

Board Dispute Resolution Policy

INTRODUCTION This Policy relates to disputes:

- Between Board members,
- Between a Board member or members and the Executive Officer, and
- By a Board member regarding a Board Policy, Procedure or decision.

PURPOSE The Board of Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc is committed to reaching a prompt and fair resolution of any disputes, conflicts or disagreements that may arise, and that may threaten the functioning of the Board.

POLICY Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc encourages Board members and staff to resolve any issues or concerns at the earliest possible opportunity, so that they may be resolved in a fair and timely manner.

While some conflicts will be resolved by an informal discussion between the parties, others will need to implement the procedure for successful resolution, as outlined in the following section of this Policy.

All users of this Policy should adhere to the following principles:

- Respect for another's point of view,
- Commitment to resolving the issue,
- Willingness to compromise,
- Confidentiality,
- Impartiality,
- Prompt action, and
- Freedom from repercussions.

PROCEDURE

1. The dispute must be set out in writing and provided to the Chair, who should acknowledge receipt of this document within two working days
2. The Chair will use their discretion to determine whether to raise the issue at the next Board meeting, or call an extraordinary meeting
3. When raised at a Board meeting, all people involved in the dispute will be given the right to speak
4. The matter should be discussed with all Committee members present. Any Committee member who is unable to attend the meeting must advise the Chair in writing that they are aware of the dispute resolution meeting being held, and they are unable to attend. Where appropriate, they may be offered the chance to participate in the vote (see 5, below) remotely
5. The Chair will call for a motion from the Board, to either:
 - Appoint an independent assessor,
 - Seek mediation,
 - Call a special general meeting, or
 - Dismiss the complaint.

All Committee members present at the meeting will vote on the motion

6. A Board decision may be reviewed in situations where:
 - New information emerges that was not available when the original decision was made
 - The Board becomes aware of an error in previous information that was used to make the decision
 - A Committee or staff member did not feel able to present their case at the time the Board made its decision.

Mediation

1. Where the Board votes to pursue mediation, the mediator must be a person chosen by agreement between the parties or, if such agreement cannot be reached, a person appointed by the Board
2. A member of the Board can act as the mediator, so long as they are not a party to the dispute
3. The parties to the dispute must, in good faith, attempt to settle the dispute by mediation
4. The mediator, in conducting the mediation, must:
 - Give all parties involved in the mediation process every opportunity to be heard, and
 - Allow due consideration by all parties of any written statement submitted by any party, and
 - Ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties to the dispute throughout the mediation process
5. The mediation must be confidential and without prejudice
6. If the mediation process does not resolve the dispute, the Board will be advised and may undertake another vote to elect to:

- Appoint an independent assessor,
- Call a special general meeting, or
- Dismiss the complaint.

RESPONSIBILITIES It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that:

- All Board members and senior staff are aware of this Policy; and
- Disputes are handled respectfully, confidentially and in accordance with natural justice.

AUTHORISATION:

This version was approved on: 23/09/2018

This version takes effect on: 23/09/2018

Authorised by: Mrs Nicole Maher

Chairperson: Mr Michael Gooden

Chairperson signature: