

# Ballina Region for Refugees Inc.

## Grievance and Complaint Policy

### *Policy Statement:*

This policy is intended to ensure that BR4R handles grievances and complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively.

This policy provides guidance to those who wish to air a grievance or make a complaint.

This policy applies to all BR4R members, volunteers, any employees and the BR4R Committee receiving or managing complaints from the public, made to, or about us. It equally applies to the handling of grievances within BR4R made by volunteers, employees or members against other members, volunteers, or staff, against the Committee or BR4R itself.

The policy is consistent with requirements in our Constitution outlined in Clauses 28 and 37.

This policy does not negate in any way the right of any party involved in a grievance to contact at any stage, any external authority such as police, Anti-Discrimination or other governmental or legal authorities, that the party sees as appropriate.

### *Terms and Definitions*

**A Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, or our membership, our volunteers or staff, or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. Complaints can be made directly, in person or in writing to the Committee of BR4R but may also be made on social media.

**A Dispute:** An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of BR4R

**Feedback:** Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about BR4R, or our complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

**Grievance:** A clear, formal written statement by an individual member, employee or volunteer, or by a group of members, volunteers, or employees about another member, volunteer (s) or employee(s), or about a task or work-related problem. A grievance can also be about BR4R as an organisation. A grievance would usually be a clear, formal written statement.

### *Procedures:*

- BR4R is committed to seeking, receiving and acting on feedback.
- BR4R expects all volunteers and members to act within the BR4R Code of Conduct.
- BR4R believes that where a grievance is between BR4R volunteers, employees or members, every effort should be made to first resolve this between the parties. Where this proves impossible, aggrieved parties should provide a clear, formal written statement to the President of BR4R. The President and at least one member of the BR4R Committee will together investigate the grievance. BR4R holds the expectation that all aggrieved parties will be willing to meet and work together to resolve the matter.
- BR4R will accept complaints directly, in person, or in writing to the BR4R Committee, but will also acknowledge any complaints made on social media.
- BR4R commits that all raising complaints or grievances will be listened to, treated with respect, and actively involved in the complaint or grievance process, where possible and appropriate.
- BR4R will acknowledge receipt of each complaint or grievance promptly, and preferably within 5 working days. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint or raising a grievance.

- BR4R is committed to a fair, respectful and timely process of dealing with complaints and grievances. We will address each complaint or grievance with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. We commit to act in as timely a way as possible in handling any complaint or grievance.
- BR4R commits to providing reasons for any decision/s made by BR4R.
- BR4R will take all reasonable steps to ensure that anyone making a complaint or raising a grievance are not adversely affected because a complaint or grievance has been made by them or on their behalf.
- Where a grievance is between BR4R members, or between members and BR4R, and that grievance becomes a dispute and appears irresolvable, additional conditions apply as outlined in Clause 28 of the BR4R Constitution. The BR4R Committee will reserve the right to nominate members of any independent tribunal to assist in bringing about a resolution.

### **Special note about bullying and harassment**

Harassment is unwanted or unwelcome behaviour. Some types of harassment may be offences against the law

Bullying is ongoing behaviour that is intimidating, offensive or degrading. It can be unlawful discrimination if it is directed at someone because of gender, race, sexuality etc It can be against the law.

BR4R will not tolerate bullying and harassment directed by any member, volunteer or external party at any other member, volunteer or BR4R, whether direct or indirect. Where such incidents relate to members and volunteers, the BR4R grievance process should be used to deal with any such incidents. Where bullying or harassing behaviour is used by parties external to BR4R to BR4R members or volunteers carrying out BR4R activities, BR4R will reserve the right to take any action it seems fit, including referral to external authorities. BR4R will endeavour to do what it takes to ensure that no other member or volunteer of BR4R is subjected to like behaviour from the same parties.

<b>Approved by the BR4R Committee</b>	<b>Reviewed by the BR4R Committee</b>	<b>Amendments accepted by the BR4R Committee</b>
<b>Date: 11/12/2020</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Date:</b>