



COMPLAINTS POLICY

2026 / 2027

1. PURPOSE

This Complaints Policy outlines the process by which complaints are received, investigated, and resolved by phase Broadcasters Inc. It aims to ensure that complaints are handled transparently, fairly, and in accordance with the standards set by the Community Broadcasting Codes of Practice, ACMA, and other relevant industry regulations.

The policy's goals are to:

- Provide clear, fair, and accessible procedures for the submission and resolution of complaints.
- Ensure that complaints are handled efficiently, in a timely manner, and with full respect for privacy and confidentiality.
- Maintain compliance with the applicable regulatory frameworks and ensure procedural fairness for all parties involved.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all complaints related to:

- Broadcast content, including programming, sponsorship, and advertisements.
- Conduct of staff, presenters, volunteers, and contributors.
- Any matters related to compliance with broadcasting standards and regulations.

Complaints may be received via various channels, including telephone, email, or written correspondence, and will be handled in accordance with this policy.

3. COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

The following steps outline the procedure for handling complaints received by the station:

Complaint Received (Telephone or Verbal)

- **Complete a Breach Report:**
 - All verbal complaints will be documented in a Breach Report form.
- **Advise the Complainant:**
 - The complainant will be encouraged to submit their complaint in writing.
- **Forward to Management:**
 - The complaint and Breach Report will be submitted to management for review.

Complaint Received (Written)

- **Complete a Breach Report:**
 - Written complaints will also be recorded on a Breach Report form.
- **Attach and File:**
 - The written complaint and Breach Report will be filed for records.
- **Forward to Board President:**
 - The complaint will be forwarded to the Board President for further review.

Author:	Matthew Berry	Reviewed By:	Matthew Berry
Revised Date:	March 2026	Next Revision Date:	January 2027
Approved By	The PRN Board	Version:	2.2

Initial Action by Management

- **Minor Breach:**
 - If the breach is minor, management may issue a formal warning.
- **Major Breach:**
 - For more serious breaches, the program or broadcaster may be temporarily suspended pending review by the Board.

Investigation and Research

Management will:

- **Back-Up Audio Logs:**
 - Retain relevant audio logs of the broadcast in question.
- **Witness Testimony:**
 - Seek testimony from any relevant witnesses or involved parties.
- **Review Evidence:**
 - Investigate the alleged breach thoroughly, including reviewing any security logs or documentation.
- **President's Oversight:**
 - The Board President will lead the investigation if the complaint pertains to management or internal issues.

Response and Preliminary Actions

- **Initial Reply:**
 - A letter acknowledging the complaint will be sent to the complainant, confirming receipt and outlining next steps.
- **Issue Warning or Suspension:**
 - If applicable, management may issue a warning or suspend the program, pending further review.

Board Review

At the next scheduled Board meeting, the Board will:

- **Review Evidence:**
 - Listen to the audio logs and examine all relevant evidence.
- **Consider All Evidence:**
 - The Board will deliberate on the complaint, taking into account past penalties and the severity of the issue.
- **Decision and Action:**
 - The Board will decide on appropriate actions, including issuing warnings, suspensions, or policy changes.

Final Follow-Up

- **Written Response to Complainant:** Within 60 days of receiving the complaint, a final decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing, including any actions taken.
- **Mediation:** If the complainant is not satisfied, they will be offered the option to participate in independent mediation.

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4. MEDIATION AND INDEPENDENT REVIEW

If internal resolution efforts fail, mediation can be initiated to ensure fair handling of complaints:

- **Appointment of an Independent Mediator:**
 - If the Board deems necessary, an independent mediator will be appointed to assist in resolving the issue.
- **Mediation Process:**
 - The mediator will engage with both parties, review the evidence, and facilitate a resolution.
- **Costs of Mediation:**
 - If the mediator is selected by the station, the network will bear the associated costs. However, if the complainant requests a mediator of their choice, they will be responsible for the costs.

5. FALSE, VEXATIOUS, OR FRIVOLOUS COMPLAINTS

In the event of a false, vexatious, or frivolous complaint, the following actions will be taken:

- **Immediate Reversal of Suspensions:**
 - If a complaint is found to be false or unjustified, any temporary suspension imposed will be immediately lifted.
- **Restoration of Airtime:**
 - If a broadcaster's airtime was suspended, it will be restored without penalty.
- **No Breach Record:**
 - No breach will be recorded against the broadcaster, and any temporary documentation regarding the complaint will be removed.
- **Written Notice:**
 - The complainant will be informed in writing that their complaint was not upheld, and further action may include mediation or referral to ACMA.

6. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF PROGRAMS

If a complaint involves a serious or potentially serious breach of the broadcasting codes:

- **Immediate Suspension:** Management may temporarily suspend a program or broadcaster until the complaint is fully reviewed by the Board.
- **Temporary Airtime Substitution:** A temporarily vacated time slot may be filled with interim programming, but no permanent reassignment of airtime will occur until the issue is resolved.

7. RECORD-KEEPING AND COMPLIANCE

- **Retention of Records:** All complaint records, including audio logs and Breach Reports, will be retained for a minimum of four (4) years for compliance purposes.
- **Confidentiality:** All complaint handling processes will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality, protecting the identities of complainants, broadcasters, and other involved parties.

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8. REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up-to-date with:

- Changes in legislation, including the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).
- The latest regulations set by the ACMA and the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBA).
- The operational needs and governance of the station.

9. CONTACT DETAILS FOR COMPLAINTS

Complaints can be made using the following methods:

- **Mail:** PHAZE Broadcasters Inc – 30 Production Drive, Victoria Australia, 3350
- **Phone:** 03 5303 0546
- **Email:** complaints@ratfm.org.au
- **Website:** www.phazern.org.au

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