

Review of Surfing New Zealand Constitution – Complaints and Governance Recommendations

Summary of key findings and recommended improvements to ensure a fair, safe, and inclusive governance model for Surfing New Zealand.

Main Concerns

- 1 The complaints process is overly legalistic and difficult for members to navigate.
- 2 The Board has too much control over complaints involving itself or the CEO.
- 3 There are no clear timeframes for handling complaints or appeals.
- 4 No explicit protection for whistle-blowers or complainants from retaliation.
- 5 Limited external oversight or appeal mechanisms.

Recommendations

- 1 Create a two-stage process: informal resolution first, then formal investigation if needed.
- 2 Appoint an independent person or panel for any complaint involving Board members or the CEO.
- 3 Introduce clear timeframes for acknowledging, investigating, and deciding complaints.
- 4 Add explicit whistle-blower protections and anti-retaliation clauses.
- 5 Allow appeals for all disciplinary outcomes to an independent external body.
- 6 Publish an anonymised annual report on complaint numbers and types.
- 7 Strengthen inclusivity commitments in the Constitution to include gender, youth, and disability representation.

Alignment with National Standards

These recommendations align Surfing NZ with Sport NZ's Integrity Framework and the Integrity Sport and Recreation Act 2023.