

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

1. To ensure an effective complaints resolution process, Dogs Queensland will not deal with:
  - (a) anonymous complaints, whether by telephone, email or in writing;
  - (b) complaints that do not substantially comply with paragraph 5 below; or
  - (c) complaints that are frivolous or vexatious, manifestly ill-founded or which use deliberately false or misleading information, unnecessarily biased, lodged maliciously or contain abusive or inappropriate language.
2. Dogs Queensland will not become involved in disputes between members in relation to the sale of dogs. These are usually private matters to be determined by the contractual agreements between parties. Disputes regarding contractual agreements should be resolved in the Courts and not by Dogs Queensland.
3. Complaints must be submitted directly by the complainant to Dogs Queensland (not via a third party).
4. The complainant must, in the first instance make all attempts to resolve the problem with the member who is the subject of their complaint, for example a breeder; i.e. discuss options of refund, partial refund or replacement, DNA testing, etc.
5. If unable to come to an agreement, the complaint must:
  - (a) be in writing and utilise the Complaint Lodgement Form which, at a minimum, contains:
    - (i) the date the Statutory Declaration is made;
    - (ii) the complainant's name and contact details;
    - (iii) the name of the other person(s) the complaint is being made about;
    - (iv) a factual description of the incident(s) / decision and / or alleged conduct in also any witness statements;
    - (v) the time and date of the incident(s);
    - (vi) a factual description of the complainant's attempt at resolving the matter; and
    - (vii) the complainant's signature;
  - (b) be written in a manner that is simple, concise and direct and describes the issues in the clearest possible terms;
  - (c) include reference to the specific Dogs Queensland Rule(s) which are alleged to have been breached (Dogs Queensland's Rule Book 2017 can be viewed on the Dogs Queensland website at the following website address: <http://www.dogsqueensland.org.au/AboutUs/?id=1203>);
  - (d) be supported by directly relevant materials and documentary evidence including proof that the complainant has attempted to resolve the matter and, where the breeder / seller has refused, proof of the breeder's / seller's refusal, receipt / proof of purchase, veterinary report, photographic evidence, etc. The evidence should state relevant facts and support the complaint;
  - (e) contain an acknowledgement that Dogs Queensland has permission to forward a copy of the complaint to the member provided personal details are removed;
  - (f) be delivered in a calm and reasonable manner; and
  - (g) contain an actual copy of the post (i.e. screen shot) if it relates to the Social Media Policy.

In addition, and in order for the complaint to progress, a lodgement fee of \$200.00 plus GST is required. This fee will not be required for any complaint relating to the Social Media Policy or by anyone lodging a complaint who is not a member of an ANKC Member body. This fee will only be refunded if the complaint is referred to a Breaches Panel and thus deemed non-frivolous. The Operations Manager has the discretion to waive this fee in certain circumstances, which are;

- Cases of alleged animal cruelty
- Cases of criminal conviction
- Cases of genuine financial hardship

Upon receipt of all of the above requirements and confirmation that the respondent is a current financial member of Dogs Queensland, the complaint will be forwarded to the respondent for their comments, also to be provided in the form of a Statutory Declaration (such Statutory Declaration to comply with paragraphs 5(b) and 5(f) above). Once the respondent has provided their comments, which in turn will be provided to the complainant, the complainant is entitled to a single right of rebuttal (such rebuttal to also be provided in the form of a Statutory Declaration which complies with paragraphs 5(b) and 5(f) above).

A response from a respondent or the complainant's rebuttal to any such response will not be considered by Dogs Queensland to the extent that it contains material that is frivolous or vexatious, manifestly ill-founded or which uses deliberately false or misleading information, unnecessarily biased, lodged maliciously or contains abusive or inappropriate language.

All correspondence will be forwarded to a Dogs Queensland Disputes Liaison Officer and Specialist Members, who in turn independently review and decide upon the outcome of the complaint, which includes referring the matter to a Breaches Panel if deemed necessary. A subsequent Appeal process is also available if required.

A Complaints Process Flowchart is attached for reference.

**Rob Harrison**  
**OPERATIONS MANAGER**

