



INTERNAL CONFLICT

Background

Volunteers are energetic, interesting, good-natured people. The idea of conflict and bullying doesn't fit well. Surprisingly, it is a big issue and can be a part of any organisation when a variety of people are brought together who are all passionate and wanting to contribute.

Whether it is volunteer/staff relations that are causing tension or volunteers amongst themselves who are disagreeing, it is important that problems are brought to light early and resolved using the correct process and procedures.

Common reasons for conflict include:

1. You may be having trouble understanding someone else's perspective on a radio issue.
2. You may disagree with how the radio station's rules, guidelines, procedures or program allocations are being implemented.
3. You may feel that other members are dismissing new ideas.
4. Your needs may conflict with someone else's at the radio station.
5. You may be experiencing discomfort about changes being introduced at the radio station.
6. You may not be happy about how someone is treating you as a member.
7. You may be feeling stressed or angry about something that causes you to be confrontational.
8. You may have different beliefs and values to someone else.

Conflict can also occur when conflicts of interest arise from Alpine Radio's involvement and/or relations with similar or competing organisations; in situations that place at risk the professional reputation of Alpine Radio or its members; or any other matter deemed as inappropriate or unacceptable for the professional good of Alpine Radio.

Purpose

Community radio is required to follow a Code of Practice dedicated to managing conflicts within station. Community Radio Code of Practice #1 (1.6) requires all stations to have a policy for internal dispute resolution.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for Alpine Radio members to express grievances, dissatisfaction and concerns with the volunteer program or organisation and to have their grievances heard, respected and dealt with in a professional, efficient and fair manner.

Policy

Alpine Radio is committed to ensuring:

1. the rights of its members with respect to the above;
2. that members are aware of the internal dispute and grievances policy, and
3. that the internal dispute and grievances procedure is easily accessible.

Alpine Radio grievances and disputes procedure is outlined in this document.

Our approach to resolving conflict

When conflict arises, it is important to lead the people involved through the conflict and to deal with the conflict promptly to prevent it from getting bigger and uglier. Depending on the situation, the parties may be able to quickly resolve a conflict by talking it through with each other.

If station management is required to step in, they will decide an approach to attempt to gain a win/win solution from the conflict. It is useful to follow an approach which enables all parties to meet and discuss the situation such as that outlined below.

1. **Understanding** – Those people involved need to understand what the conflict is about: what is the argument about, where is the anger coming from? We might need to map out the conflict. Some people find it useful to draw a mud map – put the conflict in the middle – give it its own space and name it. Linking to the conflict is everyone else's perceptions of the conflict - the needs, fears and feelings about it. Give every individual involved needs their own space too – to jot down their take on the situation. Everyone needs to say what they feel, and others need to listen and try on a little empathy.
2. **Avoid making things worse** – Take a firm hand in facilitating the meeting and ensure that people follow some basic rules:
 - a. no put downs
 - b. no personal remarks, sarcasm or remarks that could hurt feelings
 - c. don't bring up the past – let's move forward
 - d. no interrupting, shouting or raising your voice
 - e. no taking sides
 - f. tackle the "ball (the issue) not the man"
 - g. use clear communication – everyone should own their own thoughts and feelings

3. **Work together** – All people involved need to agree on the rules and take turns in saying openly and honestly what they think and feel without blaming others. Use “I” statements like: “I feel put down when you...” rather than “you make me feel...”. That way the person who speaks owns their own feelings and does not blame others. Talk quietly, gently and with purpose. It can be easier to control your emotions when you control your voice. Use active listening and reflective listening techniques. Indicate to the other person that you are listening (without interrupting) via body language. Repeat what you have heard to clarify, for example, “So you feel that...?”
4. **Find the solution** – Brainstorm a wide range of options that could resolve the conflict. Be creative, don’t censor and get everything written down. Look for solutions that provide mutual gain - the win/win solution. Check that everyone can commit to that solution, identify what everyone is to do, stick to what you have decided and check in again on progress.

However, not all conflicts are easy to resolve, particularly when dealing with the serious issues of harassment, bullying and violence.

It is worth noting that sometimes the conflict can’t be resolved. Despite having worked through all the conflict resolution techniques, there may be irreconcilable differences that just can’t be worked out. In these instances, you may need to make the call and suggest a solution that does not include the people in conflict working together. It’s tough, but sometimes people just can’t get on.

Summary

- a. Don't ignore or hide from the problem, listen to what the problem is from both sides.
- b. Don't take the problem as a personal attack or criticism.
- c. Work with the people involved to find the best possible solution.
- d. If necessary, involve a third person.

Alpine Radio grievance and dispute procedure

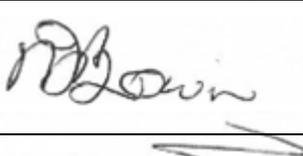
1. Details of complaint/grievance/dispute to be sent in writing to the Station Manager or Secretary. Please note that personal email addresses of station staff and management are not to be used by volunteers to lodge complaints, grievances or disputes. Instead please write to manager@alpineradio.com.au and the Station Manager will ensure the Secretary is informed.
2. A meeting will be convened to be held between disputants and the Station Manager with one other Committee of Management (CoM) member also to be present.
3. If the matter is still unresolved after the above process, then the matter may be brought before a full CoM meeting for resolution.

4. If all the above procedures still fail to achieve resolution, then outside mediation may be sought. If this is the case then the disputants may be required to equally share the costs of such mediation with Alpine Radio.
5. The above conflict resolution procedures are only to be used in the case of genuine friction or conflict between individuals or groups within the structure of Alpine Radio. These procedures are not to be used to reverse programming decisions, broadcasting or sponsorship decisions made by Alpine Radio's CoM.

Related documents

- Alpine Radio Volunteering Policy
- Alpine Radio Internal Conflict Policy (includes the grievance and dispute procedure)
- Alpine Radio Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy
- CBAA Complaints and Disputes: <https://www.cbaa.org.au/complaints-disputes>
- Victorian Government Volunteering Portal: <http://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au/manage-your-volunteers/supporting-and-supervising/settling-disputes-and-grievances>

Policy updates

Version Control	Date Amended	Author
Version 0.3	17 November 2018	Linda Parkinson
Approver name and position: Nick Brown, Secretary	Signature: 	
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