



WIRELESS INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

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WIA Complaints Report

Summary: *This is an update from the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) Board to the WIA membership concerning the current status of the formal complaints process within the WIA.*

A formal and transparent complaints process is an important part of governance of organisations small and large, as is providing periodic updates of the status of pending and resolved complaints. Whilst this update includes high level details of the nature of some complaints, it contains no details pertaining to the actual complainants.

At the time of writing this update, there remains unresolved only the complaints from 2 different complainants. These complaints relate, amongst other things, to the operation of the WIA prior to May 2017 AGM (i.e. before the current board took office) and also to alleged breaches of the WIA "Corporate Ethics Policy".

Additionally, the WIA Board has accepted in full recommendations proposed following a review to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing complaints process.

Report Detail:

The Wireless Institute of Australia's Complaints Officer, Phil Patterson, has been dealing with numerous complaints for this last 12 months.

Over the course of the formal reporting period ending 30 June 2018 the complaints officer received a total of 16 complaints from 9 complainants. The majority, 9 complaints in all, came from 2 complainants. A total of 3 complaints related to ACMA statutory functions.

During the reporting period 7 complaints were resolved or dismissed. At the end of the reporting period, 9 complaints remained outstanding from 5 complainants.

At the time of writing, there remains unresolved only the complaints from 2 different complainants. These complaints relate, amongst other things, to the historical operation of the WIA prior to May 2017 AGM (before the current board took office) and alleged breaches of the WIA "Corporate Ethics Policy".

The investigations into the historical complaints were dealt with as follows:

- several accounting errors were identified in the 2016 accounts and corrected in the second external audit initiated by the Financial Working group constituted by the new board in latter part of 2017. Once corrected, these had no substantive impact¹ on the Profit & Loss² or Balance Sheet of the WIA. Hence, no financial re-statement was required
- during the review of the 2017 accounts by the Financial Working group in the latter part of 2017, it was found that the WIA accounts had been reverted to cash accounting from the start of the 2017 FY in January 2017. This resulted in unearned income (i.e. memberships-in-advance) being incorrectly recognised as current financial year revenue and (considerably) overstated the Profit & Loss. This was rectified to re-instate accrual accounting prior to the 2017 FY Audit

¹ As determined and advised by Kidman Partners, WIA External Auditors, December 2017.

² As a Not-for-Profit (NFP) technically Profit & Loss is actually Surplus or Deficit, but all standard reporting and tools normally utilise the P&L term.

- sub-optimal decisions and errors were definitely made by previous management teams that the current team would not have made, albeit with benefit of hindsight
- in conclusion, at this time, the WIA Board has found absolutely no credible evidence of malfeasance, fraud or conflict of interest that has intentionally and / or materially impacted the operation of the WIA as a going concern in the recent past. Therefore, at this time, the current board must accept the reports of the previous management as approved by the membership at the respective AGMs. However, investigations into the remaining historical complaints are continuing with the assistance of the complainants which potentially may alter this view

One of the complaints that was submitted was a complaint about the complaints process itself. A review of this process resulted in the following improvement recommendations:

- a cohesive standards based complaints management framework be adopted to provide guidance to both complainants and case managers
- that all complaints should be forwarded into the office workflow system (Service Management system) consistent with the recent board resolution on member communications
- "Last Resort" processes be developed to ensure that avenues exist for challenging complaints to be resolved
- the complaints form and process be updated to focus on evidence and desired outcomes to ensure the shortest possible resolution time
- appropriate Service Levels be established for all complaints
- that the WIA voluntarily join the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC) and adopt the governance frameworks there-of to further demonstrate the organisations commitment to good governance and transparency

The board at a recent board meeting has adopted these recommendations in full.

The complaint policy and associated form will become available on the WIA web site. This Policy and form must be used on all complaints in the future and they should be forwarded to complaints@wia.org.au.

Finally, during a recent board meeting the board regretfully accepted the resignation of our current complaints officer, Phil Patterson. The board sincerely thanks Phil for his substantial practical and intellectual contribution to the WIA and wishes him every success in his ongoing post-graduate (PhD) studies.

Yours sincerely,

WIA Board.

- Justin Giles-Clark VK7TW
- Greg Kelly VK2GPK
- Peter Clee VK8ZZ
- Marcus Berglund VK5WTF
- Aidan Mountford VK4APM