



Procedure for Managing Internal Conflict

1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteers are an invaluable resource to Barossa Broadcasting Board Inc (BBBfm) and our primary aim is to encourage and support their contribution to the station.

Open communication and feedback are regarded as essential elements of a satisfying and productive work environment.

BBBfm encourages its volunteers to resolve any issues or concerns that they may have at the earliest opportunity with each other or, failing that, their Team or Committee Co-ordinator, or a Board member.

The preferred process involves volunteers resolving issues to their satisfaction internally, without feeling they must refer to external organisations or to authorities for assistance

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide volunteers with clear directions as to how they can work together to resolve internal conflicts as they arise.

3. IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

These considerations are included in the document “BBBfm Internal Conflict Policy” and included here to ensure understanding and compliance.

3.1. The Team or Committee Co-ordinator or Board member to whom the dispute or grievance is reported must:

- i) Maintain a professional manner, ensuring communications are clear, fair, and objective, and remain within the policy guidelines, legal frameworks, and Codes of Practice.
- ii) Always ensure “right of reply” at each stage of communication; make sure that the volunteer is, and feels that they are, listened to and supported; it is not necessary to agree with what is said, but the volunteer must know that their concerns will be acted upon.
- iii) Ensure that all parties involved understand the roles, values and expectations of the organisation in relation to performance.
- iv) Enquire about and take into account any external factors which may be contributing to the conflict, for example learning difficulties, a physical/mental health problem of the volunteer, or family or friend.
- v) Ensure that all parties involved understand the process that is to be followed, as described in the document “BBBfm Internal Conflict Procedure”.
- vi) Ensure that all parties agree that all information obtained in the conduct of the review is confidential.
- vii) Take accurate and detailed notes of all conversations (including dates, people involved) and attach any supporting documentation.
- viii) Provide the volunteer with a written summary of meetings and clarification of the next steps to be taken.
- ix) Ensure that the way the meeting is conducted will be conducive to maintaining positive working relationships, and will provide a fair, objective and independent analysis of the situation.
- x) Explain that a volunteer cannot be adversely affected because they have made a complaint, and that if they do feel that they are being adversely affected, the volunteer should send a written report to the Chairperson for review by the Board.

3.2. If the matter is not resolved and the volunteer wishes to pursue it, the volunteer should send a written report to the Chairperson for review by the Board.

3.3. If the grievance/dispute is one of a confidential or serious nature involving the volunteer’s Team or Committee Co-ordinator, the complainant may discuss the issue directly with the Chairperson; the Chairperson then will discuss with other Board members as to how the grievance or dispute will be resolved.

3.4. If the grievance/dispute is one of a confidential or serious nature involving a Board member, the complainant may discuss the issue directly with the Chairperson; the Chairperson then will discuss

with Board members other than the Board member involved as to how the grievance or dispute will be resolved.

3.5. A mutually acceptable mediator may be sought by the Chairperson to assist in resolving the grievance/dispute.

3.6. Conflicting parties may bring a support person to any meeting; the support person role is as an observer, not as an active participant.

3.7. Decisions will be made in the best interests of BBBfm, and all the BBBfm volunteers.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES IN MANAGING INTERNAL CONFLICT

4.1. It is the responsibility of each of the volunteers involved in the conflict or dispute:

- i) In the first instance, to demonstrate a genuine attempt to settle the issue amicably between themselves.
- ii) If an amicable agreement cannot be reached, to approach a Team or Committee Co-ordinator, or the Chairperson or other Board member for assistance.
- iii) To present their case both verbally and in written form, with documentation signed and dated.
- iv) To provide information set out as logically and clearly as possible to include date, time, nature of problem and what has been done to resolve the conflict.
- v) To provide names of third party witnesses to the dispute, as well as any concrete evidence which can include notes, phone messages, media sites, text messages or emails.

4.2. It is the responsibility of the person approached by the volunteers for assistance, ie Team or Committee Co-ordinator, or the Chairperson or other Board member, to:

- i) Establish an investigating team consisting of at least two members of the Board including one of the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson or Treasurer or Secretary.
- ii) Ensure that the investigating team when meeting with the volunteers in conflict will apply quality conflict resolution techniques to achieve an equitable outcome.
- iii) Ensure those involved understand that the aim of all discussions is to find a solution which is acceptable to all parties.
- iv) Make it clear that if a solution which is acceptable to all parties cannot be reached, decisions regarding a solution will be made in the best interests of BBBfm, and all the BBBfm volunteers.
- v) Maintain procedural fairness, which means that:
 - (1) the interests of the participants in the investigation will be protected.
 - (2) the credibility of the investigation process will be maintained.

5. APPLICATION OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES

5.1. It is the responsibility of the investigating team to follow the steps outlined below.

- i) Ensure the investigation is carried out in a reasonable time frame.
- ii) Ensure that all participants are given the opportunity to have a support person in the interviews pertaining to the investigation.
- iii) Advise that all participants are required to maintain confidentiality and sign a confidentiality agreement.
- iv) Consult separately with the parties involved and any third-party information.
- v) Make reasonable and diligent enquiries to ensure that there is sufficient evidence before making findings on the balance of probabilities.
- vi) In each meeting, outline the process that is to be followed.
- vii) Assure the complainant/s and the respondent/s that the investigating team has no personal interest or bias in the matter being investigated.
- viii) Ensure all participants are given the opportunity to respond to any contradictory evidence.
- ix) If more than one person is present in a meeting, establish the role of each person.
- x) In the meeting with the complainant:
 - (1) Obtain a chronology of events (who, what, why, when, how etc).
 - (2) Run through the applicable policies and procedures with the complainant.
 - (3) Ask the complainant what kind of outcome they are hoping for (best case scenario) and then talk them through next steps: for example, that you will discuss the matter confidentially with the Board to determine a way in which to deal with the issue and report back to them within a set timeframe.
 - (4) Provide the complainant with plenty of time to ask questions.
 - (5) Provide the complainant with a direct contact number that they can call if they have any concerns or queries.

- xi) In the meeting with the respondent:
 - (1) Ensure that the respondent is aware of all the allegations made against them in sufficient detail.
 - (2) Allow the respondent a reasonable opportunity, including adequate time, to respond to each of the allegations.
 - (3) Ask the respondent what kind of outcome they are hoping for (best case scenario) and then talk them through next steps: for example, that you will discuss the matter confidentially with the Board to determine a way in which to deal with the issue and report back to them within a set timeframe.
 - (4) Provide the respondent with plenty of time to ask questions.
 - (5) Provide the respondent with a direct contact number that they can call if they have any concerns or queries.
- xii) Conduct a joint discussion with both parties with the aim of finding a mutual solution with appropriate and relevant counselling offered to both parties to address the issue or concern which has caused the conflict.
- xiii) Make it clear that if a solution which is acceptable to all parties cannot be reached, decisions regarding a solution will be made in the best interests of BBBfm, and all the BBBfm volunteers.

6. THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPARTIALITY

- 6.1. It is critical to ensure that the persons responsible for carrying out an investigation are impartial and seen to be impartial.
- 6.2. The investigators must not have a vested interest in the outcome of the matter.
- 6.3. Volunteers might consider that a Team or Committee Co-ordinator, or the Chairperson or other Board member, is not sufficiently impartial because of their involvement and role in the organisation. If such a concern is raised, it's important to consider:
 - i) Whether the use of an external investigator is necessary to ensure impartiality.
 - ii) Whether any conflicts of interest need to be disclosed (for example if any individuals are friends outside the workplace); and
 - iii) Whether the investigator has handled any previous disciplinary matters.

7. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 7.1. If there is a possibility that disciplinary action implemented for any party involved in the internal conflict might result in suspension or dismissal, then the investigating team should seriously consider the use of an external investigator to ensure that the investigation and the process followed will stand up in any potential court proceeding.
- 7.2. Conduct which may lead to disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to:
 - i) Poor timekeeping and unreliability.
 - ii) Not following pre-existing station rules and policies.
 - iii) Engaging in acts or broadcasts which may breach other related legislation such as the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (which includes sponsorship provisions), copyright or defamation laws.
 - iv) Inappropriate handling or use of station equipment or other property.
 - v) Rudeness or hostility towards other volunteers, or visitors to the station, or others involved in station activities, for example outdoor broadcasts and social events.
 - vi) Intoxication through alcohol or other substances during volunteering hours.
 - vii) Publicly criticising or bringing BBBfm volunteers or the BBBfm brand into disrepute.

8. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The investigating team might find it necessary to implement disciplinary action, based on Item 7. Disciplinary Action in this document, in the case of either party involved in the internal conflict. If this is the case, the prescribed disciplinary process must be followed, as described in the document BBBfm Disciplinary Action Procedure.

Related Documents

BBBfm Sexual Harassment Policy
BBBfm Bullying Policy
BBBfm Membership Policy and Procedure
BBBfm Internal Conflict Policy
BBBfm Disciplinary Action Procedure

Amendments to this Procedure		
Date Approved	Item Number	Details of Amendment
9 th February 2022	Full Procedure	Adoption of this Procedure in its entirety