



## **BODFM Inc trading as Star FM Community Radio**

### **Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure**

[Ratified April 2017]

#### **1. Background**

In accordance with the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia's (CBA) directions, the responsibility for handling complaints about programme content rests with the Station. However, Code 7 of the Community Broadcasting Code of Practice outlines the procedures that need to be undertaken to handle complaints.

If a member of the public has a complaint about programme content on the Station, then the complaint must first be made directly to the Station.

This policy details the Station's complaints handling procedure and outlines the required steps. It also includes Annex "A".

Annex A –Complaints Received form and the form to be used by Management;

#### **2. Handling Complaints**

The overall process for complaint handling should include issues such as:

- informing our listening audience about our complaints process
- informing our announcers of their responsibilities
- receiving complaints
- responding to complaints
- resolving complaints
- unresolved complaints
- notification of complaints

#### **3. Informing Our Listening Audience**

It is a requirement under Code 7 that all radio stations provide regular on-air information about the Community Broadcasting Code of Practice and how the audience may obtain a copy of the Code.

Our radio station is permitted to develop our own policy about the number of times the announcement should be played, and we have done so. The Station Management has

agreed that the sweeper (entitled “Code of Practice”) must be broadcast at least once every week.

The following provides suggested wording for such an announcement.

”This Station subscribes to the Community Broadcasting Code of Practice. The Code of Practice outlines standards relating to programme content such as news and current affairs, Australian music and sponsorship announcements.

The Code also outlines the principles of diversity, independence and volunteerism as fundamental to community broadcasting.

If you have a complaint regarding something you have heard on this Station, you should put your complaint in writing and send it to the Station. If you would like a copy of the Code of Practice, please call us”.

#### **4. Informing Broadcasters**

The Station Director and/or Trainer will inform announcers as to what constitutes unacceptable programme content. This must always be communicated during the training courses, backed up with documents about media law and station policy, and mentioned again at occasional announcer meetings.

#### **5. Receiving Complaints**

Community feedback is an important way to connect with our listeners. Complaints don’t need to be viewed as wholly negative and, in many cases, complaints can be constructive and can function to the Station’s advantage.

It is essential to ensure that a complaint is received by a Board member or the Station Director.

It is most important to make sure that the complaint is dealt with properly and in a timely manner.

The person would not bother to make the call unless they felt they had a legitimate concern. Do not be dismissive of their decision to approach the Station. Assure them that their complaint will be taken seriously and will be dealt with professionally by Management.

It is reasonable and appropriate for the Station to request that complaints be made in writing and relate to a specific condition of license or the Code of Practice or to our Station’s policies (we may also need to provide a copy of the Code of Practice.)

#### **6. Responding to Complaints**

The Station Management must respond to a written complaint within 60 days from the date the complaint is received. If available, the Board might listen to a log of the material in

question, if it exists. (It is a condition of our licence, under the Broadcasting Services Act, that certain material should be logged.)

After due consideration of the available information, the appropriate person (usually the President) should determine the Station's response. This may involve the disciplining (e.g. suspension) of the announcer, as well as a written apology to the complainant (NB: this should not occur in the event of a potential defamation action), or may be a diplomatic response confirming the Station's commitment to the broadcast of the material in question.

In most cases, proper consideration and an appropriate and timely response by the Station will satisfy the complainant.

The formal letter of response should contain an invitation to the complainant to discuss the matter further if required.

### **7. Resolving Complaints**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Station's written response, then a number of actions may be taken, for example;

- further consideration of the complaint and a further response,
- no further response as the initial response was appropriate, or
- the option of attending a meeting on the matter.

If the complainant wishes to participate in a meeting, the announcer concerned and the Station Director and/or President should be invited to attend. The CBAA Handbook includes a chapter on Conflict Resolution for tips on how to conduct such a meeting.

### **8. Unresolved Complaints**

The Station is required by law to inform the person of their right to take their complaint to the Australian Communications Media Authority (ACMA) if the complainant is unhappy with the Station's response, or if a response has not been received within the 60 day period.

## **Annex A**

**BODFM Inc trading as STAR FM**

**COMPLAINT/COMMENT FORM**

**Nature of Complaint:**

Person taking verbal/telephone complaint:

Name of Person(s) making the complaint/comment:

Address:

Telephone:

Signature of Complainant(s):

Date: .../.../...

### **OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Received formal complaint/comment in writing:

Name of Announcer and time/date aired:

Written complaint/comment referred to Management Committee:

Written response by Committee:

Signature of Station Director:

Date: .../.../...