



Policy Title	HumanAbility Dispute Resolution Policy
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Dispute Resolution Policy (this Policy) outlines the preferred process for resolution in circumstances when disputes arise.
- 1.2 HumanAbility encourages individuals to seek to resolve any issues or concerns that they may have at the earliest opportunity. In instances where a resolution could not be sought, this Policy can be used as guidance to resolve disputes:
 - Between HumanAbility Board members
 - and
 - Between industry stakeholders and/or representatives of HumanAbility.
- 1.3 As a Jobs and Skills Council, HumanAbility will be responsible for resolving disputes between industry stakeholders on behalf of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the Department).

2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 This Policy seeks to provide best practices to avoid, manage and resolve disputes.

3.0 What is Dispute Resolution?

- 3.1 Dispute resolution is how disputes are brought to an end. This can occur through negotiated outcomes, mediated outcomes or an arbitrated or abdicated outcome.
- 3.2 Dispute can occur for many reasons, for example:
 - Competing interests and priorities
 - Unresolved past problems
 - Different personalities and personality clashes
 - Poor communication
 - Unclear responsibilities and roles; and
 - Allegations of bullying, harassment and other unlawful and inappropriate behaviour.

4.0 Effective Approaches to Dispute Resolution

- 4.1 Open communication



- Encouraging impacted individuals to communicate their problems clearly, openly, honestly and respectfully.

4.2 Change management

- Establishing a strategy to communicate change with impacted individuals to minimise impact and potential conflict.

4.3 Training

- Ensuring that individuals tasked with resolving disputes are adequately trained on key areas such as:
 - Establishing the key facts and issues
 - Listening
 - Encouraging open dialogue
 - Focusing on the individuals specific needs; and
 - Guiding a discussion to find ways to resolve the dispute.

4.4 Complaints Management

- Understanding the issues that have upset impacted individuals can provide an opportunity to fix problems before they escalate and potentially avoid future disputes.
- Please see the *HumanAbility Feedback and Complaints Management Policy* for further guidance.

4.5 Seeking Third Party Assistance

- In the instances where HumanAbility is unable to resolves disputes, they could seek third party assistance:
 - *For industry stakeholders:* HumanAbility could seek assistance from the Department.
 - *For HumanAbility Board members:* HumanAbility could seek assistance from an independent third-party mediator, the Community Justice Centre or alternative dispute resolution service (ADR) provider

5.0 Dispute Resolution Principles

6.1 HumanAbility understands that best practice dispute resolution involves more than

- 6.2 just understanding and complying with the law. Relevant individuals will seek guidance from the following principles to ensure best practice:
- *Provide training* – make sure individuals know about the dispute resolution process and how to use it. This can be done by providing training and awareness sessions.
 - *Communicate* – talk with relevant individuals. Regular communication is important as it helps to build trust and good working relationships.
 - *Listen to concerns* – take all concerns seriously. Listen to individuals and show them that you take their concerns seriously. Although some issues might seem minor at first, they could be an indication of a larger problem.
 - *Regular meetings* – hold regular meetings. These allow you to communicate current issues, rules and changes in industry and in the workplace.
 - *Be proactive* – proactively deal with any issues. Many conflicts happen because of misunderstandings and can be resolved more easily if discussed at an early stage.

6.0 How will this Operate?

- 6.1 HumanAbility will provide assistance to individuals seeking to resolve disputes within the bounds of this Policy through advice, training and where relevant, assistance through mediation.
- 6.2 HumanAbility will, in disputes with stakeholders, seek to resolve the dispute at the earliest and most informal stage of dispute resolution.
- 6.3 Resolution of disputes with stakeholders must not involve infringing on the rights and feedback of other stakeholders.
- 6.4 Where it is not possible to resolve a dispute through informal or formal negotiations or mediation, HumanAbility will access the services of an appropriate service to formally conciliate and make recommendations for resolution.
- 6.5 In appropriate cases, engagement may be extended to engaging an independent arbitrator. However, consent from all parties would be required ahead of this step to ensure that they were willing to accept the outcomes from that process before it is initiated.

Version	Date	Rationale	Next Review Date
1.0	May 2023	Initial Issue	May 2024
1.1	April 2024	Scheduled Review – Formatting Updated	April 2025
1.2	May 2025	Scheduled Review – Clarified stakeholders references and corrected minor errors	May 2026