



Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) Principles and Implementation Timeline

1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to detail the requirements and timing relating to compliance with the Gymnastics Australia (GA) National Affiliation Standard 7 on Member Protection Information Officers.

2 Background

Commitment to Member Protection is a fundamental expectation by government of all sports organisations within Australia. GA and its State Association Members all have Member Protection policies and procedures in place and the obligation flows through to all affiliated clubs.

The National Affiliation Standards are mandatory requirements of all clubs affiliated with Gymnastics Australia and State Association Members.

Affiliation Standard # 3 states that:

“The Club accepts and complies with its State/Territory Association and Gymnastics Australia’s Constitution, Regulations and Policies, including but not limited to:

- Member Protection Policy”

Affiliation Standard # 7 states that:

“The club will implement a Member Protection Information Officer procedure in accordance with the MPIO Principles and implementation timetable.

The MPIO will be a person who does not hold office or senior management role or ownership of the Club.”

Definitions

A **fully trained MPIO** means a person who:

- has successfully completed the online MPIO course provided by the Australian Sports Commission through the “Play By The Rules” website; and
- has successfully completed the subsequent face-to-face MPIO course; and
- has registered as an MPIO; and
- has received the Certificate of Recognition which can be provided as evidence.



An **MPIO-informed person** means a person who:

- has successfully completed the online MPIO course provided by the Australian Sports Commission through the “Play By The Rules” website.

3 MPIO Principles

The MPIO is an important part of an effective Member Protection policy and ideally every club would have a fully-trained MPIO operating within its organisation. Such an MPIO would be readily available to provide advice and feedback to the club on its Member Protection responsibilities and to assist club members by providing information about their rights, responsibilities and options in regard to making a complaint or raising a concern.

Having an MPIO should be the aim of every club and GA has an expectation that clubs will work to this end.

However GA and the State Member Associations also recognise that having a fully trained independent MPIO at most clubs across the country will take some time and for some smaller clubs and clubs in South Australia may not be feasible even in the long term.

Nonetheless, every club needs to have an awareness and understanding of Member Protection within its ranks and so every club must have at least one MPIO-informed person within the club. Given the readily available online MPIO course this requirement is not onerous to clubs and must be met.

In addition, where a club does not have a fully-trained MPIO within the club, its members must still have access to a fully trained MPIO external to the club. The club may make arrangements with another club’s MPIO or any fully trained MPIO from any sport within the region within which the club is located. If such an arrangement is not possible the State Association Member may provide an MPIO if a dispute or concern arises.

The requirement for an MPIO still applies within an organisation which is operating on a commercial basis and whose customers are not strictly “members” in the same way as members of a not-for-profit organisations typically are.

Finally, given that a significant proportion of intra-club dispute around member protection issues involves a club’s hierarchy or club policies and procedures the role of the MPIO is one which requires a level of independence from the senior management group. Accordingly, the MPIO needs to be a person who does not hold office or senior management role or ownership of the Club.

Exemptions

There is provision for ongoing and temporary exemptions from the MPIO requirement. The State Member Association may grant exemptions.

Reasons for **ongoing** exemptions from the requirement for a fully-trained MPIO are:

- the club has less than 100 registered gymnastics members;



- the club has less than 200 registered gymnastics members and is located in a rural or isolated area;
- the club is less than one year old (from establishment).
- The club is Affiliated in South Australia

A club may also have temporary exemption from the requirement for a fully-trained MPIO when the club's previous MPIO has left the club and there are no MPIO courses available in the short term.

Where a club is exempt from the requirement for a fully-trained MPIO it must still ensure that:

- there is at least one MPIO-informed person within the club; and
- it has made arrangements for an external person to act as an MPIO if a dispute or concern arises.

There is no exemption from any other provision of the GA Member Protection Policy.

4 MPIO Timeline

By **31 January 2016** each club must have at least one responsible person who has successfully undertaken the free, online Member Protection Information Officer course provided by the Australian Sports Commission through the "*Play By The Rules*" website.

By **31 January 2016** each club must notify its members who the MPIO for the club is (whether internal or externally provided) and maintain this information on its website.

By **30 June 2017** each club must have a fully qualified MPIO within the club who does not hold office or senior management role or ownership of the Club, unless the club is exempted.