GOVERNANCE POLICY

Grievance, Complaints & Protest Policy & Procedures of the Malanda Pastoral, Agriculture and Industrial Society Inc

A fair, respectful and consistent process for raising and resolving concerns.

Commencement and Non-Retrospective Application

This Grievance, Complaints and Protest Policy of the Malanda Pastoral, Agricultural and Industrial Society Inc (hereafter referred to as the Malanda Show Society) shall take effect from 17th November 2026.

The provisions of this Policy shall apply prospectively only and shall not be applied retrospectively to any conduct, incident, competition, event or activity that occurred prior to 17th November 2026.

No person shall be subject to disciplinary action, penalties or sanctions under this Policy in relation to matters arising from previous years' activities conducted by the Malanda Show Society.

Nothing in this provision prevents the Society from addressing historical matters in accordance with any rules, policies or legal obligations applicable at the time of the relevant conduct.

1. Purpose

The Malanda Show Society is committed to addressing grievances and complaints fairly, respectfully, consistently and as promptly as reasonably possible.

This Policy provides a process for raising and resolving concerns while supporting:

- Procedural fairness;
- Confidentiality and privacy;
- Respectful communication;
- Protection from victimisation;
- Appropriate recordkeeping; and
- The safety and wellbeing of everyone involved.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to grievances and complaints involving:

- Members and office bearers;
- Volunteers and employees;

- Exhibitors and competitors;
- Judges, stewards and officials;
- Contractors, stallholders and service providers;
- Sponsors, patrons and visitors; and
- Activities, competitions and events conducted by the Society.

This Policy does not replace:

- Processes required under the Society's constitution or rules;
- Child-safety reporting obligations;
- Workplace health and safety procedures;
- Animal-welfare or biosecurity reporting requirements; or
- A person's right to contact police, emergency services or another authority.

3. Definitions

Grievance: a concern, a perceived feeling of being unfairly treated, problem or disagreement that a person wishes to have addressed.

Complaint: Either a written or spoken expression of dissatisfaction about conduct, a decision, service, process or failure to act, where a response or resolution is sought. (Please refer to No. 7 in this document for the requested process to follow.)

Protest: - to express disagreement with, objection to, disapproval of, or opposition to a competition decision. This process is to complement competition protest procedures contained in the show schedule.

Complainant: the person making the complaint.

Respondent: the person or organisation whose conduct or decision is the subject of the complaint.

Procedural fairness: providing a fair process, including an opportunity for relevant parties to understand and respond to allegations before a final decision is made.

4. Time limits

Complaints and **grievances** must be lodged within one month of the alleged incident.

Protests regarding a considered incorrect prize awarded must be lodged within 24 hours of the competition and before the item/livestock leaves the competition grounds.

5. Guiding principles

Complaints will be managed according to the following principles:

- All parties will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Complaints will be assessed impartially.
- A respondent will be informed of the substance of allegations and given a reasonable opportunity to respond.

- Decisions will be based on relevant information and the balance of probabilities.
- Information will be shared only with people who reasonably need it.
- Conflicts of interest will be declared and managed.
- No person will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern in good faith.
- The process will be proportionate to the seriousness and complexity of the matter.
- The safety of people and animals will take priority.
- The committee, at its discretion, may call for and hear expert advice from external sources.
- If the decision by the committee is not unanimous the decision of the majority will prevail.
- If the decision is equally divided, then the decision will be made in the best interests of the show.

6. Matters requiring immediate action

Emergencies, immediate safety threats or suspected criminal conduct should be reported directly to emergency services or police where appropriate.

The Society may take immediate interim action where reasonably necessary, including:

- Separating the people involved;
- Stopping an activity;
- Removing a person from the grounds;
- Suspending duties or access;
- Relocating or removing an animal;
- Preserving documents, recordings or other evidence; or
- Referring the matter to an appropriate authority.

Interim action is precautionary and does not, by itself, represent a finding that misconduct occurred.

7. Making a complaint

Where appropriate and safe, a person may first attempt to resolve a minor concern directly with the person involved.

If this is unsuccessful, inappropriate or unsafe, a complaint may be made to:

- The relevant Chief Steward or event coordinator;
- The Show Manager or Secretary
- The President; or
- Another office bearer nominated by the Society.

Complaints should preferably be made in writing and include:

- The complainant's name and contact details;
- A clear description of what occurred;
- Relevant dates, times and locations;
- The full names of people involved
- The full names of people who witnessed the incident;

- Copies of relevant documents, photographs or correspondence;
- Any steps already taken to resolve the matter; and
- The outcome being sought.

An online complaints form is offered. Please notify the show manager once the complaint has been lodged online.

8. Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints may be considered, particularly where they identify a serious safety, welfare, child-protection, legal or integrity concern.

However, anonymity may limit the Society's ability to investigate, provide procedural fairness or advise the complainant of the outcome.

9. Confidentiality and privacy

All parties must respect the confidentiality of the complaints process.

Information may be disclosed where reasonably necessary to:

- Investigate or resolve the complaint;
- Provide procedural fairness;
- Protect a person or animal from harm;
- Obtain legal, insurance or professional advice;
- Comply with the law; or
- Refer the matter to an appropriate authority.

Depending on reported incidents, grievances may be discussed at an informal gathering of active committee members, general committee meeting, a management meeting or specifically formed committee to hear such grievances. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

10. Initial assessment

The Malanda Show Society will acknowledge a written complaint as soon as reasonably practicable.

When appropriate, the relevant steward, show manager and management committee will be made aware of any complaint or grievance.

An authorised person will conduct an initial assessment to determine:

- Whether the matter falls within the Society's authority;
- Whether another process should apply;
- Whether immediate protective action is required;
- The seriousness and complexity of the allegations;
- Whether there is enough information to proceed;
- Whether informal resolution may be appropriate; and

- Who should manage or investigate the complaint.

The Society may request further information before proceeding.

11. Conflicts of interest

A person must not manage, investigate or decide a complaint where they have an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

Where a complaint concerns a management committee member or another person who would ordinarily manage it, the complaint must be referred to an uninvolved office bearer or an appropriate independent person.

12. Informal resolution

Where the matter is suitable and all relevant parties agree, informal resolution may include:

- Clarifying a misunderstanding;
- Facilitated discussion;
- Mediation;
- An apology;
- An agreement about future behaviour;
- Correcting information or a process;
- Additional guidance, training or supervision; or
- Another mutually acceptable outcome.

13. Formal investigation

Formal investigations will be carried out with allegations of (but not limited to), law breaking, verbal and physical abuse, serious harassment, child safety, criminal conduct, significant fraud or serious animal-welfare concerns, serious misuse of property etc.

Where formal investigation is required, the appointed investigators may:

- Provide the respondent with details of the allegations;
- Obtain a written or verbal response;
- Interview the complainant, respondents and witnesses;
- Review documents, messages, photographs, recordings or records;
- Seek technical or independent advice; and
- Prepare findings and recommendations.

Both the complainant and respondent may have an appropriate support person present at an interview. The support person must not disrupt proceedings or answer on the person's behalf. That support person is then to keep the proceedings of the meeting confidential.

The investigation should be completed as promptly as reasonably possible.

14. Standard of proof

Findings are made on the evidence presented and not hearsay.

The seriousness of an allegation and the possible consequences will be considered when assessing the strength and reliability of the available information.

Advice may be sought by the Malanda Show Society from external sources. Eg Queensland Ag Show, legal representation, breed societies, expert groups etc.

15. Possible outcomes

A complaint may be found to be:

- Substantiated;
- Partially substantiated;
- Not substantiated;
- Unable to be determined due to insufficient information; or
- Outside the Society's authority.

Possible actions may include:

- No further action;
- An explanation or acknowledgement;
- An apology or corrective action;
- Mediation or a behavioural agreement;
- Training, guidance or supervision;
- A verbal or written warning;
- Changes to duties, access or responsibilities;
- Removal from a volunteer, delegated or representative role;
- Disqualification or withdrawal of an award;
- Disciplinary action under the constitution or rules;
- Restriction or exclusion from future activities;
- Termination of membership
- Exhibitors ban or exclusion from present and future shows or sections of the show.
- Policy changes, procedure or safety improvements; or
- Referral to police, an insurer, governing body or another authority.

16. Notification of outcome

The complainant and respondent will be advised in writing that the matter has been finalised and given information about the outcome where appropriate.

Privacy, employment, legal and confidentiality considerations may limit the details that can be provided about disciplinary action involving another person.

17. Review of a decision

The decision made by the Malanda Show Society will be final. If new information becomes available, the procedure taken will be at the Malanda Show Society's discretion.

18. Victimisation and retaliation

The Society will not tolerate retaliation, intimidation, disadvantage or victimisation against a person because they:

- Made or intended to make a genuine complaint;
- Participated in an investigation;
- Provided information as a witness; or
- Supported another person involved in the process.

Alleged retaliation may be treated as a separate breach of conduct.

No person shall have any claim against the Association or against the committee, member, employee or agent of the Association in respect of any act, matter or thing done in good faith during or in connection with the proceedings before the disciplinary committee.

19. Unreasonable or bad-faith conduct

A complaint will not be considered unreasonable merely because it is not substantiated.

However, the Society may act where a person knowingly provides false information, makes a malicious complaint, repeatedly raises a matter already properly determined without new information, or uses the complaints process to harass another person.

20. Records

The Society will maintain appropriate records of:

- The complaint;
- Assessment and investigation actions;
- Evidence considered;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Findings and decisions;
- Communications with the parties; and
- Actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised people.

21. Policy review

This Policy will be reviewed periodically and following any significant complaint that identifies a weakness in the Society's governance, safety practices or procedures.

Policy administration

Adopted by	Malanda Show Society Committee
Date adopted	17th November 2026
Commencement date	17th November 2026
Review date	17th November 2027
Responsible officer	Malanda Show Management Committee