



MANNA GUM COMMUNITY HOUSE GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose

Manna Gum Community House acknowledges that from time to time grievances may arise. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that grievances involving Manna Gum Community House follow a process that is fair to all parties, and are resolved as promptly and with as little disruption and cost as possible.

Where employment awards or other legal frameworks are relevant (e.g. the SACS award or the Neighbourhood Houses and Adult Community Education Centres Collective Agreement 2017), these will take precedence.

Definition

This policy covers grievances with or between

- volunteers;
- students;
- staff members;
- community members; and
- Committee of Management Committee members.

Criteria

To be formally considered by Manna Gum Community House, all grievances must meet the following criteria:

1. Be based on substantive information/incidents and have supporting evidence; and
2. Relate to actions or words that could reasonably be expected to cause offense or negatively impact on the proper functioning of the Community House and the enjoyment of users, volunteers and/or staff. This includes discrimination and sexual harassment but also includes other types of disrespectful or aggressive behaviour.
3. Be lodged in writing and supported with evidence.



Access

A copy of the Grievance Policy and Procedure will be available in the office and in the Community Lounge or on request to the Coordinator.

Lodging a Grievance

All grievances must be lodged in writing to a member of the Manna Gum Community House Committee of Management. The member will take the grievance expeditiously to the Committee of Management.

The Committee of Management will consider the grievance, decide and act on the appropriate approach for resolving the grievance, and respond in writing to the parties within 14 days of the grievance being received.

Grievances that the Committee of Management finds after preliminary consideration do not meet the criteria may be deemed vexatious and without substance and accordingly will not be acted on.

If the Committee of Management deems a grievance to be vexatious, the person(s) lodging the grievance will have 14 days to challenge that decision and provide evidence why it is not vexatious.

Students lodging grievances relating to assessment will be provided with details of external authorities if required.

Procedure

Step 1

In the first instance the person with a grievance may attempt to resolve it informally by discussion with the Coordinator, before lodging a formal grievance if the grievance cannot be resolved. If the grievance concerns the Committee of Management as an entity, the Coordinator will refer the matter to the Neighbourhood Houses Gippsland Network Coordinator (see Step 2). If the grievance is with or by the Coordinator the person with the grievance should go straight to Step 2.

Step 2

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 1 the grievance must be made in writing to a member of the Committee of Management taking into account the criteria set out in



this policy. If the grievance is with or by an individual member the Committee of Management the affected member will excuse themselves from considering the grievance. If the grievance is with the Committee of Management as an entity, the Neighborhood Houses Gippsland Network Coordinator will be asked to manage the grievance process.

Step 3

The written grievance will be considered on the supporting evidence and with proper regard to the principles of natural justice. If there is reasonable doubt regarding any aspect of the grievance the following actions may be taken:

- an independent investigator may be engaged to investigate and report to the Committee on the allegations made in the grievance; and/or
- an independent mediator may be engaged to mediate between the parties to resolve the issues raised in the grievance.

Step 4

A written response to the issues raised in the grievance will be provided to all parties outlining the findings of the relevant investigating body and actions to be taken to resolve the issues.

If at this stage the grievance is still unresolved, the matter may be referred to an external jurisdiction, such as the Department of Health and Human Services.

At each step

- All information will be treated in strict confidentiality and within the guidelines of the Information Privacy Act 2000 (VIC).
- A support person may be present at discussions and meetings, if desired by either party to the grievance.
- A written account of the grievance process will be kept by the Committee of Management (or other relevant investigating body).
- Every effort will be made by all parties to follow the process in good faith and in a timely and cost-effective way.