

## (2) Complaints Handling Policy

### 1. Context

The Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP) document Ministerial PJP Governance Principles, Foundations and Applications encourages the AMPJP to be transparent, accountable, humble, respectful and open to learn. These qualities should influence how AMPJP responds to complaints.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all personnel (paid and volunteer), including the AMPJP Council, who may receive or manage complaints from the public and clients made to, or about AMPJP, regarding its products, services and personnel, or its complaint handling process.

Complaints by AMPJP staff or volunteers are addressed in AMPJP Human Resources Policy.

The AMPJP Constitution details the dispute resolution process for AMPJP members.

### 3. Policy

The AMPJP complaint handling system aims to operate with: fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and to reinforce a positive organisational culture.

The AMPJP aims to welcome all comments and complaints as an opportunity to reflect on its activities and, where necessary, make improvements.

The AMPJP expects personnel at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaints handling.

### 4. Procedure

#### **a) Allegations or actual harm to children or adults at risk**

Refer to the AMPJP Safeguarding Policy for details of prevention, reporting, investigation and response to allegations or actual harm to children or adults at risk.

#### **b) Roles**

The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from personnel and the way that commitment should be implemented:

Who	Commitment	How
Executive Officer (EO) and AMPJP Council	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide adequate support and direction to key personnel responsible for handling complaints.</li> <li>✓ Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</li> <li>✓ Encourage all personnel to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly.</li> <li>✓ Encourage personnel to make recommendations for system improvements.</li> <li>✓ Support recommendations for service, personnel and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</li> </ul>
Executive Officer - whose duties include complaint handling	Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</li> <li>✓ Assist people to make a complaint, if needed.</li> <li>✓ Comply with AMPJP policy and associated procedures.</li> <li>✓ Provide regular feedback to the AMPJP Council on issues arising from complaints.</li> <li>✓ Provide suggestions to the AMPJP Council on ways to improve the complaints management system.</li> <li>✓ Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by the AMPJP Council.</li> <li>✓ Report to the AMPJP Council on complaint handling.</li> </ul>

**c) Principles underpinning this complaint handling process**

The AMPJP will take all reasonable steps to:

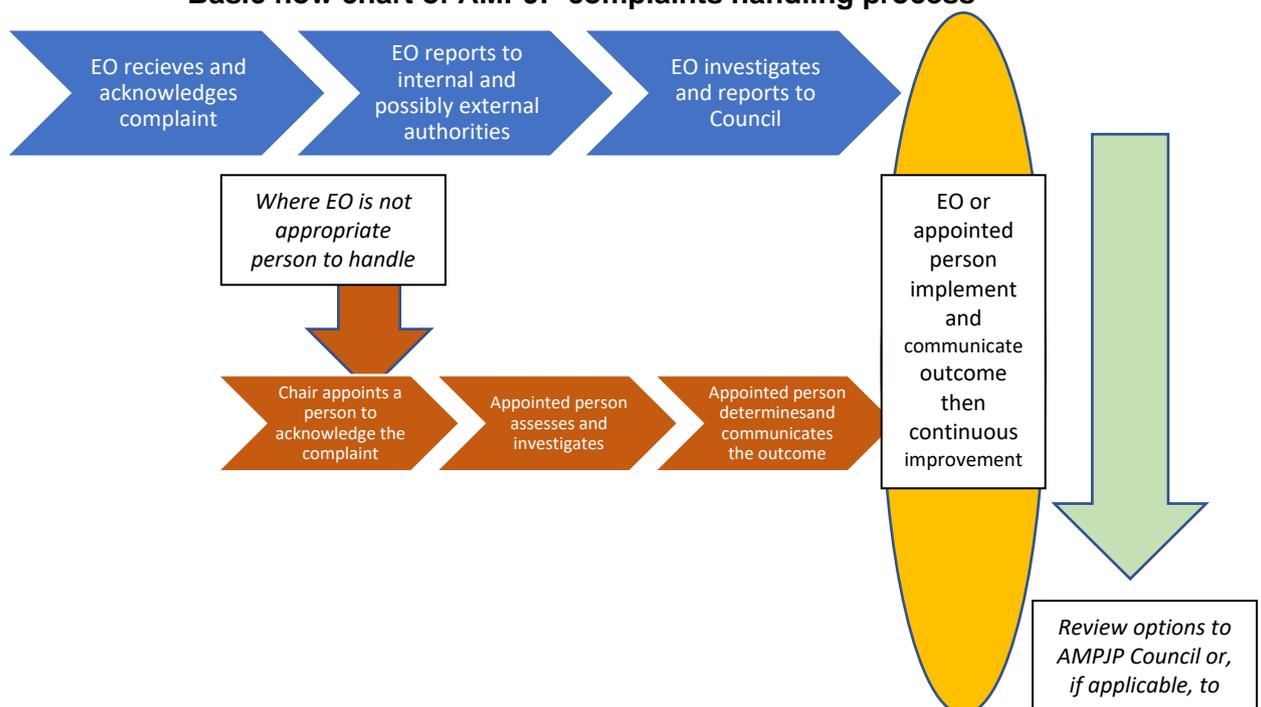
- ensure that making a complaint against the AMPJP is free of charge;
- ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf;
- inform potential complainants about how and where complaints can be made to, or about, the AMPJP e.g., via the AMPJP website;
- ensure that AMPJP systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance;

- enable any person to have another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint
- resolve complaints at first contact – if possible
- assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.
- manage people’s expectations, and inform them as soon as possible, of the details of the AMPJP Complaints Policy;
- address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner;
- ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any person whose conduct or service is being complained about;
- resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible;
- assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible; and/or
- protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Where AMPJP services are contracted out, the contracted service provider is expected to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system. The AMPJP can receive complaints not only about the actions of its personnel but also the actions of its contracted service providers.

**d) The AMPJP Complaints Handling Process**

**Basic flow chart of AMPJP complaints handling process**



### **1. Receiving a complaint**

The AMPJP may receive feedback, comment or complaint from any person, including from anonymous persons, and via any means, e.g.:

- face-to-face;
- phone: 0419 447 217;
- letter: AMPJP, P.O. Box 6, The Junction NSW 2291;
- email: [info@ampjp.org.au](mailto:info@ampjp.org.au);
- contact page of website: [www.ampjp.org.au](http://www.ampjp.org.au)

Any feedback, comment or complaint does not have to be submitted in writing or in any form.

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, the Executive Officer will record the complaint and its supporting information. A unique identifier/number will be assigned to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received;
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want;
- Any other relevant information; and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

### **2. Acknowledging the complaint**

The Executive Officer will acknowledge, via email or letter, the receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 5 working days. When the Executive Officer begins the Assess and Investigate stage within a few days of receiving the complaint no further acknowledgement is required.

When appropriate the Executive Officer may offer an immediate explanation or apology.

### **3. Assess and Investigate**

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the Executive Officer will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within AMPJP control.

The Executive Officer will also clarify the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.

When determining how a complaint will be managed, the Executive Officer will consider:

1. How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is;
2. Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety;
3. How the person making the complaint is being affected:

4. The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed: and
5. Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

The Executive Officer will investigate and respond to any feedback, comment or complaint unless the complainant says they want another person to do so or if the Executive Officer believes s/he is too close to the issues to be objective. If the Executive Officer is not to investigate and respond to the feedback, comment or complaint, the Council Chair will decide who will do so.

The Executive Officer may:

1. Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation, including a copy of the AMPJP Complaints Policy;
2. Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about; and/or
3. Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

The Executive Officer will keep the person making the complaint up-to-date on AMPJP progress in responding to their complaint, particularly if there are any delays.

The actions the Executive Officer decides to take will be tailored to each case and will consider any statutory requirements.

#### **4. Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision**

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, the Executive Officer will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

1. The outcome of the complaint and any action AMPJP took;
2. The reason/s for the AMPJP's decision;
3. The remedy or resolution/s that AMPJP has proposed or put in place; and
4. Any options for review (determinations by the Executive Officer can be appealed to the AMPJP Council (via the Chair). If the matter relates to corporate governance the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission may decide they have a review role).

If possible, the Executive Officer will speak to the person making the complaint face-to-face or via phone.

The Executive Officer will also email or send a letter with details regarding the outcome if the person requests this and/or the Executive Officer deems it necessary.

#### **5. Document and close the complaint: monitor and review**

The Executive Officer will keep records about:

- How AMPJP managed the complaint

- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations, whether the complainant said they were satisfied with the outcome or what would have been their preferred outcome), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes

The Executive Officer will report recent complaints at each AMPJP Council meeting.

In August each year, the Executive Officer will provide the AMPJP Council with an annual complaint handling report for the previous financial year which will include:

- the number of complaints received;
- the type of issue leading to the complaint;
- the outcome of complaints, including whether claim was substantiated;
- issues arising from complaints;
- the number of requests for internal and/or external review of AMPJP complaint handling process;
- whether the complainant said they were satisfied with the outcome or what would have been their preferred outcome;
- any deficiencies in the operation of the system;
- need for further investigation e.g., audits and satisfaction surveys; and
- improvements required to the complaints handling process.

## 5. Compliance

Compliance with this policy is being measured by:

- a) The minutes of all regular AMPJP Council meetings will include a report on all feedback, comment or complaints, including the complainant's comments on the outcome; and
- b) An annual complaints handling report given to the AMPJP Council in August.

## 6. Evaluation

This policy objective can be evaluated as achieved by:

- a) At least 90% on complainants say they are satisfied with the outcome.

## 7. References

<b>Civil law</b>	a) Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act, 2012 (Cth) b) Corporations Act, 2001 (Cth)
<b>Church teaching</b>	a) Holy See (1983) Code of Canon Law b) ASCL (2022) National Response Framework

	c) ACSL (2022) Our Common Mission
<b>Other references</b>	a) AMPJP (2016) <a href="#">Constitution, 08 Aug 2021</a> b) AMPJP (2018) Governance Principles, Foundations and Applications c) Wallace, Sue-Anne (2018) Factsheet: Complaint Handling by Charities and Not-For-Profits and Model Policy and Procedure: Complaint Handling by Charities and Not-For-Profits <a href="http://www.nfplaw.org.au/complainthandling">http://www.nfplaw.org.au/complainthandling</a> d) Australian and New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint handling in organizations AS/NZS 10002:2014

## 8. Record of changes to document

<b><i>Date of change</i></b>	<b><i>Section changed</i></b>	<b><i>Nature of change</i></b>
02 Aug 2019	All sections	Document created
13 Dec 2022	7. References	Constitution date changed
08 Feb 2023	2. Scope  4.a Allegations or actual harm to children or adults at risk 7. References	Complaints by personnel addressed in AMPJP Human Resources Policy New section  Add 'Our Commission Mission'
08 Feb 2026		Policy Review Due

**Appendix 1. Complaints assessment and outcome record**

**Name:** ..... **Address:** .....

**Phone:** ..... **Email:** .....

**Date complaint received:** ..... **Date complaint acknowledged:** .....

**How complaint was communicated:**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> face-to-face | <input type="checkbox"/> email                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> phone        | <input type="checkbox"/> contact page of website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> letter       | <input type="checkbox"/> other.....              |

**Issues raised by the person making a complaint:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> mismanagement of information/data | <input type="checkbox"/> provision/quality of services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> use of resources                  | <input type="checkbox"/> timeliness                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cost of services                  | <input type="checkbox"/> other.....                    |

**Outcome/s requested by the person making a complaint**

**Any other relevant information**

**Support person/advocate the person making a complaint has requested**

**Name:** ..... **Address:** .....

**Phone:** ..... **Email:** .....

**Any additional support the person making a complaint has requested**

**Is the issue/s raised in the complaint within AMPJP control?**  Yes  No

**AMPJP appointed person to investigate the complaint:** .....

**Is there more than one issue raised in the complaint within AMPJP control?**  Yes  No

**Date AMPJP Complaints Policy was given to the complainant** .....

**How was complaint investigated, information collected and from whom and what was uncovered?**

**How was the complainant kept informed on the progress of the complaint investigation?**

**Was the complaint or any aspect of it was substantiated?**  Yes  No

*Details:*

**The reason/s for the AMPJP's decision:**

**Any recommendations made to address problems identified?**

**Any remedy or resolution/s that AMPJP has proposed or put in place:**

**Was the complainant satisfied with the outcome?**  Yes  No

**If applicable what did the complainant say would have been their preferred outcome?**

**What options for review were offered to the complainant?**

- appeal to the AMPJP Council (via the Chair)
- the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- other:

**How was the outcome communicated to the complainant:**  face-to-face or  phone.

**Date that  email or  letter was sent to the complainant confirming the outcome:** .....

**Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes**