

AASW ETHICS COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT PROCESS (ECMP) - STAGES CHART

1. Complaint received by Ethics Office (EO)

2. Initial triage and review by Ethics Officer (EO) – KEY TASKS

- Ensures the complaint is received in writing and signed via online form— assistance will be provided if required.
- Ensures that complaints meet jurisdictional criteria to proceed.
- Discusses informal or alternative dispute resolutions with Complainant and the scope of the ECMP - At this stage the EO may also request further information if needed to proceed with the complaint.
- Within **10 working days of receiving the full complaint** the EO will inform the Complainant if the Complaint is within jurisdiction. *Note: **Complaints that do not meet these criteria can be dismissed at this stage.***
- The EO will provide complaints within jurisdiction to the **AASW Case Reviewer** for assessment.

3. Conclusion of EO triage

- Complaint dismissed
- Complaint referred to stage 4

4. Case Reviewer (CR) appointed to the complaint

Key Tasks:

- Conduct preliminary assessment and preliminary enquiry (*CR may contact Complainant for further information in writing or by telephone if necessary*)
- Serve Respondent with notice of Complaint and await Respondent's written response (*CR may engage in telephone contact with Respondent if necessary*)
- Work with Complainant / Respondent encouraging early conciliation or mediation
- Formulate report including recommendations, based on information supplied by the Complainant and the Respondent

5. Complaint report is presented to the Ethics Council (EC)

Key Tasks:

- Review full CR report and recommendations for ratification
- The EC ensures the correct processes have been followed
- Monitor next steps in the ECMP process

6. Response Actions

Option A:

Early Conciliation

- Liaises individually with Respondent and Complainant
- For example Complainant seeking written apology

Option B:

Mediation

- In person or other appropriate meeting mode
- Respondent and Complainant present

Option C:

Hearing Panel

- In person or other appropriate meeting mode
- Respondent, AASW and Complainant may be present

Option D:

Appeal Panel

- In person or other appropriate meeting mode
- Respondent AASW and Complainant may be present

7. Ethics Council

- Findings and outcomes from all Conciliation, Mediation, Hearing and/or Appeal Panel processes will be reported to the EC to determine whether correct process has been followed.

The EC will monitor that all remedial actions enforced to the Respondent are undertaken within specified time frame

Notes:

- **Case Reviewer**- A skills based independent appointed AASW Member with ethics skills and experience
- **Ethics Council** - Comprised of three people, one AASW Manager and two Social Work Peers (one External Peer will be appointed The Chair)
- **Mediators / Conciliators** - Comprised of two skills-based appointments drawn from an ethics pool; where appropriate external services to the AASW may be utilised from time to time
- **Hearing Panel** - Comprised 3 - 4 Hearing Panel Members, Two Social Worker Peers (Members) one of which will be appointed The Chair, one Consumer, one external professional, in addition one Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander Member (when required)
- **Appeals Panel** – Comprised 2 Ethics Pool Members who have not previously heard or presided over the ethics matter
- **Ethics Officer** will assist in the coordination/administration for all Conciliation, Mediation, Hearing and Appeal Panel processes – including all liaison with the Complainant and Respondent.

8. Recommendations for suspension or cancellation of an AASW membership will go to the AASW Board for approval

9. Determination by the AASW Board

Upon receipt and consideration of the findings and recommendations provided by the AASW CEO, the **Board** will determine:

- **To accept** the recommendation: (i) suspension (ii) cancellation for a specified period (iii) permanent cancellation of AASW membership for implementation
- **To reject** the recommendation: (i) suspension (ii) cancellation for a specified period (iii) permanent cancellation of AASW membership for implementation