



**Council Development  
Assessment Panel  
Complaint Handling Policy**  
*Policy No. ENVPOL 15*

<b>Version No:</b>	1.0
<b>Responsible Officer/s</b>	Director of Environmental Services
<b>Issued:</b>	2 Nov 2015
<b>Next Review:</b>	June 2019

### 1. Purpose

Council has established a Development Assessment Panel (CDAP) under Section 56A of the *Development Act 1993* (the Act).

CDAP members must abide by the Code of Conduct (Code) for Panel Members established by the Minister for Planning under Section 21A of the Act.

This Policy governs the way in which complaints made to the Council about a CDAP member under the Code will be determined.

### 2. Scope

This Policy only concerns complaints made in respect of individual CDAP members under the Code. Concerns regarding the assessment and/or determination of a development application, should be raised with Council's development assessment staff and/or pursuant through the appeal process, where this is available under the Act.

Complaints concerning alleged corruption, maladministration and/or misconduct by CDAP members exercising their functions as a CDAP member may also be made separately to the Office for Public Integrity under the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012*. More information about making a complaint to the OPI can be obtained from [www.icac.sa.gov.au](http://www.icac.sa.gov.au).

### 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

**Council** – District Council of Grant

**Act** – *Development Act 1993*

**Regulations** – *Development Regulations 2008*

**Application** – *Development Application*

**CDAP** – Council's Development Assessment Panel

**CDAP member** – means a person appointed by Council under Section 56A(3) of the *Development Act 1993* to be a member of its CDAP.

**Presiding Member** – means the person appointed by the Council under Section 56A(3)(b) of the *Development Act 1993* to be the Presiding Member of its CDAP. The Presiding Member must not be an officer or member of the Council.

**Code** – Code of Conduct for CDAP Members

**Independent Assessor** – means a person selected by the Public Officer from a list of people who are suitably qualified and have been previously approved by the Council for the purposes of undertaking the independent investigation of complaints against members of Council, a Council committee or its CDAP.

**Public Officer** – means a person appointed by the Council under Section 56A(22) of the *Development Act 1993* as the Public Officer for its CDAP. The functions of a Public Officer include ensuring the proper investigation of complaints about the conduct of a member of the CDAP.

**CEO** – Council's Chief Executive Officer (including their delegate)

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#### 4. Policy

##### 4.1 Making a Complaint

A complaint against a CDAP member must be made in writing to the Public Officer of the Council, being the Chief Executive Officer, District Council of Grant, 324 Commercial Street West (PO Box 724) Mount Gambier SA 5290 Telephone (08) 8721 0444 Facsimile (08) 8721 0410 Email [info@dcgrant.sa.gov.au](mailto:info@dcgrant.sa.gov.au), and must contain the following details:

- the name of the CDAP member the subject of the complaint; and
- your name, address, telephone number and/or email address; and
- the circumstances giving rise to the complaint; and
- evidence supporting the complaint.

The Public Officer will acknowledge receipt of complaints in writing within 3 business days of its receipt.

When you make a complaint to the Public Officer, you must keep details of this complaint confidential so that it can be investigated and determined thoroughly and properly.

The Public Officer will then write to the CDAP member who is the subject of the complaint to notify the CDAP member that a complaint has been made concerning him/her and provide full particulars of the alleged misconduct and direct the CDAP member to observe confidentiality regarding the complaint.

The CDAP member will be given an opportunity to respond to the Public Officer on the complaint.

The other CDAP members will not be informed of the complaint.

The Public Officer may request further information from the complainant.

##### 4.2 Initial Assessment and Referral by the Public Officer

Once the above process has been undertaken, the Public Officer must then assess the level of severity of the Complaint.



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## LEVEL 1

## LEVEL 2

## LEVEL 3

**Type of Complaint:**  
Breaches of the CDAP Meeting procedures and minor breaches of the Code of Conduct

**Type of Complaint:**  
Behaviour which is not assessed as being Level 1 or Level 3

**Type of Complaint:**  
Serious or Systemic Misconduct or Maladministration or Criminal conduct

- Examples:**
- Interruption of another speaker
  - Failure to accept the Presiding Member's ruling
  - Failure to observe CDAP Meeting Procedures
  - Disrespectful comments during deliberations

- Examples:**
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct which are not considered to be **serious** or **systemic**;
  - Repeated Level 1 breaches which are not considered to amount to serious or systemic misconduct or maladministration

- Examples:**
1. A serious breach of the Code of Conduct
  2. Systemic breaches of the Code of Conduct
  3. Serious or systemic maladministration
  4. Bribery or corruption
  5. Threats or reprisals against public officers
  6. Abuse of public office;
  7. Demanding or requiring benefit on basis of public office
  8. Offences relating to appointment to public office
  9. Failing to disclose a conflict of interest under the *Development Act 1993*
  10. Theft
  11. Fraud

**Assessment & Referral:**  
If the Public Officer assesses the complaint as a LEVEL 1 complaint, then they **must** refer to:

- the Presiding Member of the Panel;
- unless it is about the Presiding Member, in which case it must be referred to an Independent Assessor

**Assessment & Referral:**  
If the Public Officer assesses the complaint as a LEVEL 2 complaint, they **must** refer it to an Independent Assessor

**Assessment & Referral:**  
If the Public Officer assesses the complaint as a LEVEL 3 complaint, they **must** report it to:

- in respect of 1-8 above, to the Office for Public Integrity pursuant to the ICAC's Directions and Guidelines issued pursuant to section 20 of the ICAC Act;
- in respect of 5-8 above, to SAPOL.

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#### 4.3 Investigation of Level 1 Complaints

The Presiding Member may determine that the complaint is frivolous and determine that no further action will be taken with respect to the allegations the subject of the complaint. The Presiding Member must report this determination in writing to the Public Officer.

The Presiding Member may determine that the complaint has substance and make recommendations as to the consequences that should follow. The Presiding Member must report this determination in writing to the Public Officer within 2 weeks from the date of receipt of the complaint.

The recommended consequences may include a request that the CDAP member withdraw remarks, a request that the CDAP member offer an apology, a request that the CDAP member receive training, and/or a request that the CDAP member receive counselling from the Presiding Member or another suitable experienced and qualified person.

The Presiding Member may determine that the complaint requires referral to an Independent Assessor for investigation. The Presiding Member must report this determination in writing to the Public Officer.

Where a Level 1 complaint has been referred an Independent Assessor for investigation the determination should be reported to the Public Officer within 4 weeks from the date of referral of the complaint.

Where a Level 1 complaint has been made against the Presiding Member, then the complaint will be referred an Independent Assessor for investigation.

#### 4.4 Investigation of Level 2 Complaints, and Level 1 Complaints referred to an Independent Assessor

The Independent Assessor may determine that the complaint is frivolous and determine that no further action will be taken with respect to the allegations that are the subject of the complaint. The Independent Assessor must report this determination in writing to the Public Officer.

If the Independent Assessor identifies issues of substance that warrant investigation:

- The investigation shall be through a thorough and balanced assessment of the evidence and all circumstances relevant to making a fair and reasonable judgement about the matter.
- The CDAP member the subject of the complaint shall be provided with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the complaint, explain his/her actions and to make a written submission on the allegations. The member also has the right to have a representative attend any meeting about the complaint with them (including legal counsel).
- The Independent Assessor may, for the purposes of an investigation, request the complainant and/or the CDAP member the subject of the complaint and/or a third party to answer questions which may assist the investigation.

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- The Independent Assessor may determine that the complaint has substance and make recommendations as to the consequences that should follow. The Independent Assessor must report this determination in writing to the Public Officer.
- The recommended consequences may include suspension or removal of the CDAP member from the Panel (requires a Council resolution), provision of training to the CDAP member, and/or provision of counselling to the CDAP member from the Presiding Member or another suitably experienced and qualified person to the CDAP member.
- The Independent Assessor may determine that the complaint requires referral to the Office for Public Integrity, SAPOL, the Minister, the Ombudsman and/or another body. The Independent Assessor must report this determination in writing to the Public Officer who will refer the complaint to the relevant investigating authority.
- Level 2 complaints investigated and determined by the Independent Assessor must be reported to the Public Officer within 4 weeks from the date of the referral. If the Independent Assessor forms the view that additional time will be required to conclude the investigation and finalise the report the Independent Assessor should bring this to the attention of the Public Officer at the earliest opportunity, and at the very least, before the expiration of the 4 week timeframe.

#### **4.5 Level 3 Complaints (and Level 2 Complaints referred to the Office for Public Integrity, SAPOL, the Minister, the Ombudsman and/or another body)**

The relevant body will determine the processes by which these complaints will be handled in accordance with relevant legislation and their own internal processes.

#### **4.6 Determinations**

##### Level 1 Complaints:

The Public Officer must report the determination in writing to the complainant and the CDAP member who is the subject of the complaint. The Presiding Member may request that the recommended consequences be implemented.

##### Level 2 Complaints:

The Public Officer must report the determination in writing to the complainant, the CDAP member who is the subject of the complaint and the Presiding Member.

The Public Officer must report the determination to the Council if the determination requires a Council resolution. All deliberations by the Council must be conducted in confidence, subject to satisfying the requirements of Section 90(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999*, and maintained as confidential until finally determined, at which time the Council must decide the ongoing status of the confidentiality order. The Council may enforce any recommended consequences within its powers.

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Note: The Section 21 Minister's Code of Conduct provides that where an allegation of misconduct is made out, the Council may:

- (a) remove the person from the CDAP;
- (b) suspend the person from the CDAP for a period of time; or
- (c) take any other reasonable action deemed appropriate.

Otherwise, the Presiding Member may request that the recommended consequences be implemented.

Level 3 Complaints, and Complaints referred to the Office for Public Integrity, SAPOL, the Minister, the Ombudsman and/or another body:

The relevant body will, in accordance with relevant legislation, determine how a complaint is processed and determined and who is notified in this regard.

## 5. Further Information

This policy is available for inspection at the Council Offices listed below during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website at [www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au](http://www.dcgrant.sa.gov.au).

Council Offices, 324 Commercial Street West, Mount Gambier

Port MacDonnell Community Complex, 5 Charles Street, Port MacDonnell

Copies are available for purchase in accordance with Council's fees and charges register.

Any grievances in relation to this policy or its application should be forwarded in writing addressed to the Chief Executive Officer.

For further information contact the Council Offices – Telephone (08) 87210444 or Email [info@dcgrant.sa.gov.au](mailto:info@dcgrant.sa.gov.au).

## 6. Responsibilities

The Presiding Member, Public Officer and/or Director of Environmental Services are responsible for ensuring the requirements of this policy are met.

## 7. References:

### State Legislation

Development Act 1993

Development Regulations 2008

Local Government Act 1999

## 8. Review

In order to ensure Council continues to provide the best possible complaints handling service for its customers, this policy will be subject to periodic evaluation and review.

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This Policy shall be reviewed by the District Council of Grant at minimum every four (4) years, within 12 months of a general election (or on significant change to legislation or other matters which could affect this policy).

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Minute Reference</b>
Adopted by Council	1 December 2008	08275.5
Amended	20 June 2011	11164.3
Amended	2 November 2015	15135.1.2