE HANDLING

Frontline resolution

A committee member or employee will receive the complaint or grievance, assess it and where possible, resolve it immediately within the scope of their authority. All grievances will be referred to the Committee to be recorded in the next committee meeting minutes in a de-identified format and added to a register of grievances as per the Ovens Landcare Network Privacy Policy.

Timeframe: As soon as possible or at or before the next scheduled committee meeting.

Investigation

Where a frontline resolution cannot be reached, the grievance will be referred to the committee for further investigation and a response to the grievance will be discussed and delivered in writing to the complainant.

Timeframe: Within 2 months of receiving the written notification of a grievance.

External Review

If the complainant(/s) is not satisfied with the process or outcome of the internal review, we inform them of the external review options. There are a range of options available depending on the nature of a complaint:

- Grievances and complaints raised with an Ovens Landcare Network member group maybe be raised to the Network committee for review
- Grievances and complaints may also be raised with the state Landcare body - Landcare Victoria Inc.
- If a person feels that they have been harassed or discriminated against, they can seek advice from the anti-discrimination commission.
- The Complainant could also approach another external agency such as the Victorian Police.

6. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Complainants have a right to expect that their grievance or complaint will be handled in confidence, to the extent possible. The grievance or complaint will not be revealed or made public, except where required by law, or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the grievance or complaint. Procedural fairness (natural justice) means that the Network is required to provide the person/people who are the subject of the grievance or complaint with full details of the grievance or complaint so they have a fair chance to respond.

When gathering information to respond to a grievance or complaint, we will only:

- use it to deal with the grievance or complaint or to address systemic issues arising from the complaint

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- disclose it in a de-identified format when disclosing data to the public
- share details of the grievance or complaint with others only on a 'need to know' basis.

All grievances or complaints lodged with the Ovens Landcare Network and its member groups are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed under the provisions of that legislation.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Ovens Landcare Network Conflict of Interest Policy, it is the responsibility of any employee, committee member or member involved with the grievance handling procedure to identify and disclose any conflicts of interest.

8. UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT CONDUCT

We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time our success at resolving grievances or complaints depends on:

- Our ability to perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible exists to secure increased recognition, resourcing and support for the Landcare movement.
- The health, safety and security of our employees, Committee and members, and
- Our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive, with consideration that most members are acting in a volunteer capacity.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. Unreasonable conduct might include:

- continued and unrelenting contact or conduct e.g. excessive phone calls, emails or letters
- contacting different people within the one organisation to elicit a different outcome
- demands that are constantly repeated
- an unwillingness to accept reasonable and logical explanations
- inappropriate conduct including intimidation, harassment, acts of aggression, or physical threats
- demands that are outside the scope or scale of the organisations capability or capacity
- lack of cooperation in following complaints handling processes
- arguments that are false, inflammatory or defamatory

As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our employees and Committee members to do the same in accordance with this Complaints Policy and Procedure.

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Where complainants or respondents are offensive, abusive or threatening they will be warned against such further conduct and where such conduct persists, the Group or Network will cease contact and, where appropriate, report such conduct to the appropriate authorities.

9. RECORDING COMPLAINTS

The Ovens Landcare Network and its member groups shall maintain a register of all grievances and complaints. This register will comply with the Ovens Landcare Network Privacy Policy and relevant legislation, and will only be accessible by elected committee members and employees when complaints are being reviewed or to identify systematic issues. The register will only be made accessible in a de-identified form to the extent practicable in dealing with or reviewing a complaint.

10. REVIEW

The Ovens Landcare Network will review this procedure on an annual basis and whenever a complaint has been raised to ensure it remains effective. Review date:
16/06/2022