



Complaint Management Process

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The **Complaints Management Process** (CMP) is a neutral, transparent, and structured framework that provides a fair and consistent method for receiving, assessing, investigating, and resolving complaints about ethical breaches by SCA Members.

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Purpose

The Strata Community Association (SCA) Complaints Management Process (CMP) upholds the integrity of the strata profession by enforcing the SCA Code of Ethics (Code) and ensuring that concerns are addressed impartially, all parties are treated fairly, and decisions are based on evidence.

Beyond accountability, the CMP supports ongoing professional development and strengthens public confidence by promoting ethical conduct, transparency, and trust across the sector.

Key Principles

Fairness

Every party involved in a complaint is treated with respect, given a reasonable opportunity to be heard, and assessed without bias. The process ensures that decisions are based on clear, objective evidence and guided by procedural integrity.

Transparency

The process, including how complaints are assessed, decisions made, and outcomes communicated, is clear, consistent, and open.

Timeliness

Complaints are managed within reasonable and predictable timeframes, minimising unnecessary delays while allowing sufficient time for thorough and balanced consideration.

Accessibility

The CMP is publicly available, free to access, and written in plain language. Guidance and support are offered where needed to ensure all stakeholders can meaningfully participate.

Supportive

Parties are treated with respect throughout the process and participants are encouraged to engage in good faith to resolve matters constructively.

Proportionality

If a complaint is upheld, any sanction or corrective action is proportionate to the nature and impact of the misconduct. These measures are designed not only to ensure accountability but to support improvement and uphold ethical standards.

Continuous Improvement

Complaint outcomes and trends inform updates to the Code, training, and industry guidance. Continuous analysis of data strengthens professionalism and supports the development of an ethical culture over time.

Scope and Applicability

- Applies to all SCA Members across Australia and New Zealand.
- Concerns must relate to a potential breach of the Code.
- The process does not address general operational issues unless the conduct also involves a potential breach of the Code, such as behaviour that is dishonest, demonstrates a lack of integrity in terms of behaviour that is morally or professionally unacceptable.
- Anonymous complaints are not generally accepted unless the matter is credible, serious, and there is a valid reason for the complainant wishing to remain anonymous. Where accepted, the complaint must still include sufficient detail and evidence to allow for fair assessment.
- The SCA Board/Panel may initiate a complaint unilaterally.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Appeals Officer	A person appointed by the Panel to independently review determinations under this Complaints Management Process. The appointed Appeals Officer will not be a member of the Panel, will have had no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint, and will be free from any conflict of interest or bias.
Complaint	An allegation that an SCA Member has breached the Code.
Complainant	The person or organisation lodging a complaint.
Member	All employees of businesses who hold a membership with the Strata Community Association.
Panel	The Panel may be the Professional Standards and Membership Board Advisory Group (PSMBAG), a subgroup from the PSMBAG, or suitably qualified individuals with no conflict of interest. The Panel operates with delegated authority from the Board/SCA and may adopt flexible procedures to ensure complaints are handled fairly, transparently, and in accordance with the CMP and Code.
Respondent	The SCA Member who is the subject of the complaint.
Senior Executive	The person responsible for managing the CMP.

Complaints Process

Stage 1:

Lodgement and Initial Assessment

1. Only complaints submitted through the online SCA Complaint Application Form, and lodged in accordance with the approved complaints process, will be accepted for review.
2. Receipt of application is acknowledged by the Senior Executive within 7 calendar days.
3. The complaint must:
 - Be submitted in writing using the prescribed SCA Complaint Application Form.
 - Relate to an SCA Member only.
 - Include specific and factual details of the members involvement.
 - Clearly identify which section(s) of the Code are alleged to have been breached.
 - Be supported by relevant evidence; unsupported allegations will not be considered.
 - Include no more than 10 attachments, with a maximum total of 50 pages. If additional documents are necessary, a request for approval must be submitted to complaints@strata.community.
 - Avoid duplication. The same document or email should not be submitted multiple times.
 - Clearly identify which attachment(s) corresponds to the allegation(s). Include page numbers where appropriate.
4. Senior Executive reviews within 14 calendar days:
 - May request further information from the complainant, who will be provided 7 calendar days to respond.
 - Reject the complaint if it is frivolous, vexatious, clearly operational in nature, outside the scope of the Code of Ethics, or otherwise unsubstantiated. In such cases, the Senior Executive will notify the complainant in writing, advising that the matter will not proceed and providing the reason(s) for that decision.
 - Where a complaint involves serious concerns such as allegations of misappropriation, discrimination, physical or sexual abuse or unlawful conduct, the Senior Executive may refer the matter to an appropriate external authority or regulator.

Stage 2:

Response and Preliminary Review

1. If accepted, the Respondent will be notified in writing within 21 calendar days from the original date of lodgement, and provided with:
2. A copy of the complaint application form and supporting documents submitted by the Complainant
3. A link to the Code and CMP.
4. Respondent is provided 14 calendar days to respond in writing with supporting evidence. Members are required to participate in good faith. Failure to respond will not halt the process and may itself be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics.
5. If accepted, within 21 calendar days the complainant will receive a written summary confirming the allegations that fall within or outside the scope of the CMP and outline the expected timeframe for response and investigation.
6. A matter may be resolved early if both parties provide written agreement.



Stage 3: **Investigation by the Senior Executive or Designated Person**

1. Upon receipt of the Respondent's response to the allegations, all relevant documents and submissions from both parties are complied.
2. If further information or clarification from either party is required, they will be provided 7 calendar days to provide a response.
3. The investigation may include interviews, written statements, and documentary review.
4. The investigation process does not involve a formal or informal hearing.
5. All parties are expected to cooperate in good faith.
6. Upon completion of the investigation process, the complaint file is prepared and submitted for review by the Panel at the next scheduled meeting of the Panel.
7. If a complaint is resolved during this stage, the resolution is reported to the Panel.
8. The investigation phase should be completed within 21 calendar days, unless an extension is approved by the Senior Executive or Panel due to complexity or exceptional circumstances.

Stage 4: **Determination**

1. The Panel will:
 - Review the matter based on the evidence provided by both parties.
 - Determine whether a breach of the Code is substantiated.
2. Panel decisions:
 - No Breach
 - Unsatisfactory Conduct: Conduct that does not meet ethical standards under the Code but does not amount to serious or intentional misconduct and is not based on dissatisfaction with service quality or operational matters.
 - Professional Misconduct: Serious or deliberate breaches of the Code that result in significant adverse consequences or demonstrate a disregard for ethical obligations. This includes dishonest, unethical, or unlawful conduct, or repeated breaches that undermine public trust in the profession.
3. Findings issued in writing to both parties within 14 calendar days.

Outcomes and Corrective Actions

If a breach is substantiated, the Panel may apply sanctions or corrective actions, which may include (but are not limited to):

- Educational or mentoring requirements.
- Written warnings or reprimands.
- A requirement to adopt or align with specific SCA best practice standards.
- Written apology, either private or public.

In case of serious professional misconduct or repeated breaches, the Panel may make a recommendation to the relevant State or Chapter Board for:

- Suspension of membership
- Expulsion of membership

Where appropriate, the matter may be referred to an external authority or regulator.

All outcomes are intended to be proportionate to the nature and impact of the breach. Wherever possible, corrective actions focus on education, accountability and reinforcing ethical and professionals standards.

Procedural Fairness and Confidentiality

All parties will be provided a reasonable and fair opportunity to respond to allegations, present relevant evidence.

The complaints process is conducted confidentially. Information is only disclosed where necessary and appropriate, including to the respondent, the Panel, and any relevant authority if required.

All records are securely stored and only accessible to individuals directly involved in managing or assessing the complaint.



Appeals Process

A complainant or subject member may appeal a determination made under this Complaints Management Process. The appeal must:

- Be submitted in writing within 14 calendar days of receiving the determination.
- Be sent by email to complaints@strata.community, addressed to the Senior Executive or Panel.
- Clearly state the basis on which the appeal is being lodged.

Grounds for appeal are limited to the following:

- Procedural error that affected the outcome.
- Material error or omission of fact that affected the findings.
- A sanction or corrective action that is unreasonable or disproportionate in the circumstances.

Appeals are reviewed by an Appeals Officer appointed by the Senior Executive or Panel. The Appeals Officer must be independent, have no prior involvement in the complaint, and be free from any conflict of interest.

All documents and records relevant to the complaint will be provided to the Appeals Officer for a full and independent review.

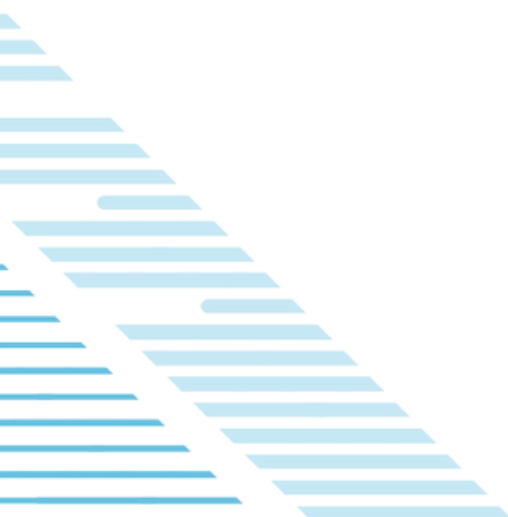
The Appeals Officer will consider the appeal and issue a written decision to the Senior Executive within 21 calendar days of receipt.

The Appeals Officer may:

- Dismiss the appeal and confirm the original determination.
- Substitute a new determination.
- Refer the matter back to the Panel for further consideration, with specific directions on the issues requiring review.

The Appeals Officers decision will be notified to the complainant in writing within 7 calendar days.

Where the Appeals Officer issues a substituted determination or refers the matter back to the Panel for further consideration, the respondent will be notified in writing of the appeal outcome and any resulting changes to the original decision within 7 calendar days.



Timeline Summary

All timeframes refer to calendar days and exclude public holidays. Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Senior Executive.

Stage	Action	Timeframe (Calendar Days)
Lodgement	Complaint acknowledged by Senior Executive	7
Assessment	Senior Executive preliminary review	14
Additional Information	Complainant to provide additional info if requested	7
Complainant Summary	Summary of allegations provided to complainant	21
Respondent Notification	Respondent notified and provided complaint material	21
Respondent Response	Respondent to submit written response	14
Investigation	Completed by Senior Executive or delegate	21 (unless extended)
Further Info (Investigation)	Either party to provide additional info if requested	7
Panel Review	Panel to review application	Next scheduled meeting
Determination	Panel decision issued in writing	14
Appeal Lodgement	Appeal submitted after determination	14
Appeal Outcome	Appeals Officer decision issued	21
Appeal Notification	Parties notified of decision	7

