

# CANOE RACING NEW ZEALAND

## RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS AND/OR CONCERNS



### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Aims:** This policy sets out CRNZ's approach to addressing complaints and concerns raised with us. It aims to:

- (a) Set out how people can raise complaints or concerns with CRNZ;
- (b) Guide CRNZ personnel in addressing matters raised;
- (c) Set clear expectations about what will happen if/when matters are raised with CRNZ.

1.2 **Application:** Complaints or concerns can be raised by our about anybody involved in or connected with CRNZ.

1.3 **Scope:** People may raise concerns about any matter that is not covered by another CRNZ Policy (note that complaints and appeals regarding selection should be addressed via the relevant Selection Policy. A (non-exhaustive) list of examples includes:

- (a) Organisation management issues;
- (b) Health and safety risks;
- (c) Offensive/insulting language or behaviour;
- (d) Conflicts of interest (including favouritism);
- (e) Unsporting behaviour;
- (f) Disrespectful behaviour;
- (g) Inappropriate conduct;
- (h) Discrimination.

1.4 **Principles:** This policy has been designed with the following principles in mind:

- (a) Wherever possible, issues, disputes or concerns should be addressed informally first by the parties involved, provided it is reasonable and safe to do so;
- (b) There should be multiple avenues available for people to raise concerns, including an independent channel for those not comfortable raising concerns direct with CRNZ;
- (c) Matters should be addressed with a view to keeping the mana of all parties intact and maintaining relationships wherever possible;
- (d) It should be easy to raise any concern or complaint with CRNZ;
- (e) CRNZ will address matters raised with us quickly, without unnecessary delay;
- (f) Any process for addressing complaints or concerns should be fair, transparent and respectful to all parties;
- (g) CRNZ will communicate with all parties regularly and clearly about the progress and/or resolution of any matter;

- (h) CRNZ will respect the privacy of complainants and will not disclose information without their consent, except under certain serious circumstances.

## 2. RAISING CONCERNS AND MAKING COMPLAINTS

2.1 **How to Raise Concerns and/or Make Complaints:** Anybody who wishes to raise a concern or make a complaint should observe the following guidelines:

- (a) First, consider whether it is possible to resolve the matter informally with the person or people involved;
- (b) Consider what outcome you want to achieve from the process;
- (c) Consider whether there are any particular channels set out in any contract or agreement you have with CRNZ. For example, athletes should consider the process set out in the Athlete Agreement (if they have one). CRNZ employees are bound by their employment contracts;
- (d) You may raise your concern or complaint with any member of CRNZ's staff or coaching team. If the matter is serious, it is preferable to raise the matter with a senior member of staff, for example the Performance Manager or CEO;
- (e) If you do not feel comfortable raising an issue direct with CRNZ, you may approach SportNZ's mediation and complaints handling service via their website at <https://www.sportsmediationservice.org.nz>

## 3. CRNZ'S PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING INFORMAL CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

3.1 **Treat Serious Matters with Urgency:** If there is an immediate threat of harm, the matter should be referred to the NZ Police.

3.2 **Receiving The Concern or Complaint:** When approached with a concern or complaint, a CRNZ staff member or coach will do the following:

- (a) Listen to the concern/complaint and try to understand the issue, writing notes if possible and asking questions where necessary;
- (b) Consider whether it is appropriate to take responsibility for addressing the matter, or whether to escalate the matter to the Performance Manager or CEO;
- (c) Once initial information is received, inform the person of the next steps and a timeline for the next contact.

3.3 **Addressing the concern or complaint:** Unless a matter can be easily resolved informally, CRNZ staff members should refer the matter to the Performance Manager or CEO. In exceptional cases, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the CRNZ Board. In addressing the matter, the Performance Manager or CEO will:

- (a) confirm they have received the complaint within three working days of receiving it. Details of the complaint will be entered into a Complaints Register.
- (b) Inform the complainant of all relevant information and discuss a process for resolving the complaint. If the person is under 18, their parent/guardian must also be notified.

- (c) If the complaint is about a specific person, notify the person that the complaint is about. If the complainant is not willing to have their complaint or identity shared with the person or organisation concerned, other ways to address the complaint will have to be considered.<sup>1</sup>
- (d) When considering the complaint, the Performance Manager and/or CEO will consider:
  - (i) What the complaint is about
  - (ii) Whether the matter can be resolved informally
  - (iii) How serious or urgent the complaint is
  - (iv) Whether there is a set process for the type of complaint
  - (v) Culturally appropriate processes depending on the parties involved
  - (vi) Whether the complaint might indicate a broader problem
  - (vii) What risks the complaint raises for CRNZ
  - (viii) What outcome the complainant is seeking
  - (ix) Any other relevant information.
- (e) The Performance Manager or CEO will then decide whether:
  - (i) There is no clear basis for complaint and no action can be taken;
  - (ii) The complaint can be resolved informally; or
  - (iii) A formal process is needed.
- (f) If a formal process is needed, the Performance Manager or CEO will
  - (i) Appoint a decisionmaker for the matter. It may be appropriate for the Performance Manager or CEO to act as decisionmaker, but in serious cases or where there is potential for an actual or perceived conflict of interest to arise, it may be necessary to appoint an independent decision-maker.
  - (ii) Raise the matter with the person complained about in a way that preserves the dignity and mana of that person, their whānau and wider community. If the person complained about is a CRNZ staff member, CRNZ must meet our obligations to the person under employment law.
- (g) The decision maker will:
  - (i) Meet separately with the person making the complaint and the person complained about. These meetings will be at a time and place and run according to a protocol/agenda that suits everyone, to the extent possible. People may be accompanied by chosen family/whānau and/or other support people.
  - (ii) Meetings should take place as soon as possible and ideally within two weeks of the complaint being received. Where it is not possible to meet face to face, the meeting can be held by phone or videocall if people agree and have access to technology.
  - (iii) Interview witnesses if necessary

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in some cases where CRNZ considers that a matter raised involves a serious health and safety risk, it may be necessary to escalate and investigate the matter even if the person who raised it does not agree to disclose their identity. If this is the case, CRNZ will advise the person immediately.

3.4 **Decisions and/or resolutions:** The decision maker will make and communicate decisions as follows:

- (a) Decisions should be made in a careful, reasoned way that is justified on the facts and is consistent with any rules that apply.
- (b) The decision should be communicated to the people involved as soon as possible in writing, with a simple explanation of:
  - (i) the issue;
  - (ii) any applicable policy or rule;
  - (iii) the process followed;
  - (iv) the facts and any evidence relied on;
  - (v) any submissions or explanations by anyone involved;
  - (vi) the decision (complaint upheld or not upheld);
  - (vii) the reason for the decision;
  - (viii) any penalty or outcome, and the options that either party has to appeal or seek revision of the outcome;
  - (ix) any recommendations for repairing relationships.

#### 4. INDEPENDENT MECHANISM AVAILABLE

4.1 **SportNZ Service:** SportNZ has an independent complaints-handling service available to all participants in sport and recreation. Anybody who wishes may approach SportNZ's mediation and complaints handling service via their website at <https://www.sportsmediationservice.org.nz>