

<p style="text-align: center;">GIPPSLAND FM POLICY COMPLAINTS HANDLING</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to station management on the equitable and appropriate handling of any complaints received by the station.
- 1.2 It is noted that the Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that the station maintains and complies with this policy and any associated procedures.
- 1.3 The key elements covered by this policy include handling and resolving complaints received, informing audiences and informing station presenters.
- 1.4 This policy is consistent with the Code 7 of the community broadcasting Codes of Practice. That Code is included as an attachment (Schedule 3) to this policy for easy reference.
- 1.5 This policy only covers complaints about Gippsland FM that are directly received by the station from external parties. Any internal complaints shall be covered by other appropriate station policies such as the Internal Conflict Resolution Policy.
- 1.6 Complaint procedures can vary based on the nature of the complaint. A broad guideline is outlined in Schedule 2 of this policy.

2. RECEIVING COMPLAINTS

- 2.1 Complaints can be received in many varied ways – by letter, e-mail, direct personal contact or by telephone or SMS message. All complaints received by the station must be taken seriously.
- 2.2 All complainants shall be encouraged to forward their complaints to the station in writing. Such complaints should identify the name and address of the complainant and specific details of the complaint.
- 2.3 Any verbal complaints shall only be progressed under this policy if the details required under the previous clause are provided. The name of the station representative who received the complaint and the time the complaint was received should also be advised to station management in accordance with clause 2.4.
- 2.4 All complaints shall be promptly advised to the Secretary who must then advise the Board of Directors at the next available meeting, unless the nature of the complaint requires more urgent action.
- 2.5 If a complaint relates to a defamation matter, the Secretary shall immediately advise the Chairperson and the station's insurance company.
- 2.6 The Secretary shall be designated as the responsible officer under the code and be responsible for maintaining a register of complaints in a format acceptable to the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

3. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 The station will acknowledge in writing to the complainant that their complaint has been received and advise on the expected process to handle and respond

to the complaint. The complainant must also be advised that if the station does not respond within sixty days of lodging the complaint, that the complainant can lodge the complaint with the Australian Communications and Media Authority. This acknowledgement should be forwarded within fourteen days of the receipt of the complaint.

- 3.2 The Board shall determine the station's response to all complaints received. As a rule, the Board should consider inviting the complainant to attend any meeting of the Board where a complaint is to be discussed.
- 3.3 The Board will endeavour to resolve its response to any complaint within a reasonable timeframe and once it has determined such a response shall ensure that the complainant is advised within fourteen days of making such a determination. The Board shall endeavour to determine its response and advise the complainant within sixty days of receiving the complaint.

4. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

- 4.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the written response provided by the station and the station is advised in writing by the complainant of that fact, then the Board may in its absolute discretion determine what further response it will make, if any.
- 4.2 In the event that a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the station shall inform the complainant of their right to take their complaint to the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

5. INFORMING AUDIENCES

- 5.1 It is noted that the station can provide regular on-air information about the Community Broadcasting Code of Practice and how members of the general public can receive a copy.
- 5.2 To assist in informing audiences, the Board shall ensure that an announcement is scheduled for broadcast at least once per week. Such an announcement shall be scheduled across various times of the week throughout the year.
- 5.3 The wording of the announcement shall be in a form that is similar to that outlined in Schedule 1 of this policy.

6. INFORMING BROADCASTERS

- 6.1 Station management acknowledges that it has a responsibility to inform station broadcasters of what constitutes unacceptable program content. It is noted that this may change over time as community attitudes change.
- 6.2 The Board shall review the station programming policy on an annual basis to ensure that program content maintains its relevance to the local community.
- 6.3 The Board shall ensure that all training and induction for new broadcasters includes information on what constitutes unacceptable program content. As a guide, this may include material that is obscene, harmful to children, illegal content, incitement of anti-social behaviour, possible defamatory items and material which is discriminatory towards others.

Schedule 1

Form of Announcement Wording

(refer clauses 5.2 & 5.3)

This station complies with the community broadcasting codes of practice. The codes of practice outline standards relating to program content such as news and current affairs, Australian music and sponsorship announcements.

The code also outlines the principles of diversity, independence and volunteerism as fundamental to community broadcasting.

If you have a complaint regarding something you have heard on this station, you should put your complaint in writing and send it to the station. If you would like a copy of the code of practice please call this station on 03 5134 8444.

Schedule 2

Guidelines From the Broadcasting Services Act

If a person wishes to complain about something of concern they have seen or heard on a program broadcast by a radio or TV station, and the matter is covered by a code of practice, the person must, by law, first make a written complaint to the station.

However, if a complaint relates to a matter covered by a licence condition, the person can complain directly to the Australian Communications & Media Authority and need not complain to the station first.

Schedule 3

Code 7 - Complaints

Purpose: To outline our legal requirements relating to complaint handling

1. We acknowledge the rights of our listeners, members and volunteers to make complaints in writing about alleged non-compliance with both the licence conditions in the Act and the requirements outlined in the Codes.
2. We will make every reasonable effort to resolve complaints, except where a complaint is clearly frivolous, without sufficient grounds or not made in good faith.
3. We will ensure that:
 1. complaints will be received by a responsible person in normal office hours and receipt is acknowledged in writing,
 2. complaints will be conscientiously considered, investigated if necessary, and responded to substantively as soon as possible,
 3. complaints will be responded to in writing within 60 days of receipt, as required by the Act, and the response will include a copy of the Codes, and
 4. complainants are advised in writing that they have the right to refer their complaint about a Code matter to ACMA provided they have first:
 1. formally lodged their complaint with the licensee in writing, and
 2. received a substantive response from the licensee and are dissatisfied with this response, or have not received a response from the licensee within 60 days after making the complaint.

A written complaint or response can be a letter, fax, or email.

4. A responsible person of the licensee will maintain a record of complaints and responses for at least two years from the date of the complaint.
5. The record of complaints and responses will be made available to ACMA on request.