

# Template Grievances Policy for member parties

## Overview:

The Greens are committed to establishing a professional working environment for all involved in the Party. The Party is committed to viewing grievances and conflicts and their resolution as learning and development for its people and the organisation. Green parties seek to find ways of dealing with conflict that are constructive and respectful.

From time to time, grievances or conflicts may arise in the Party. People have a right to be heard and to be assisted to work towards a resolution.

## Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process to resolve grievances or conflicts as quickly and as simply as possible. The focus is on people working together constructively and promptly to:

- Create an environment where grievances and conflicts are identified, heard, and resolved
- Resolve the issue/s
- Enable the resolution of grievances and conflicts
- Restore and maintain good working relationships

The policy will apply to all people interacting on party business. This includes staff, volunteers, representatives, Office Bearers, etc. Examples of party business include party face-to-face and online meetings, events, or any other activity being done to progress the work of the party.

The process outlined in this document is not intended to be a legal process. The party and any of its members participating in the conflict resolution process are not to be considered liable for any bad results arising from an investigation.

It is hoped that by Green parties maintaining a good grievance policy and procedures that all parties can internally deal with any issues that may arise and resolve them quickly in a structured process that benefits everyone.

## Definitions:

### *Conflict:*

Conflict may arise between two or more people at any time, when there is disagreement over opinions or behaviour, or when a person is hurt or offended.

Conflicts can vary in intensity and duration, and in some situations can lead to positive outcomes after discussion between the people involved.

#### *Grievances:*

A grievance is any matter which a person might feel is illegal, unfair, unjust, or upsetting. A grievance may arise from a single act or from ongoing conflict and may relate to:

- your job, working conditions, or volunteer conditions
- interpersonal/team conflict
- your relationship with your supervisor, co-workers, or others in the workplace
- your relationship with elected representatives, staff, those in elected positions in the party, or volunteers
- perceived harassment, discrimination or victimisation in the Party or workplace

#### **Principles:**

The following points support the operation of the grievance procedures and apply to all people involved in a grievance or conflict situation and/ or resolution process.

- Follow a duty of care to all involved.
- All communications will be dealt with confidential and impartially by those involved.
- Issues and concerns raised are valued, heard, and discussed with respect.
- If the dispute is not resolved, the person raising the issue has the right to submit a formal complaint.

#### **Support Structures: Grievance Committee**

- The party will select either an independent person to handle the grievance/s or refer to a grievance committee set up by the party
- An independent committee will be elected annually to handle the grievances procedures.
- The Grievances Committee will :
  - Be familiar with all processes involved and seek out research or training or further information where required
- The Grievances Committee aims to:
  - Address the concerns raised by independently analysing the overall situation
  - Help individuals clarify and sort out issues
- If you decide to approach the Grievance Committee, you can:
  - Choose which person on the committee you choose to approach
  - Talk about a situation which is causing you stress or making you upset
  - Be heard in confidence and privately
  - Be treated with respect
  - Decide if you want to take the matter further and have the next steps clearly explained to you
  - Ask the Committee member to support you in the steps you may take moving forward to address your concerns.

## Resolving a grievance

Anyone wishing to undertake a conflict resolution process can choose to resolve it either:

- Informally; or
- Formally.

### ***Informal Conflict Resolution Process:***

The aim of an informal process is to assist a person to resolve the conflict. Either party may have a support person present during any stage of the informal conflict resolution process.

- Direct Contact or Negotiation:
  - Firstly the Grievance Committee will assist an individual to resolve a conflict with the parties concerned .
  - Persons are encouraged to meet with each other in an informal way to see if they can reach a resolution on the issue They may wish to have one other person present for their meeting or a member of the Grievance Committee as an observer. The complainant can state if they feel this process is no longer relevant or suitable.
- Mediation:
  - In a mediation process, a member of the Grievance Committee will contact the parties to discuss the issue surrounding the conflict. They will try and come up with a solution that suits all involved.
- The Committee member may take on the role of mediator:
  - For mediation to occur both parties must be willing to resolve the issues between them
  - The parties must approach mediation in good faith
- An informal conflict that is not resolved may be lodged as a Formal Grievance by the aggrieved person.

### ***Formal Resolution Process:***

The Formal Grievance should clearly state:

- A. Who the grievance/issue refers to (the person/s who has caused the grievance, called the Respondent)
- B. The actions or behaviour of the Respondent/s which has caused the grievance
- C. Evidence, or description of evidence, that may be used to explain the nature/situation of the grievance.

The person responsible for actioning a complaint is the Grievance Coordinator. The Grievance Coordinator may be the person who first receives the grievance, or another person responsible for these matters appointed by the party.

- The Grievance Coordinator will decide on the best process to use to resolve the formal grievance.

- They will decide on the process after talking to both groups about the process that ought to be followed to reach a resolution
- During the formal resolution of a grievance, neither group is required to be in the room with the other.
- At the end of the process, the Grievance Coordinator will write a report determining the grievance matters in dispute. This report may include recommendations and a timeline.
- If the Grievance Coordinator considers the topic of the grievance to be valid then it may result in suspension or expulsion. The report is to be given to both parties.