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## Masters Swimming Queensland (MSQ) Dispute Resolution Policy

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### Contact Details:

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### 1. Introduction

The Branch Management Board (BMB) of Masters Swimming Queensland (MSQ) is committed to the fair, timely, and effective resolution of disputes or grievances that may arise within the organisation. This policy outlines the process for resolving disputes at the branch and club level, in alignment with the frameworks of Masters Swimming Australia (MSA) and Swimming Australia.

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### 2. Purpose

This policy:

- Provides a clear, equitable, and accessible process for resolving disputes involving MSQ members, clubs, or the BMB.
- Ensures compliance with State Development Funding Program requirements.
- Supports harmonious and effective organisational functioning.

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### 3. Scope

This policy applies to disputes:

- Between committee members of the BMB and/or the Business Manager.
- Between members of a club affiliated with MSQ.

- Between a member of MSQ and a member of the BMB and/or the Business Manager.
- Between a volunteer and any member of MSQ at branch or club level.
- Regarding committee processes or resolutions.

**Note:**

Where a dispute falls under the jurisdiction of MSA or Swimming Australia (e.g., national competition, integrity, or member protection matters), this policy defers to the relevant national policy. See Section 8 for escalation procedures.

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#### **4. Principles**

- Disputes should be addressed as early as possible to prevent escalation.
  - All parties are entitled to be heard and treated fairly, without fear of intimidation or repercussions.
  - Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the process.
  - Direct negotiation and mediation are encouraged as first steps.
  - The process should be transparent, consistent, and documented.
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#### **5. Responsibilities**

- **MSQ Club Executives, President, and BMB:**
    - Proactively identify and address potential issues.
    - Foster open communication and information sharing.
    - Ensure grievances are handled promptly and confidentially.
    - Uphold fairness and consistency in dispute resolution.
  - **Members and Volunteers:**
    - Attempt to resolve issues internally and at the earliest opportunity.
    - Engage in the process in good faith.
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##### **5.1 Member Protection Information Officers (MPIOs)**

MSQ has trained Member Protection Information Officers (MPIOs) available to support members who may have concerns relating to harassment, discrimination, abuse, or other inappropriate behaviour.

MPIOs:

- Provide confidential and impartial information and guidance.
- Explain options for raising concerns or lodging complaints.
- Support members in understanding relevant policies and pathways.

- Do not investigate or intervene, but help direct matters to the most appropriate process or authority.

Members may contact an MSQ for referral to an MPIO at any time for advice or support.

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## **6. Procedures**

### **6.1 Lodging a Dispute**

- Disputes must be submitted in writing to the MSQ President.
- The President will acknowledge receipt within two business days.

### **6.2 Initial Review**

- The President will bring the matter to the next scheduled BMB meeting, or call an extraordinary meeting if the next meeting is more than four weeks away.
- All parties involved will be given the opportunity to present their case.

### **6.3 BMB Decision**

- The BMB may decide to:
  - Seek further information or legal advice.
  - Refer the matter for mediation.
  - Dismiss the complaint.
- Decisions will be documented and communicated to all parties.

### **6.4 Review of Decisions**

A BMB decision may be reviewed if:

- New information becomes available.
  - An error in previous information is identified.
  - A party was unable to present their case.
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## **7. Mediation**

- Mediation is a voluntary process facilitated by a neutral third party.
- The mediator may be an MSQ member or an external party, as agreed by the parties or appointed by the BMB if agreement cannot be reached.
- The mediator assists parties to identify issues, explore options, and seek a mutually acceptable solution.
- Any agreement reached should be documented and signed by all parties (not legally binding, but made in good faith).
- If mediation fails, parties may escalate the matter as per Section 8.

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## **8. Escalation and Alignment with MSA/Swimming Australia**

- If a dispute cannot be resolved at the MSQ level, or if it falls under the scope of MSA or Swimming Australia policies (e.g., integrity, member protection, national competition), the matter will be referred to the appropriate national body.
- Refer to:
  - MSA Member Protection Policy
  - Swimming Australia National Integrity Framework
  - MSA/Swimming Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy

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## **9. Liability**

Neither MSQ nor any mediator shall be liable for any act or omission arising from the holding of a mediation session under this policy.

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## **10. Related Documents**

- MSA Member Protection Policy
- Swimming Australia National Integrity Framework
- MSA/Swimming Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy

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## **11. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or as required to ensure alignment with MSA and Swimming Australia policies and compliance requirements.

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