

# Resource 2: Role of a member protection information officer

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## What is a member protection information officer?

A member protection information officer (MPIO) is the first point of contact in a sporting organisation for any enquiries, concerns or complaints about harassment, abuse and other inappropriate behaviour. The MPIO provides information and moral support to the person with the concern.

Most national and state sporting organisations have appointed a least one MPIO, as have some clubs depending on their size. The Australian Sports Commission maintains a database that allows people who need the help of an MPIO to find one in their sport and/or their state.

## What does a member protection information officer do?

- listens and acts as a sounding board
- clarifies basic points and concerns
- refers to a sport's member protection or welfare policy and explains what constitutes inappropriate behaviour
- explains the complaint process and options available under a sport's member protection or welfare policy
- discusses any relevant laws and the right to complain to external agencies (for example, to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission)
- offers to provide details for counselling or other referrals if appropriate or requested
- monitors and follows up the enquiry or complaint.

## It is important that a member protection information officer:

- takes complaints seriously
- tackles one issue at a time
- doesn't take sides
- maintains confidentiality (only discuss or refer to those that need to know). In some circumstances, there is an obligation to report incidents to other authorities (e.g. child protection related issues).
- provides reassurance about victimisation
- keeps notes.

## What is the state association's role?

- be aware of who your MPIOs are and regularly communicate with them
- clarify what your expectations and requirements of the role are, including what (if any) issues you would like to be advised of
- ensure the MPIOs have access to and understand the most current versions of your member protection policy, code of conduct, complaint procedures and other support available: e.g. welfare officers, mediators
- keep MPIOs advised of any changes to relevant government policy and laws such as child protection and anti-discrimination
- provide training, including refresher training, and support
- provide a list of useful contact details for the MPIOs such as local police, Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, Justice Department, mediators, Office for Disability, vicsport, Sport & Recreation Victoria, VicHealth
- promote the role and contact details of MPIOs to your membership (e.g. via your website).

Modified from the Australian Sports Commission 2010, *Member protection information officer*, information reproduced with permission.

Developed in collaboration

Collaboration leader:

Source:

