



U3A Pine Rivers – Dispute Resolution Policy – v2.1

1. Scope

The Dispute Resolution Policy applies to all members, committee members and volunteers of U3A Pine Rivers Inc and the public who interact with U3A Pine Rivers. It is to be distributed to committee members and volunteers during induction. It is available on the website, and in hard copy at the U3A Centre Kallangur for any person to access.

2. Background

Conflict exists in every organisation and to a certain extent indicates a healthy exchange of ideas and creativity. However, counter-productive conflict can result in member dissatisfaction, reduced productivity for volunteers, increased volunteer and member turnover, increased stress, a hostile environment and possible litigation.

A fair and consistent process for dispute resolution improves the culture and morale of an organisation.

3. Policy Statement

U3A Pine Rivers is committed to an organisational culture that encourages collaboration, cooperation and communication. It is recognised, however, that on occasions inappropriate behaviours or matters may occur and that a complaint and grievance process may be required in order to resolve these matters.

A dispute may arise from any action or inaction, behaviour, situation or decision impacting on a member that the member thinks is unfair or unjustified. It can relate to any aspect of member, volunteer and public engagement and can include but is not limited to:

- Member participation in courses and activities
- Volunteer engagement in delivery of services
- General organisation environment
- Interpersonal conflicts or difficulties
- Safety in the organisation
- Misuse of resources
- Behaviour contrary to the code of conduct

4. Principles of Natural Justice

- 4.1 The person complained about is to be seen as acting in good faith while the complaint is investigated.
- 4.2 Any complaint should be investigated promptly.
- 4.3 The complaint must be put to the person complained against.
- 4.4 The person complained against must be given the opportunity to provide a response to the complaint.

5. Procedures

A person may lodge a complaint in writing to the Secretary of U3A Pine Rivers. The Secretary will inform the President immediately.

Dispute resolution refers to the processes by which disputes are brought to an end. This can occur through:

- 5.1 A negotiated outcome, where the parties sort things out themselves.
- 5.2 A mediated outcome, where the parties use the services of a third person to help them arrive at their own agreement, or
- 5.3 An arbitrated outcome where a decision maker outside the parties to a dispute determines how the dispute should be resolved. This may be internal to the organisation or may be taken to outside the organisation when there are legal obligations involved e.g. anti-discrimination or workplace health and safety legislation.

Every effort should be made to resolve the issue at the earliest possible stage and at each stage efforts will be made to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to resolve the issue amicably.

6. Outcomes

6.1 Stage 1 Negotiated Outcome

The parties to a dispute should seek to resolve the matter between themselves. If this proves impossible:

6.2 Stage 2 Mediated Outcome

A third party such as a fellow member, tutor or committee member may be asked to assist the parties to resolve the dispute. If mediation is unsuccessful, a more formal process is required:

6.3 Stage 3 Arbitrated Outcome

- 6.3.1 The person making the complaint can initiate a more formal process. A grievances sub-committee will be convened and this sub-committee will consist of three members appointed by the management committee to hear the complaint.
- 6.3.2 The complaint must be made in writing, with details of the event and suggestions for resolution.
- 6.3.3 The person complained against must be informed of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond. The sub-committee will meet with both parties separately and together. If no agreement is reached, the sub-committee will make a determination which will be binding on both parties.
- 6.3.4 If either party remains dissatisfied the matter may be referred to the full management committee.

Nothing in this policy and procedure constrains the rights of a person to seek redress from outside the organisation in accordance with any relevant legislation.