



**M**etropolitan  
**B**owls  
**A**ssociation Inc.

**COMPLAINTS  
PROTESTS  
HEARINGS  
&  
APPEALS  
POLICY**

Adopted  
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## PREAMBLE TO COMPLAINTS, DISPUTES AND PROTESTS.

Bowls SA is the overarching State Authority. The Constitution, By-Laws and Policies of Bowls SA are relevant here – in particular, **The Bowls SA MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY (MPP)** specifically: PART D COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURES.

- Attachment D1: Complaints Procedure
- Attachment D2: Mediation
- Attachment D3: Investigation Process
- Attachment D4: Procedure for handling allegations of child Abuse
- Attachment D5: Hearings and Appeals Tribunal Procedure.

The Metropolitan Bowls Association Constitution, By-Laws and Policies sit below the Bowls SA policies and procedures.

**# In particular, this Metropolitan Bowls Association Complaints, Disputes, Protest, Hearings and Tribunal Appeals policy deals specifically with issues related to playing Pennant bowls, or other MBA controlled events.**

**# Protests, Hearings and Appeals which apply between members of clubs or between associations will be dealt with by Bowls SA.**

**# Complaints between members ideally will be resolved at the club level.**

**See the flow chart opposite. If not resolved, the Bowls SA Member Protection Policy will be the main reference as listed in the attachments referred to above.**

All clubs are encouraged to be familiar with the Bowls SA MPP and adopt the procedures for their own clubs.

Hearings and Appeals will be in line with Attachment D5 above and the procedure in this document. An accelerated process applies for Finals.

### **Brief Definitions only as guides:**

**Association: The Metropolitan Bowls Association (MBA)**

**A Complaint:** is an objection to something that is unfair, unacceptable, or otherwise not up to normal standards.

**A Dispute:** is an assertion of opposing views or concerns...a conflict of claims or rights.

**A Protest:** a formal declaration of objection or disapproval of an act about to be done or already performed.

**Natural Justice:** the rules and procedures to be followed by a person or body with the power to settle disputes. Some rules of natural justice are to act fairly, without bias, and the right of all parties to be heard.

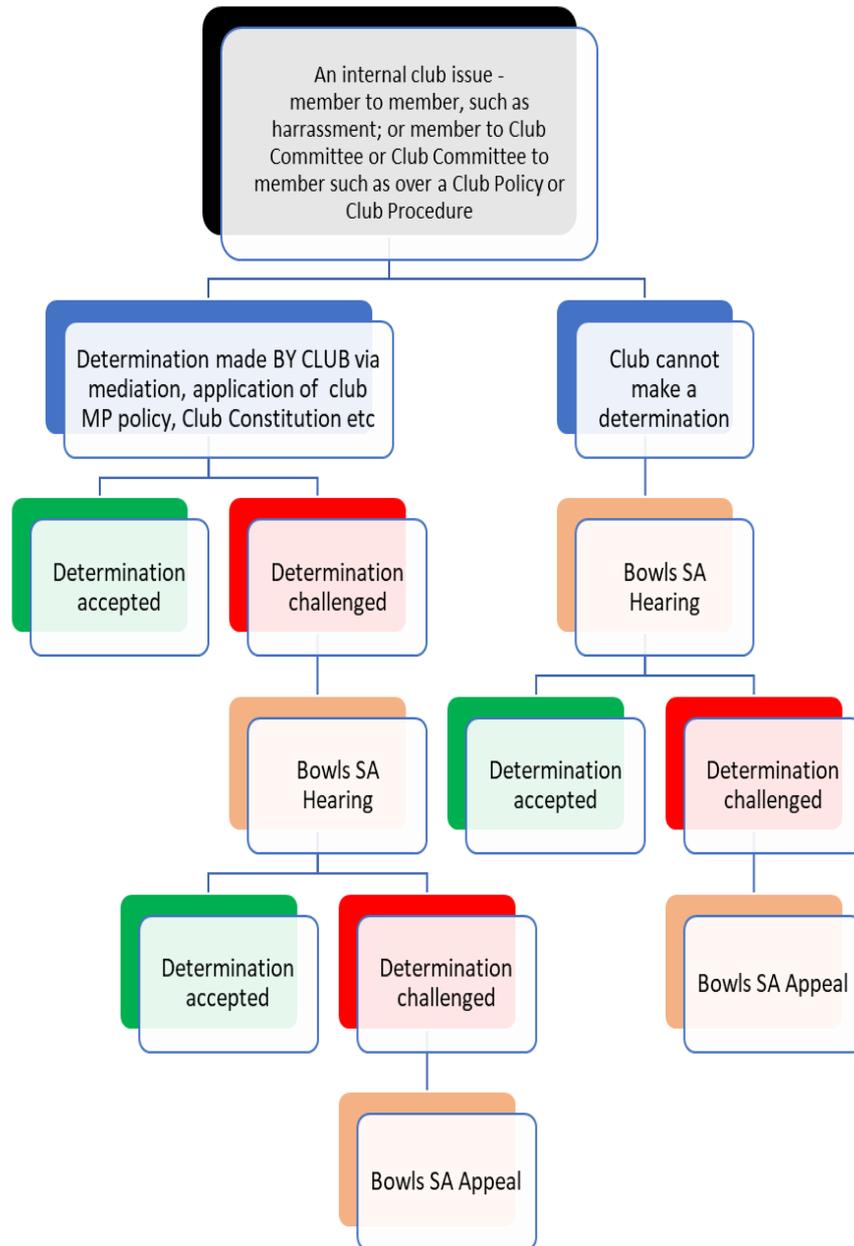
**Hearing Rule:** a person must know the allegations against them and be allowed an adequate opportunity to present their case in as much detail as possible.

**Bias Rule:** The judging authority must be impartial and able to make a decision based on a balanced and considered assessment of the information.

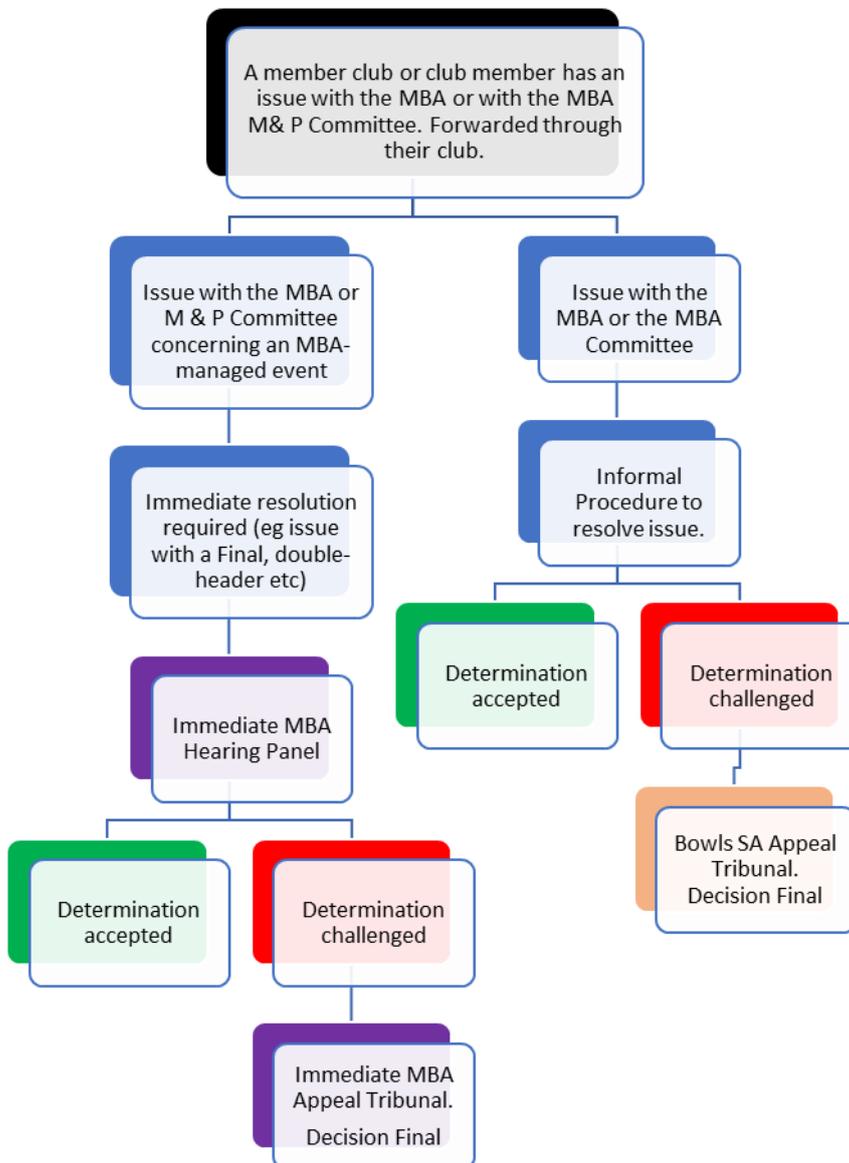
**Evidence Rule:** An administrative decision must be based upon logical proof, not on mere speculation or suspicion.

**A GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATORS:**

**FLOWCHART FOR MEMBER ISSUES- MATTERS THAT GO TO BOWLS SA**



## MATTERS THAT ARE DEALT WITH BY THE MBA



## **A GUIDE FOR CLUB ADMINISTRATORS.**

### **Possible Sources of Issues:**

Club Procedure, Club Policy; Club Selection, Uniform Policy, Smoking Policy, E.O., Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Abuse, Social Media, An Official, Another member.

**THE GAME-**These are the areas covered by the MBA Policy hereunder.

Rules of Sport

Pennant Rules

Eligibility of Players

Behaviour

### **Possible Sources of Support and Information in Resolving Issues**

- Bowls SA Member Protection Information Officer.
- MBA Member Protection Information Officer.
- Bowls SA Member Protection Policy
- Sports SA
- State Sport Dispute Centre-by arrangement with Bowls SA- they can provide advice.
- Play -By -The Rules Website.
- Mediation SA 8350 0376
- E.O. Commission
- ORS 7424 57622
- **U/18**
- CARL 131 478
- Parent/Guardian

### **CRIMINAL**

- SAPOL

## **COMPLAINTS, PROTESTS, HEARINGS & APPEALS POLICY**

The Bowls SA Member Protection Policy has a specific complaints procedure that can be followed and which is intended to be easy to use, confidential and fair to all parties. It is a serious breach of the policy to victimise or otherwise unfairly treat a person simply because that person is a party to a complaint or is otherwise involved in seeking to resolve a complaint

So as to maintain the integrity of the complaints process it is a breach of the policy to knowingly make a false, malicious or vexatious complaint.

### **COMPLAINTS**

All complaints will be investigated and, wherever possible, the MBA will try and help the parties resolve the complaint by discussion and agreement. All complaints will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed without the complainant's consent except if the law requires disclosure or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the complaint. The MBA may have difficulty assisting the resolution of a complaint if the complainant wishes to remain anonymous.

**Issues related to Pennant competitions and other MBA-controlled events will be dealt with by the MBA. All other issues will be dealt with by Bowls SA.**

### **INFORMAL APPROACHES.**

Step 1. Talk with the other person and try to sort out the problem with the person or people involved if you feel able to do so.

Step 2. Contact a Bowls SA or MBA Member Protection Information Officer. This person will assist you in the process as outlined in the Bowls SA MPP.

The MBA will endeavour to resolve issues brought to its attention informally if possible. If this process is not successful in resolving the issue, a formal process can be instigated. If a decision or ruling of the Executive committee or the MBA Match and Programme Committee is challenged a formal complaints process as detailed here can be pursued.

## 1. FORMAL PROCESS: COMPLAINTS, DISPUTES AND PROTESTS.

### 1.1 Powers of the Executive Committee, Hearing Panel and Appeals Tribunal

- 1.1.1 The Executive Committee of the MBA shall have the power to fine, suspend, disqualify, or otherwise penalise, any party involved in a dispute found in breach of any Bowls SA policy, MBA policy, Law of the Sport, rule or condition of play, or of having brought the sport of bowls into disrepute.
- 1.1.2 The Hearing Panel shall have the delegated authority from the Executive Committee of the MBA to impose fines, suspensions, disqualifications or other penalties in accordance with the MBA Schedule of Fines and Penalties.
- 1.1.3 The Appeals Tribunal will be held under the auspices of the Bowls SA By-Laws.
- 1.1.3 The principles of natural justice shall be applied to all disputes and protests, and to the decisions made by the Hearing Panel and Executive Committee of the MBA.
- 1.1.4 No member of a Hearing Panel or Tribunal Panel shall adjudicate upon a complaint, dispute or protest concerning any party where they are connected by an alliance or by membership.
- 1.1.5 No Executive Committee Member of the MBA shall adjudicate upon an Appeal concerning any party in dispute where they are connected by an alliance or by membership.
- 1.1.6 A complainant or a respondent who is not satisfied with the decision of a Hearing Panel can lodge one appeal accompanied by a lodgement fee in accordance with the Schedule of Fines and Penalties.
- 1.1.7 There are two different circumstances for Appeals. The full process applies to the majority of protests or disputes.

However, in the situation of a Finals match or a doubleheader match where a decision may be required immediately the Appeal will be organised by the MBA Executive Committee as outlined in the Finals Procedure.

All other Appeals will be notified to the CEO of Bowls SA who will deal with the process. The Appeal will be heard on one or more of the following basis:

- That a denial of natural justice has occurred; or
  - That the disciplinary measures imposed are unjust and or unreasonable.
  - That the decision was not supported by the information or evidence provided to the President of the MBA or Hearing Panel.
- 1.1.7 The hearing of an Appeal is not a re-hearing of the matter but a hearing of the issue under appeal only.

## **1.2 Hearings and Appeals Recording**

The MBA reserves the right to record Hearings and Appeals by any appropriate means including voice recording.

## **1.3 Suspension or Expulsion of a Member of a Member Club**

Every suspension or expulsion of a Member of a Member Club, or Member Club, shall be reported to the President of the MBA by the Chairperson of the Hearing Panel. Any suspension of a Member Club must be confirmed by the Executive Committee as soon as practicable.

## **1.4 Notification of Complaints, Disputes or Protests with the Metropolitan Bowls Association- Pennant Rules and Conditions**

1.4.1 Notice of any complaint, dispute or protest between the Metropolitan Bowls Association (MBA) and a Member Club, or Member of a Member Club, must be lodged in writing with the President of the MBA within one working day from the time the complaint, dispute or protest arises, accompanied by a lodgement fee in accordance with the Schedule of Fines and Penalties.

1.4.2 The complaint, dispute or protest, shall be dealt with by a Hearing Panel whose appointment shall be arranged by the President of the MBA or their representative within three working days of receipt of notification of the dispute, as outlined in the Hearing Procedures below.

1.4.3 All legal and administration costs incurred in any dispute resolution or appeal process between the MBA and a Member Club, or Member of a Member Club shall be borne by the losing party or by agreement.

## **1.5 Notification of Complaints, Disputes or Protests between Memberships**

1.5.1 Notice of any complaint, dispute or protest between Member Clubs, or members of a Member Club, must be lodged, in writing, with the President of the MBA within one working day from the time the complaint, dispute or protest becomes unresolvable by informal means, accompanied by a lodgement fee in accordance with the Schedule of Fines and Penalties.

1.5.1 Depending on the nature of the complaint, dispute or protest, the President of the MBA may forward the issue to the CEO Bowls SA for resolution as outlined in the flowcharts.

## **1.6 Notification of Complaints, Disputes or Protests with the Metropolitan Bowls Association - Pennant Finals Only Procedures.**

1.6.1 Any dispute or protest between Member Clubs or Members of a Member Club and the Metropolitan Match and Program Committee in regard to the metropolitan pennant competition elimination and final rounds, including eligibility of players must be lodged in writing, using the appropriate form, with the Manager of the Day and accompanied by the required lodgement fee in accordance with the Schedule of Fines and Penalties, within fifteen minutes of the completion of the game. See Finals Hearings below.

## 2. HEARING PANEL PROCEDURE

- 2.1 The following will be allowed to attend the Hearing:
- The Hearing Panel members;
  - The respondent;
  - The complainant;
  - Any witnesses called by the respondent;
  - Any witnesses called by the complainant;
  - Any parent/guardian or support person required to support the respondent or the complainant.
- 2.2 The President of the MBA will appoint a member of the Hearing Panel to act as Chairperson for the duration of the Hearing.
- 2.4 The number of Hearing Panel members required to be present throughout the Hearing will be determined by the President of the MBA. The Hearing Panel is to include at least one person with knowledge or experience of the relevant law, rule, condition of play, or policy adopted by the MBA;
- 2.3 The President of the MBA shall forward a copy of the notice of complaint, dispute or protest to all other relevant parties involved.
- 2.5 The Hearing Panel members will be provided with a copy of all the relevant correspondence, reports or information received and sent by the President relating to the complaint, dispute or protest.
- 2.4 The Hearing will be scheduled within three working days, or as soon as practicable, but must allow adequate time for the complainant and respondent to prepare their case.
- 2.5 Pending the decision of the Hearing Panel and including any time allowed for an appeal, the respondent will be allowed to participate in all Bowls SA and MBA activities and events, unless the President of the MBA believes, after considering the nature of the complaint, that it is necessary to exclude the respondent from all or some activities and events.
- 2.6 The President will inform the complainant and respondent in writing that a Hearing will take place and the notice will outline:
- 2.6.1 that the respondent has a right to appear at the Hearing to defend the complaint or allegation;
  - 2.6.2 details of the complaint or allegations, copies of investigation report findings and the clauses of any policy, condition of play or rule allegedly breached;
  - 2.6.4 the date, time and venue of the Hearing;
  - 2.6.5 that the complainant and the respondent may make verbal and or written submissions to the Hearing Panel;
  - 2.6.6 that the complainant and the respondent may arrange for witnesses to attend the Hearing in support of their position;
  - 2.6.7 an outline of any possible fines or penalties that may be imposed if the complaint or allegations are found to be true;

- 2.6.8 that the complainant and the respondent may have a support person, who may attend the Hearing, but not speak;
  - 2.6.9 that legal representation will not be allowed; and
  - 2.6.10 a complainant or respondent that is a minor, must by law, have a parent or guardian present.
- 2.7 If the complainant believes the details of the complaint or allegations are incorrect or insufficient the President is to be advised as soon as possible so that the respondent and the Hearing Panel members can be properly informed of the complaint or allegations;
- 2.8 If the respondent is not present at the set hearing time and the Chairperson considers that no valid reason has been presented for their absence, the Hearing will continue subject to the Chairperson being satisfied that all Hearing notification requirements have been met.
- 2.8.1 If the Chairperson considers that a valid reason for the non-attendance of the respondent has been presented, or the Chairperson does not believe the Hearing notification requirements have been met, then the Hearing will be rescheduled to a later date.
  - 2.8.2 The Chairperson will inform the President of the MBA of the need to reschedule, and the President of the MBA will organise for the Hearing Panel to reconvene.
- 2.9 The Chairperson will read out the complaint or allegations, ask the respondent if they understand the complaint or allegation and if they agree or disagree with the complaint.
- 2.9.1 If the respondent agrees with the complaint or allegations, they will be asked to provide any evidence or witnesses that should be considered in mitigation by the Hearing Panel when determining any disciplinary measures, fines or penalties.
  - 2.9.2 If the respondent disagrees with the complaint, the complainant will be asked to describe the circumstances that lead to the complaint being made. Reference may be made to brief notes.
  - 2.9.3 The complainant may call witnesses and the respondent may question the complainant and witnesses.
  - 2.9.4 The respondent will then be asked to respond to the complaint. Reference may be made to brief notes.
  - 2.9.5 The respondent may call witnesses and the complainant may question the respondent and witnesses.
  - 2.9.6 Both the complainant and respondent may be present when evidence is presented to the Hearing Panel.
  - 2.9.7 Witnesses will be asked to wait outside the Hearing until required.

- 2.9.8 The Hearing Panel may:
- Consider any evidence, and in any form, that it deems relevant.
  - Question any person giving evidence.
  - Require the attendance of any witness it deems relevant;
  - Consider video evidence, if presented. The arrangements must be made entirely by the person wishing to offer this type of evidence.
- 2.9.9 If the Hearing Panel considers that at any time during the Hearing any person is displaying unreasonable or intimidating behaviour the Chairperson may determine that the person shall have no further involvement in the Hearing.
- 2.9.10 After all evidence has been presented the Hearing Panel will adjourn to make their decision in private and decide whether the complaint has been substantiated on the balance of probabilities, that is, more probable than not.
- 2.9.11 If the complaint is upheld, the respondent will be given an opportunity to address the Hearing Panel on disciplinary measures which might be imposed.
- 2.9.12 Disciplinary measures, fines and penalties imposed must be seen as appropriate in the circumstances.
- 2.9.13 All Hearing Panel decisions will be by majority vote.
- 2.9.14 The Chairperson will announce the decision in the presence of all persons involved in the Hearing and will declare the Hearing closed, or may advise those present that the decision is reserved and will be handed down later in written form.
- 2.9.15 Where the matter is of unusual complexity or importance, the Chairperson may inform the parties in writing within 48 hours that the decision will be delayed.
- 2.10 Within 48 hours of the decision of the Hearing Panel being announced, the Chairperson will:
- 2.10.1 Forward to the President of the MBA, in writing, details of the Hearing, reasons for the decision of the Hearing Panel and any disciplinary measures, fines or penalties imposed.
- 2.10.2 The President of the MBA shall forward a letter to the complainant and respondent reconfirming the decision of the Hearing Panel and any disciplinary measures, fines or penalties imposed. The letter should also outline the process and grounds for an appeal.
- 2.10.3 All decisions of the Hearing Panel shall not take effect until the expiration of the seven days period within which the parties in dispute may appeal the decision of the Hearing Panel.
- 2.11 The lodgement fee shall be refunded if the complaint, dispute or protest is resolved in favour of the party that lodged it and, in these circumstances, an amount equivalent to the lodgement fee refunded shall be charged against the losing party.

2.11.1 All legal and administration costs incurred by Bowls SA or the MBA in any complaint, dispute or protest Hearing shall be borne by agreement between the parties, or in default of agreement by the party losing the appeal.

#### 2.12 Procedures for Hearings during Finals only.

2.12.1 The dispute or protest must identify on the appropriate form, the Rule of the Pennant Competition or the law of the Game that is being challenged in relation to the Final being played at the venue.

2.12.2 The Manager of the Day shall immediately direct the dispute or protest to the appointed Hearing Panel member(s), in attendance at the game or by phone link up, who will deal with the dispute or protest immediately and the decision given to the relevant parties forthwith.

2.12.3 The Hearing Panel will follow the general procedures described above.

2.12.3 The decision of the Hearings Panel may be appealed in writing and lodged with the Manager of the Day within thirty minutes of the Hearing Panel delivering their decision. The appeal must be accompanied by payment of a non-refundable lodgement fee in accordance with the Schedule of Fines and Penalties.

2.12.4 The Manager of the Day will immediately advise the Executive Committee member designated to act as the Appeal Tribunal. The Executive Committee Member shall attend to the appeal within thirty minutes or as soon as practicable following receipt of such notice. The decision of the Appeal Tribunal shall be final.

### 3. APPEAL TRIBUNAL PROCEDURE

#### **All Appeals apart from those in Finals will be dealt with by the CEO Bowls SA.**

3.1 A complainant or a respondent who is not satisfied with the decision of a MBA Hearing Panel can lodge one appeal to the President of the MBA who will then forward the notice of appeal to the CEO of Bowls SA.

3.2 A complainant or a respondent wanting to appeal in accordance with By-Law 3.1 must lodge the appropriate form with the President of the MBA within seven days of the relevant decision of the Hearing Panel, setting out the basis for their appeal or as applicable in the relevant competition conditions of play/rules.

3.3 Lodgement of an appeal must be accompanied by an Appeal fee as outlined in the Schedule of Fines and Penalties.

3.4 If the letter of appeal or the lodgement fee is not received by the President of the MBA within seven days of the Hearing Panel decision, the right of appeal lapses.

3.9 The Appeal Tribunal Procedure shall follow the guidelines set down for the Hearing Panel Procedure in these and the Bowls SA By-Laws.

3.10 The decision of an Appeal Tribunal will be final and binding on all parties concerned.

3.11 The Appeal fee is returned only if the appeal is upheld.

3.12 All legal and administration costs incurred by Bowls SA or the MBA in any Appeal process shall be borne by the losing party or by agreement.

#### **4. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

If a Member or Member club to which this policy applies breaches this policy, one or more forms of discipline may be imposed. Any disciplinary measure imposed under this policy must:

- Be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
- Be fair and reasonable;
- Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach; and
- Be determined in accordance with the Constitution & By Laws of the Association & Bowls SA, this policy and/or Laws of the Sport of Bowls.

##### **4.1 Individuals**

Subject to contractual and employment requirements, if a finding is made by a Tribunal that an individual has breached this policy, one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed:

- 4.1.1 A direction that the individual makes a verbal and/or written apology;
- 4.1.2 A written warning;
- 4.1.3 A direction that the individual attend counselling to address their behaviour;
- 4.1.4 A withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by the MBA;
- 4.1.5 A demotion or transfer of the individual to another location, role or activity;
- 4.1.6 A suspension of the individual's membership or participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- 4.1.7 Termination of the individual's membership, appointment or engagement;
- 4.1.8 A recommendation that Bowls SA terminate the individual's membership, appointment or engagement;
- 4.1.9 In the case of a coach or official, a direction that the relevant organisation de-register the accreditation of the coach or official for a period of time, or permanently;
- 4.1.10 A fine;
- 4.1.11 Any other form of discipline that the President of the MBA considers appropriate.

## **4.2 Organisations**

If a finding is made that a Bowls SA member or affiliated organisation has breached its own or this Member Protection Policy, one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed by Bowls SA or the MBA:

- 4.2.1 A written warning;
- 4.2.2 A fine;
- 4.2.3 A direction that any rights, privileges and benefits provided to that organisation by the national and/or state body or other peak association be suspended for a specified period;
- 4.2.4 A direction that any funding granted or given to it by the Association or Bowls SA cease from a specified date;
- 4.2.5 A direction that the Association and Bowls SA cease to sanction events held by or under the auspices of that organisation;
- 4.2.6 A recommendation to Bowls Australia that its membership of Bowls Australia be suspended or terminated in accordance with the relevant constitution or rules; and/or
- 4.2.7 Any other form of discipline that the national and/or state body or peak organisation considers to be reasonable and appropriate.

## **4.3 Factors to consider**

The form of discipline to be imposed on an individual or organisation will depend on factors such as:

- Nature and seriousness of the breach;
- If the person knew or should have known that the behaviour was a breach;
- Level of contrition;
- The effect of the proposed disciplinary measures on the person including any personal, professional or financial consequences;
- If there have been relevant prior warnings or disciplinary action;
- Ability to enforce discipline if the person is a parent or spectator (even if they are bound by the policy); and/or
- Any other mitigating circumstances.



# COMPLAINTS, PROTESTS, & DISPUTES LODGEMENT FORM

***This form must be submitted, with appropriate payment, to Secretary, MBA by the end of the next working day following the day of the incident being protested or at such time as an informal resolution has failed.***

**Please fill in and tick as appropriate**

**1. Date of Incident** .....

Location of incident (e.g., Glanville Bowling Club) .....

Event at which incident occurred (e.g., Pennant Round 5) .....

Controlling body of the Event (e.g., Bowls SA, Association, Club etc.)

.....

**2. Summary of the Protest**

Breach of the Laws of the Sport

Breach of BA/BSA/MBA Policy

Breach of the event Conditions of Play

Result of a Match/Series

Breach of acceptable behaviour

Member or Club Eligibility

Other - please describe .....

**3. Details of the parties involved in the Protest.**

***(A Party can be a Region/ Association/ Member Club or Club Member)***

**Who is lodging the Protest?** (e.g. Region 15/ASB Association/ GlanvilleBowling Club etc)

.....

**Who or what is the Protest against?** (e.g. Region 15/ASB Association/ GlanvilleBowling Club etc)

.....

**4. Protest received by** ..... **Position** .....

**Lodgement Fee Received in Full YES/NO Amount received** .....

**Date and time received** ..... **Signature** .....

**Informing the organisations/ individuals identified in the Protest of the existence of a Protest against them.**

Who was informed? .....

When were they informed? .....

Who informed them?

Name ..... Position.....

**FOR USE BY PRESIDENT MBA ONLY**

**Protest or request valid; Hearing Panel will be convened.**

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....

**Protest or request invalid. Signed** ..... **Date**

.....

**5. Description of the Incident**

Time and place of the incident .....

Outline of the Incident (use another page if necessary)

Desired Outcome of Protest .....

**Witnesses (if applicable)**

Witness 1 Name.....Contact Details.....

Witness 2 Name.....Contact Details.....

**7. Lodgement of Protest**                      *Region/ Association/ Member Club or Club Member*

By signing below you agree as an authorised representative of ..... that all above details are correct and factual to the best of your knowledge and agree to the process as per the MBA Complaints, Protests, Hearings & Appeals Policy.

Name .....

Signed ..... Date .....

***This form must be submitted, with appropriate payment, to Secretary, MBA by the end of the next working day following the day of the incident being protested or at such time as an informal resolution has failed.***

***Refer to the MBA “Complaints >.....” and “Charges” documents for details***



# NOTICE OF APPEAL LODGEMENT FORM

## 1. Details of the original Protest.

*(A Party can be a Region/ Association/ Member Club or Club Member)*

Who lodged the Protest? .....

Who or what was the Protest against? .....

Date of the Hearing Panel.....

Name of the Chair of the Hearing Panel .....

## 2. Basis of Grounds For an Appeal

A denial of natural justice has occurred

Disciplinary measures imposed are unjust and or unreasonable

The decision was not supported by the information or evidence provided

## 3. Notice of Appeal received by ..... Position .....

Lodgement Fee Received in Full YES/NO Amount received .....

Date and time received ..... Signature .....

## 4. Informing the organisations/ individuals identified in the original Protest of the existence of an Appeal against a Ruling.

Who was informed? .....

When were they informed? .....

Who informed them? Name ..... Position.....

## 5. Lodgement of Notice of Appeal *Region/ Association/ Member Club or Club Member*

By signing below you agree as an authorised representative of ..... that all above details are correct and factual to the best of your knowledge and agree to the process as per the Bowls SA Protests, Hearings & Appeals Policy.

Name .....

Signed ..... Date .....

***This form must be submitted, with appropriate payment, to SecretaryMBA within seven (7) days of the decision by a MBA Hearings Panel***

***Refer to the MBA "Protests >....." and "Charges" documents for details***

**FOR USE BY CEO BOWLS SA ONLY**

**Basis for Appeal valid; Appeals Tribunal will be convened.**

**Signed ..... Date .....**

**Basis for Appeal invalid. Signed ..... Date**

.....