

Policy and Procedures for Disciplinary Action and Dismissal of Volunteers [Community Radio Codes of Practice 2008 – Code 2.3 (d)]

BACKGROUND

Volunteers are an invaluable resource to Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc. The Station's primary aim is to encourage and support volunteers' contributions; however, it is also recognised that there could be times when it is necessary for a volunteer to be counselled, disciplined and perhaps dismissed.

PURPOSE

This document outlines a policy and procedure for disciplinary measures and dismissal. It aims to provide a clear and fair structure that is understandable to both management and volunteers.

Included is an appeals mechanism that ensures a 'right of reply' to a volunteer who has been disciplined. This is further complemented by Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc **Conflict Resolution and Grievance Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure** which may be used in a situation where a volunteer believes they have not been fairly heard or that the *Procedures for Disciplinary Action and Dismissal of Volunteers process* has not been adequately followed.

This document does not include the procedure for expulsion of a member from the association, which is laid out in the constitution of Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc.

POLICY

Where it is deemed by the Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc that a behaviour of a volunteer jeopardizes the running of the Station or its reputation, steps will be taken to discipline that volunteer.

The Station undertakes to handle such situations in the most professional manner, ensuring that communication between the Station and the volunteer is clear, fair, objective and remains within this policy.

Conduct which may lead to disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to:

- Poor timekeeping and unreliability
- Not following pre-existing station rules and policies, including programming policies and program briefs

- Engaging in acts or broadcasts which may breach the Community Radio Codes of Practice
- Engaging in broadcasts which could breach other related legislation, such as the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (which includes sponsorship provisions), copyright or defamation
- Inappropriate handling or use of Station equipment or other property
- Rudeness or hostility towards other volunteers or staff members
- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances during working hours
- Publicly bringing Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc into disrepute

Some conduct may be tantamount to 'gross misconduct', in this instance a volunteer may be dismissed without prior warning.

Conduct which could be classed as gross misconduct may include, but is not restricted to:

- Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteer, employee, member or guest of Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc, particularly in respect of race, sex or religion
- Wilful damage to or theft of property belonging to Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc or other volunteer, employee, member or guest of Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc
- Falsifications of any of the organisation records for personal gain
- Commercial misrepresentation of Fraser Coast Community Radio Inc

In the case of a volunteer being dismissed without prior warnings the volunteer will be provided with an appeal process as outlined below.

Throughout the entire disciplinary process the Management Committee will reflect on its own operations as well as those of the Station and will consider the circumstances, actions and behaviour leading to the situation.

The following questions will guide this process:

- Have the roles, values and expectations of the organisation been clearly communicated to the volunteer and subsequently reinforced during prior conversations regarding the volunteer's performance?
- Are there any other factors that may be contributing to the volunteer's poor performance e.g. learning difficulties, health, personal problems or language barriers?
- Has the volunteer been reminded of expected codes of conduct and consequences for breaches?
- Has the volunteer received training/mentoring and or coaching to improve performance?
- Has a verbal and written warning been given to the volunteer explaining that any further non-compliance will result in termination of the volunteering opportunity?
- Did the volunteer have the opportunity to respond to prior verbal and written warnings?

PROCEDURE

The procedure for disciplinary action is a three step process which includes:

- First formal notice in writing
- Second formal notice in writing
- Notice to the volunteer of dismissal from duties

For issues that are considered minor a conversation with the volunteer may be appropriate; however, this will not be considered part of the formal disciplinary action (although it may be referred to in later action.)

Written notice will include details of the issue and, where feasible, evidence. In a case where the disciplinary measure has been instigated by a complaint, it may be appropriate to include a copy (with identification removed) or extract of this complaint.

Further disciplinary actions, such as a suspension of volunteer duties for a period of time, may also be appropriate. In such cases these actions will be included with the formal notice in writing.

Every effort will be taken to ensure that notice of a disciplinary measure, whether formal or informal, will be given at an appropriate time, eg not immediately prior to, or during a broadcast.

Notice of a disciplinary measure will be given by a designated Committee Member.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

Volunteers will also be given the opportunity to appeal the action. The appeal could take the form of a meeting with the appropriate Committee Member or a representation in person and/or in writing to the board.

The volunteer may bring a representative to any such meeting if they choose. Should this appeal result in a change of the disciplinary action, or removal of it, this will be confirmed in writing to the volunteer.