New South Wales Nurses’ Association

MEMBER COMPLAINTS SYSTEM POLICY

Implementation date: ____________________________

Approved by: _________________________________

Review date: _________________________________
1. Title

This policy is known as the Member Complaints System Policy.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:-

- to deliver an excellent service to meet member expectations
- to ensure a clear and transparent process of complaint handling
- to streamline complaint handling
- to meet AS 4269 guidelines regarding complaint handling
- to promote improvement in complaint handling and service delivery
- to improve interaction with members

3. Scope

This policy applies to all NSWNA employees and members of the NSWNA.

4. Complaints in General

- a complaint is a problem raised by a member as a result of dissatisfaction with services and/or advice provided by NSWNA Officers and/or staff
- a complaint is not an enquiry

5. Introduction of a Member Complaints System

As part of the NSWNA commitment to quality management, a Member Complaints System has been developed to meet quality standards and best practice in service delivery. The basis for the introduction of a Member Complaints System is to:

- demonstrate a commitment to complaint handling internally and externally
- increase member confidence and loyalty
- strengthen service provision
- retain existing members
- increase membership base

6. Development of a Member Complaints System

The policy is based on the guidelines of the Australian Standard, AS 4269 – 1995, Complaints Handling.
7. **Basic Principles of a Member Complaints System**

**Commitment**
All NSWNA Officers and/or staff acknowledge a member’s right to raise issues of concern, and in response shall make every effort to heed the member’s concerns and to then resolve the complaint. This is an essential component of developing an organisational culture with a positive attitude to complaint handling.

**Accountability**
All NSWNA Officers and/or staff are accountable for the decisions they make and actions taken. NSWNA Officers and/or staff may be required to act in accordance with NSWNA policy and procedure, which may result in member dissatisfaction. Examination of policy and procedure may be an outcome of a complaint. Every level of the Association accepts responsibility for complaint handling.

**Resources**
NSWNA management support of a Member Complaints System is evidenced by their commitment to training and provision of infrastructure (database) to establish the system and ongoing monitoring and human resource support to their Officers and staff.

**Access**
The Member Complaints System policy and process map shall be made easy to understand, and accessible to members and NSWNA Officers and staff.

**Transparency**
The Member Complaints System Policy and Process Map shall be publicised internally and externally eg, the Lamp, NSWNA website, NSWNA staff induction and training.

**Assistance**
All reasonable support shall be given to a member to lodge a complaint.

**Fairness**
Each complaint shall be treated equally and fairly with respect to the rights of the member, NSWNA Officers and/or staff, and the NSWNA.

**Privacy & Confidentiality**
The NSWNA is bound by the requirements of the Privacy legislation and National Privacy Principles (NPPs). The NSWNA undertakes to ensure that privacy and confidentiality will be respected throughout the complaint handling process.

This document should be read in conjunction with the *NSWNA Privacy and Website Policy and Procedure*. This document can be obtained from the NSWNA head office, Privacy Officer or on the NSWNA website at [www.nswnurses.com.au](http://www.nswnurses.com.au).
Responsiveness
A complaint should be managed within suggested timeframes and a member informed of progress, consistent with the Guidelines for the Provision of Responses to Member Requests for Assistance.

Complaint Progression
In the first instance, the relevant NSWNA Officer and/or staff shall handle the complaint. However, if the complaint is not able to be resolved at this level, then the complaint is progressed to the next level in the Association. A process map accompanies this policy and all procedural steps are aimed at being practical and achievable.

Outcomes
An appropriate outcome for each complaint should be determined and implemented (eg policy and procedure review, apology, goodwill gesture, information, referral) to the agreed satisfaction of the member and the NSWNA, wherever possible.

Data collection and analysis
Each complaint shall be recorded, analysed, acted upon and used as an opportunity to improve services. Analysis of complaint data will assist in strategic planning, and continuous improvement of service delivery.

Review
Regular review and improvement of the system shall occur, based on member and NSWNA Officer and staff feedback.