

**NSWRL JUDICIARY
AND CODE OF
CONDUCT –
INFORMATION AND
GUIDELINES FOR
CLUBS**

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The Purpose of this Brief is:

See [Slides 3 and 4](#)

To simplify and explain Judiciary and Code of Conduct processes to Clubs (Committee Staff, Players, Team Staff, Match Officials etc).

See [Slides 5 to 8](#)

To provide guidance on the different roles within the Judiciary and Code of Conduct Panel and what each is required to do.

See [Slides 9 to 13](#)

To provide support to Clubs in understanding the steps involved when a Player or Club Member is involved in a Judiciary or Code of Conduct matter.

See [Slide 14](#)

To explain the role and impact of the Tough Love in League Policy and how it interacts with Judiciary and Code of Conduct matters.

To provide guidance to those involved in Judiciary or Code of Conduct matters on requirements and timeframes for Panel processes.

See [Slides 15 - 17](#)

To provide some answers to FAQ's in relation to Judiciary and Code of Conduct processes.

See [Slides 18 - 22](#)

To provide resources for Clubs to support communications with members on Judiciary and Code of Conduct Panel processes.

See [Slide 23](#)



What will this presentation cover?

1. Introduction to your Presenters today.
2. The purpose of the Judiciary and Code of Conduct Panels.
3. What are the relevant Policies and Procedures?
4. What roles exist within the Judiciary and Code of Conduct processes?
5. How can my Club support the Judiciary / Code of Conduct processes?
6. What are the indicative timeframes for the Judiciary / Code of Conduct processes?
7. What actually happens at a Hearing?
8. What are some FAQ's that I can use to help me this season?
9. QUESTIONS FOR THE PANEL!



Introduction to Presenters

Jerusha Konz

16 years involved in the game within Newcastle and Central Coast in various roles on and off field. Solicitor with 15 years practical legal experience. Appointed NSWRL Judiciary Administrator under pilot program run in Northern Corridor in 2025.

John Fahey

Over 50 years involvement with the game across many areas. Ex-Referee; Referee Coach; ex-General Manager of Newcastle Rugby League. 10 years plus in Judiciary and Code of Conduct as both Chairperson and Panel Member.



What are the purposes of Judiciary and Code of Conduct Panels?

- To enforce the NSWRL Policies & Procedures and NRL Laws of the Game as they relate to on-field and off-field behaviour.
- To provide a fair and transparent process for addressing breaches of any NSWRL Policies & Procedures and NRL Laws of the Game as they relate to on-field and off-field incidents.
- NSWRL Judiciary offences apply to **Players only**.
- NSWRL Code of Conduct offences apply to **Players, Team Staff, Match Officials, Volunteers and Spectators**.



What are the relevant Policies and Procedures?

- For **Judiciary** policies and procedures – see Section 7 of the NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies & Procedures
- For **Code of Conduct** policies and procedures – see Section 6 of the NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures
- For Tough Love in League policies and procedures - see Section 5.4 of the NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures
- For Appeals policies and procedures – see Section 8 of the NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies and Procedures

ALL documents are available on the NSWRL website and NSWRL Club Hub

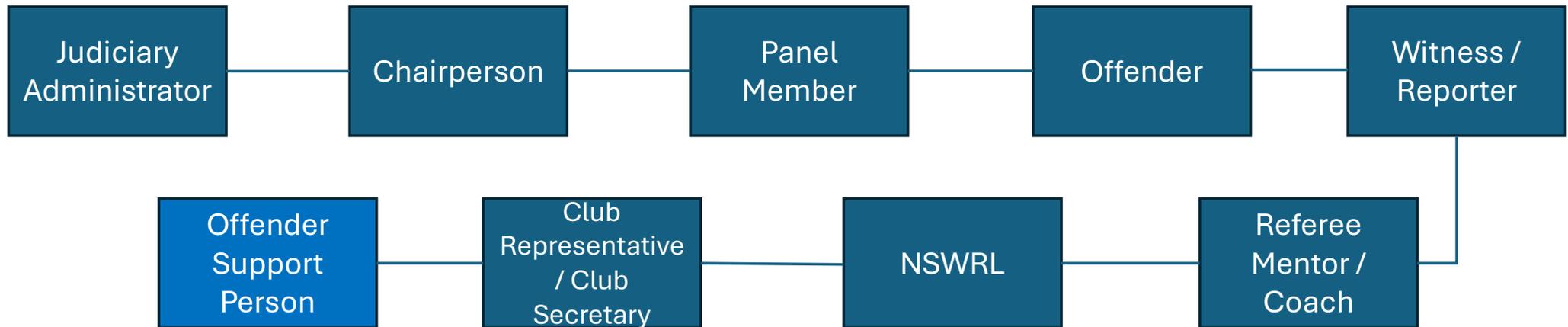


What is Tough Love in League and why do I need to know about it?

1. Tough Love in League (TLIL) is a separate but related policy within the NSWRL Policies & Procedures (Section 5.4).
2. TLIL was established as a means of trying to eradicate serious and repeated offences which involve high levels of poor behaviour and/or dangerous acts.
3. Acts covered by TLIL include striking, Match Official abuse, leaving the bench to enter the field of play illegally, foul language, deliberate and dangerous misconduct and other similar offences.
4. TLIL sits alongside the 'regular' penalty structure for offences but sets minimum (and often higher/longer) penalties for Offenders who are found guilty of offences to which the TLIL applies .
5. If the TLIL applies and an Offender is found guilty of that offence, TLIL can mean that penalties for that offence may extend to Clubs and potentially siblings and family members of the guilty party (eg: deduction of competition points, fines, deregistration of offenders and siblings etc).
6. Whether TLIL applies to your matter is discussed at the Judiciary / Code of Conduct hearing but if TLIL is applicable, Panel Members are bound by the minimum penalties set out in the policy – they have **no discretion** to downgrade or reduce penalties.



What roles exist in the Judiciary / CoC processes?



The Judiciary and Code of Panel exist to support the P's and P's across the various competitions. No one role is more important than any other – we operate collectively!



How can my Club support the Judiciary / CoC processes?

1. Ensure all parties involved with a Judiciary or CoC Hearing (eg: Offender, Offenders Support Person, any Witnesses and the Club Representative) are advised of the Hearing date and time as soon as possible.
2. Ensure that all parties required to attend the Hearing **actually attend**.
3. Start gathering any witness statements/other evidence (eg: video footage of an incident etc) as soon as possible after being made aware of an incident.
4. Educate your Club Member / Offender / Witness / Offender Support Person / Club Representative on their role in the Hearing process.
5. Understand that whilst Judiciaries and Code of Conduct Hearings are process driven and often involve legally qualified people - the Panels themselves are **not** courts of law and are as informal as possible.



How can my Club support the Judiciary / CoC processes?

6. Encourage Offenders to take early guilty pleas where it is appropriate to do so.
7. Encourage anyone attending the Hearing to remain calm and respectful at all times.
8. **STRONGLY DISCOURAGE** any individual against posting negative or aggressive comments on social media regarding any incident, offence, Notice of Charge or Hearing outcome/penalty.
9. **STRONGLY DISCOURAGE** anyone appearing at a Hearing in any capacity against lying to the Panel.
10. Do not harass NSWRL about the outcome of a Hearing – you will be informed as soon as possible of the outcome and normally by the Friday following the Hearing.



What are the indicative timeframes for Judiciary and Code of Conduct processes?

These are based off the timings set out in the NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies & Procedures.

DAY OF INCIDENT

OFFENDER: Start collating witness statements and gathering any video or other available evidence. Engage with your Club Secretary and ensure they are aware of the fact that you have been involved in an incident.

CLUB SECRETARY: Email NSWRL to advise that you have been made aware of an incident involving your club member etc. Provide a basic summary of the incident (if you have it) and include the relevant parties etc. If the incident occurred at your grounds, engage with the Ground Manager on duty at the time of the incident and request they prepare you a statement of what they observed/heard etc in relation to the incident.

SUNDAY AFTER INCIDENT

MATCH OFFICIAL/GROUND MANAGER: Ensure Match Officials Report and/or Ground Manager statements etc have been submitted to NSWRL **no later than 5pm on the Sunday following the incident.**



What are the indicative timeframes for Judiciary and Code of Conduct processes?

These are based off the timings set out in the NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies & Procedures.

**MONDAY
NIGHT AFTER
INCIDENT**

MATCH REVIEW COMMITTEE/NSWRL: Review Match Officials Report and other evidence in relation to incident and determine offence/severity. Inform NSWRL in relation to Notice of Charge.

**TUESDAY
AFTER
INCIDENT**

NSWRL: Issue Notice of Charge to Offender via Club Secretary.

CLUB SECRETARY / OFFENDER: Discuss the Notice of Charge with the Offender/Offender's parents etc and consider any plea likely to be made based on the information available and the circumstances of the incident. Collate all evidence the Offender is wanting the Panel to consider at the Hearing ready for submission with the Plea to NSWRL.



What are the indicative timeframes for Judiciary and Code of Conduct processes?

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CLUB SECRETARY: Submit any Plea on the Offenders behalf no later than 9.00am on the Wednesday **together with any supporting evidence the Offender wants the Panel to consider.**

Note: If the Offender does not submit a plea before 9am on the Wednesday, NSWRL will consider that the Offender intends to plead guilty and the Judiciary Administrator will proceed to schedule a Hearing and/or NSWRL will send out the Notice of Outcome.

OFFENDER: If you intend to dispute the severity of the charge or plead not guilty, ensure you have spoken with any witnesses who have given evidence already to your Club Secretary and/or intend to provide evidence on your behalf.

JUDICIARY ADMINISTRATOR: Convene Panel and schedule Hearing. Notify NSWRL. Engage with Chairperson on evidence and required witnesses etc. Notify NSWRL.

NSWRL: Notify Club Secretary/Offender of Hearing details and advise of witnesses required to attend the Hearing.

CLUB SECRETARY / OFFENDER: Inform relevant parties of Hearing details and confirm attendance at the Hearing.

NOTE: Important that the Club Secretary informs NSWRL as soon as possible upon learning any party is unavailable for a Hearing so that the Chairperson can decide if the Hearing can or should be postponed.

**WEDNESDAY
AFTER
INCIDENT**



What are the indicative timeframes for Judiciary and Code of Conduct processes?

These are based off the timings set out in the NSWRL Community Rugby League Policies & Procedures.

THURSDAY AFTER INCIDENT

JUDICIARY ADMINISTRATOR: Run Hearing including coordination and presentation of evidence and completion of Panel Report which captures the Hearing outcomes (summarises the evidence, records the findings/outcomes of the Hearing). At conclusion of Hearing, send Hearing Report to NSWRL.

OFFENDER AND WITNESSES: Attend Hearing and present evidence.

PANEL MEMBERS AND CHAIR: Attend Hearing, consider evidence presented and decide any outcome.

FRIDAY AFTER INCIDENT

NSWRL: Communicate outcome of Hearing to Offender/Club Secretary **no later than 12noon.** Update My Sideline with any changes required as a result of Hearing outcome(s).



What actually happens at a Hearing?

THE BELOW ASSUMES A HEARING START TIME OF 6.30 PM AND ALL TIMES ARE ESTIMATES ONLY

6.30pm – Parties dial into the ZOOM link for the specified hearing – AV issues are checked and parties confirm they can hear and see each other and the Panel Members.

6.32pm – 6.35pm – Introductions to the Panel members and those on the call takes place. Chairperson confirms the charges and the plea(s) being made by the Offender. Can also include time to allocate Witnesses to waiting rooms etc (if required).

6.36pm – 6.50pm – Chairperson seeks oral evidence from the relevant parties which may include listening to the Offender, the Match Official or Complainant (in the case of Code of Conduct), any Witnesses as well as viewing any and all CCTV / Video footage or other evidence. During this time, the Panel Members are also asking the parties questions and the Offender is usually given an opportunity to ask questions.

6.50 pm – Chairperson usually dismisses all parties except for the Panel Members, the Offender and the Club Rep / Offender support person.

6.51pm – 6.55pm – Chairperson requests character evidence from the Club Representative (evidence in support of the Offender's general character and personality and any evidence the Panel should consider in relation to the incident).

6.56pm – 7.00pm – Panel members reflect on the evidence presented (both prior to and during the Hearing) to determine the outcome.

In total – the Offender has between 10 – 15 mins to provide relevant evidence, which allows time for the Panel to hear character evidence and to determine the outcome of the Hearing.



REMEMBER!

These timeframes are **indicative only**. In some cases, there may need to be a lengthier investigation process (particularly with significant/complex matters or Code of Conduct matters). NSWRL will engage with the Club Secretary in these circumstances about any alternative timeframes.

It is always best practice to start collating information relating to an incident **as soon as possible after the incident**. This is especially the case with witnesses and getting witness statements etc to the Club Secretary. The Chairperson has ultimate discretion when it comes to what evidence can be admitted and evidence submitted outside of these guidelines may not end up being before the Panel. This could have a significant impact on the Hearing outcome.

You are free to make submissions on behalf of your Club Member and **RELEVANT** submissions will be passed on to the Panel. Submissions containing paragraphs on NSW case law are **NOT** relevant. Panel prefers to have direct evidence in the form of witness statements / CCTV etc during Hearings so keep character references to a minimum. Character references will still be passed on to the Panel – they are just not as important as direct witness statements.

To make sure Offender receives a fair Hearing, the Panel **needs time** to review material related to the Offence(s) – VERY IMPORTANT that you abide by the timeframes to submit evidence you want the Panel to hear. Late evidence is usually NOT accepted – get your evidence in with your plea if you need to attend a Hearing.



What are some FAQ's that I can use to help me this season?

1. I have been charged with an offence from Saturday's game. I have witnesses from the game who are happy to write statements to support I am not guilty of the offence. How do I get those to the Panel?
2. I have been given a Notice of Hearing but I cannot attend and/or my witness(es) cannot attend. What do I do?
3. I am not happy with the outcome of the hearing. What can I do?
4. I have been charged with an offence and have been given a Notice of Hearing. Do I get to see or read any of the evidence that has been used to charge me?
5. I have been charged with an offence. I intend on pleading guilty but I think the severity of the charge is too high. What do I do?



What are some FAQ's that I can use to help me this season?

6. I wish to plead guilty to the offence I have been charged with. Do I need to attend a Hearing?
7. What are the differences in the type of suspension?
8. I have been charged with an offence. It is the first time I have been charged with this offence this season but I had a previous offence proven last season. Will this impact the outcome of my Hearing?
9. What does it mean if I receive a 'suspended' sentence, in whole or in part?
10. My Club President witnessed an incident occurring which resulted in me receiving a Notice of Charge to attend a Hearing. He has given me a witness statement which I have sent to the Panel. Can my Club President attend the Hearing as my Club Representative as well as my witness?



REMEMBER!

Panel Chairpersons and Panel Members are also volunteers. They give up their time, skills and expertise to improve the game, much like Club Committee members, Executive members and Coaching Staff. They will make mistakes from time to time - they are just as human as everyone else. Collectively, we all have a part to play to ensure the smooth running and operation of the Judiciary and Code of Conduct processes supporting the game of Rugby League in our region.