

2.5 Complaints, Disputes & Discipline Policy

Adopted: 14 August 2025

Approved by: AUTRA Committee

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the process for lodging, handling, and resolving complaints, grievances, disputes, and disciplinary matters within AUTRA, in accordance with the Sport Integrity Australia National Integrity Framework and Sport Australia's Member Protection Framework. The policy ensures all matters are managed fairly, confidentially, and efficiently to maintain the integrity and safety of our community.

2. Scope

Applies to all AUTRA members, athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, committee members, staff, and contractors participating in any AUTRA event or activity.

3. Statement of Commitment

AUTRA commits to:

- Providing accessible and fair complaints and discipline pathways for all;
- Promoting respectful resolution of disputes;
- Ensuring procedural fairness, natural justice, and confidentiality for all parties;
- Protecting children and vulnerable individuals from harm or misconduct;
- Meeting obligations under Sport Integrity Australia and relevant laws.

4. Definitions

- **Complaint:** Any expression of dissatisfaction, concern, or allegation relating to AUTRA activities or individuals within scope.
- **Dispute:** A disagreement between parties regarding AUTRA activities, services, or decisions.
- **Discipline:** Actions taken in response to breaches of codes, policies, or conduct rules.
- **Respondent:** Person who is the subject of a complaint/allegation.

5. Lodging a Complaint

- Complaints should be made in writing to secretary@autra.asn.au, or to the AUTRA Child Safeguarding Officer for child safety matters.
- Complaints must normally be lodged within six (6) months of the alleged incident.
 - No time limit applies for child safeguarding or criminal complaints.
- Anonymous complaints will be accepted where possible but may be limited in investigation.
- Reports involving criminal conduct or child abuse will be referred to the appropriate authorities immediately.

6. Initial Response and Assessment

- Complaints will be acknowledged within five (5) business days.
- AUTRA will assess the complaint's nature, seriousness, and urgency.
- Where necessary, clarification or further information will be sought.
- Complainants and respondents will be advised of available pathways; minor/interpersonal matters may be directed for informal resolution within fourteen (14) days.

7. Resolution Pathways

7.1 Informal Resolution

- AUTRA encourages prompt, respectful dialogue and informal solutions where possible.
- If not resolved within fourteen (14) days, formal procedures may be initiated.

7.2 Formal Resolution and Investigation

Complex or serious matters will follow formal procedures and may involve:

- Appointment of an impartial case manager or, where suitable, a mediator.
- Notification in writing to the respondent, including details of the complaint and an opportunity to respond.
- Investigation, which may involve gathering statements or further evidence.
- Allegations of child abuse, criminal conduct, or serious safeguarding breaches will be escalated under the Child Safeguarding Policy and reported to external agencies as required.
- Reasonable assistance or support will be offered to all parties.

7.3 Disciplinary Hearing

- Where warranted, the AUTRA Committee (or a subcommittee with no conflict of interest) will review the evidence and determine outcomes.
- The respondent will be given the opportunity to be heard, either in writing or in person.
- Decisions will be made on the balance of probabilities and in accordance with principles of fairness.

8. Outcomes and Sanctions

- Possible actions include:
 - No action or request for further information
 - Apology, education, or remedial training
 - Formal warning or reprimand
 - Removal or suspension from roles, events, or membership
 - Referral to police, regulatory, or integrity bodies as required
- Parties will be notified of the outcome in writing.

9. Appeals

- Either party may appeal a disciplinary decision within seven (7) days of written notification if there is new relevant evidence or a procedural error.
- Appeals will be reviewed impartially by a panel not previously involved in the matter.

10. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- All complaints, findings, and disciplinary actions will be documented and stored securely.
- Information will be shared only as required for investigation, resolution, or legal obligations.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years or sooner if required due to changes to AUTRA's governing rules, relevant laws, or integrity frameworks, or upon feedback/incident review.

12. Related Documents

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Member Protection Policy
- National Integrity Framework (Sport Integrity Australia)
- Policy Review & Amendment Procedure

Compliance Note:

This procedure is aligned with:

- Sport Integrity Australia National Integrity Framework
- Sport Australia Governance Principles (Principles 2, 7, 8)
- Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)

Contact: AUTRA Committee Secretary at secretary@autra.asn.au for questions or feedback.

Appendix A – Complaint Lodgement Information Requirements

Purpose:

This appendix sets out the minimum information required when lodging a complaint under the AUTRA Complaints, Disputes & Discipline Policy. Supplying complete and accurate information assists AUTRA to assess and manage the complaint promptly and fairly.

When submitting a complaint, please provide:

1. Your Details
 - Full Name
 - Contact Email and/or Phone
 - Role/relationship to AUTRA (e.g., member, athlete, volunteer, parent, official, other)
2. Details of the Person(s) Involved
 - Name(s) and, if known, role/relationship to AUTRA
 - Any other persons directly involved or witnesses
3. Details of the Complaint/Incident
 - Date(s) and time(s) of incident(s)
 - Location(s)
 - Description of the incident, specific conduct, or behaviour of concern
 - Relevant background/context
 - Any supporting evidence (documents, emails, screenshots, witness statements, etc.)
4. Steps Already Taken
 - Description of any actions you have already taken to resolve the issue (e.g., informal discussion, reporting to another official)
5. Preferred Outcome
 - Indicate any outcome or resolution you are seeking
6. Confidentiality and Safety
 - Any concerns about your safety or need for special confidentiality protections

Please note: Complaints may be submitted anonymously, but anonymity may limit AUTRA's ability to investigate and resolve the matter.