Bats Qld (Flying Foxes & Microbats) Inc
Policy and Procedure

Grievance Policy

Version 1 (September 2018)

PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that members of Bats Qld (Flying Foxes & Microbats) Inc ('Bats Qld') have a process whereby grievances and/or complaints can be referred through and resolved by the Management Committee of Bats Qld.

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

A grievance is a real or perceived issue causing resentment, suffering or distress and which may be regarded as grounds for complaint in the members' environment.

A grievance may be about any act, omission, situation or decision that you think is unfair, discriminatory or unjustified.

Grievances can range in severity from matters that can be immediately resolved by timely and appropriate action, to complex matters involving prolonged investigation, negotiation or disciplinary action.

The Bats Qld grievance procedure is:

- **Confidential** – Only the people directly involved in making or investigating a complaint will have access to information about the complaint.
- **Impartial** – Both sides of the grievance will have a chance to tell their side of the story. The person assigned to hearing and resolving the grievance will be free from any personal interest and/or conflict of interest in the matter.
- **Fair** - No assumptions will be made, and no action will be taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered.
- **Timely** – All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as practicable. Bats Qld aims to resolve all complaints within 28 days from receipt of the grievance, if at all possible.
- **Free of repercussions** – No action will be taken against anyone for making a complaint or helping someone to make a complaint. The Management Committee will take all necessary and reasonable steps to ensure that no victimisation occurs against any member who makes a complaint.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A GRIEVANCE

For a grievance to be dealt with effectively and efficiently, you will need to:

- Prepare for you meeting at each stage by writing down the facts relating to the incident and gathering any relevant evidence to assist your case. Be specific with the facts presented.
- When speaking to the appointed Management Committee member clearly describe the problem and your concern. Focus on the problem, not the personality of other individuals involved and avoid being hostile. Discuss the situation and agree on a possible solution.

First Stage – self help

If you can, try to sort out the issue directly with the person involved. Sometimes people do not mean to do things that hurt or offend others and sometimes they may not have realised that they did in fact hurt or offend you. This does not mean that it is acceptable. However, it does mean that if you can, you should tell the person who is acting in a hurtful or unsuitable way that you consider that their behaviour is unacceptable and/or is offensive so that they have the chance to apologise, and/or stop or change what they are doing.

Second Stage – complaint is made

If the direct approach does not work, or you do not feel that you can sort it out directly with the other person, you should contact the Management Committee. You should put your concerns in writing and forward them to the Bats Qld Secretary, either via email at secretary@batsqld.org.au or by post at PO Box 549 Helensvale Plaza, Helensvale 4210.

A written complaint should include:

- The details of the grievance, that you consider are important and relevant;
- The efforts taken, if any, to resolve the grievance; and
- The desired outcome/resolution.

The Management Committee will discuss the issue and appoint a suitable Committee member to manage your grievance. If the grievance is in relation to a member of the Management Committee that member of the Committee will not be assigned to hear and resolve the grievance, either at first instance or on appeal.

Once a member of the Management Committee is appointed to resolve the grievance, the following steps will follow:

- Within 7 days of the grievance being made, the Management Committee member appointed, will contact you and explain the grievance handling procedure, including what may happen if there is enough evidence to support the complaint or what will happen if there is not enough evidence to support the complaint.
- The Management Committee member will talk to other person/s involved separately and impartially to hear their side of the story in order to fully respond to the allegations.
- The Management Committee member will liaise with you in relation to what the other person/s stated and discuss possible resolutions in order to rectify the complaint.

- The Management Committee member will attempt to ensure that whatever you have agreed/decided upon is implemented.

Third Stage – Appeal

You should only ask the organisation to take a second look at a decision if they have not followed the procedure set out in this Policy or you think they did not do something properly.

If you think that the grievance procedure was not followed properly, you may appeal the decision, within 28 days of the conclusion of the matter. The decision may be appealed to the President of Bats Qld. If the President is in any way associated with the original grievance, either as a witness or as the other party to the grievance, the President cannot hear the appeal. If the President is precluded from hearing the appeal, three members of the Management Committee will be appointed to hear the appeal. To ensure the fairness and impartiality of the appeal proceedings, the member of the Management Committee who was originally appointed to resolve the grievance cannot form part of the appeal panel, nor can any member who has a personal interest in the matter and/or a conflict of interest.

If the President or appeal panel believe that the complaint was handled properly, they will not take any further action. If they think it was not handled properly, they will organise for the complaint to be looked at again by an alternative Management Committee member. If such is the case, the steps and proceedings outlined at the Second Stage above will apply.

Note

Written statements of events will be kept for all stages of the grievance to ensure the correct information is communicated at each stage. You may be requested to sign and date any paperwork generated from your part of the grievance.

Nothing in this policy is intended to alter or limit the rights of either the members or Bats Qld.