



Australian Alpaca  
ASSOCIATION

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## Australian Alpaca Association Ltd

### Unacceptable Conduct - Complaint Handling Policy

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#### 1. The Scope

The Australian Alpaca Association Ltd (**AAA**) understands that from time to time an individual or group of individuals may be dissatisfied or have a concern or complaint that they want to bring to the AAA's attention.

Where possible the AAA encourages such concerns to be identified and resolved speedily and informally and this Complaint handling policy (**Policy**) is designed to apply where informal avenues have been exhausted or are not appropriate and a formal process is required.

This Policy relates to complaints or concerns raised in relation to:

- an alleged breach or alleged breaches of the AAA Bullying policy and/or the AAA Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy (as may be amended from time to time); and/or
- an alleged breach or alleged breaches of law relating to Bullying, Discrimination and/or Sexual Harassment.

#### (Unacceptable Conduct)

with respect to the actions or inaction of one or more of the following:

- AAA employees, contractors and sub-contractors;
- AAA officeholders, directors, committee and board members (including but not limited to regional committees and board appointed committees);
- AAA judges (including apprentice judges) stewards and convenors;
- Organisers of other AAA events and volunteers assisting them;
- AAA managers of social media platforms; and
- Any other person authorised by the AAA to act on its behalf.
- AAA member participating in (or whose actions arise in connection with) sanctioned AAA activities or events; and
- Job candidates seeking a paid or unpaid position with the AAA;

### **(Relevant Individuals)**

This Policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract for services, whether express or implied.

## **2. Your rights and responsibilities**

The AAA counts on you to speak up if there is reason to suspect that a Relevant Individual has violated this policy and to report any activity that could be a breach of the AAA Bullying policy and/or the AAA Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy (as may be amended from time to time).

The AAA expects all Relevant Individuals to ensure they do not gossip or victimise anyone involved in a complaint or investigation.

### **2.1 Victimisation**

Victimisation is subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation. Victimisation is against the law and will not be tolerated by the AAA.

It is also victimisation to threaten someone (such as a witness) who may be involved in investigating a concern or complaint involving Unacceptable Conduct.

Victimisation is a very serious breach of this Policy and is likely (depending on the severity and circumstances) to result in formal discipline against the perpetrator.

### **2.2 Gossip**

It is unacceptable for any Relevant Individual to talk with others about any complaint of Unacceptable Behaviour.

Breaching the confidentiality of a formal complaint investigation or inappropriately disclosing personal information obtained in a professional role (for example, as an office bearer) is a serious breach of this Policy and may lead to formal discipline.

## **3. Reporting**

If you believe you or someone else has been, or are being, subject to Unacceptable Conduct or behaviour potentially in breach of AAA policies and procedure, you should:

### **3.1 Tell the person/s to stop:**

If you feel comfortable doing so, tell the other person/s that their behaviour is unacceptable. If you prefer, you could tell that person in writing.

### **3.2 Make an informal complaint:**

If you do not want to approach the other person yourself or if their behaviour does not stop, you should inform, if the other person is:

- a Youth Member – the member who is for the time being the chairperson of the AAA Australian Youth Education Committee (**AYE Chair**);
- a Judge - the member who is for the time being the chairperson of the AAA Showing and Judging Committee (**SJC Chair**);

- a Regional President – the AAA President;
  - a Board Member – the AAA President;
  - any other member – the president of the Region to which the other person belongs,
- unless the person you would otherwise inform is the other person, in which case you should inform the Company Secretary.

**(Relevant Office Bearer)**

Your Relevant Office Bearer can then discuss options for resolving the situation with you.

**3.3 Make a formal complaint:**

If the situation is unable to be resolved informally in the manner set out above, you should submit a written complaint to the AAA Company Secretary.

If you do not feel safe or confident to take such action you may seek assistance from:

- if you are a Youth member – the AYE Chair;
- if you are a Judge – the SJC Chair;
- if you are a Regional President – the AAA President;
- otherwise, your Regional President

unless the person you would otherwise seek assistance from is the other person, in which case you should seek assistance from the Company Secretary ([cosec@alpaca.asn.au](mailto:cosec@alpaca.asn.au)).

Additional assistance to prepare a formal written complaint may be sought from an appropriately qualified professional if additional support is required due to disability, literacy, literacy issues or for translation from another language into English.

## **4. Disciplinary action**

If your complaint is substantiated, possible outcomes range from an apology being made to disciplinary action being taken against the person/s the subject of the complaint.

If your complaint is unsubstantiated and it is found that you made the complaint vexatiously or you knew it was false, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

Disciplinary action, whether it is taken and what it will comprise, will be at the discretion of the AAA and may include suspension or termination of membership or employment/services or demotion, suspension or removal from office of a committee member or judge (as appropriate).

The AAA take breaches of its policies and procedures seriously and the AAA may, by way of Board resolution, suspend or terminate your membership, if you:

- breached, failed, refused or neglected to comply with the AAA Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy and/or the AAA Bullying Policy;
- breached a law relating to Bullying, Discrimination and/or Sexual Harassment; or

- acted in a manner which constitutes Bullying, Discrimination and/or Sexual Harassment at law or as described in the AAA Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy and/or the AAA Bullying Policy.

If the AAA is considering passing a resolution to terminate or suspend membership, no less than 10 days prior to passing any such resolution, the member concerned must, be given written notice setting out:

- the grounds upon which the AAA relies in seeking to terminate or suspend the membership; and
- the member's right to, either orally or in writing, give the AAA Board any explanation or defence of his, her or its actions giving rise to liability to suspension or termination of membership.

Where the AAA Board passes a resolution to terminate or suspend a member's membership, the AAA must give that Member notice in writing of the termination or suspension within ten business days of the resolution passing.

## **5. Confidentiality**

Any AAA-initiated investigation will be handled as confidentially as possible and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis. However, strict confidentiality cannot be promised, as doing so may compromise the quality and thoroughness of the investigation. If information is learned that requires personnel or legal action, disclosure of information may occur in that process.

Participants must maintain confidentiality during the investigation process. This confidentiality obligation does not prevent a person from reporting misconduct to the AAA and/or a government authority.

## **6. Other relevant policies**

Relevant Individuals must read this Policy in conjunction with other relevant AAA policies, including:

- Bullying policy
- Discrimination and harassment policy
- Code of Conduct
- Mission, vision and values statements
- All other membership obligations attaching to a AAA member.

## **7. More information**

If you have a query about this Policy or need more information please contact the AAA Company Secretary ([cosec@alpaca.asn.au](mailto:cosec@alpaca.asn.au)).

## **8. Review details**

This Policy was adopted by the AAA on 12 July 2022

This Policy was last updated on 12 July 2022