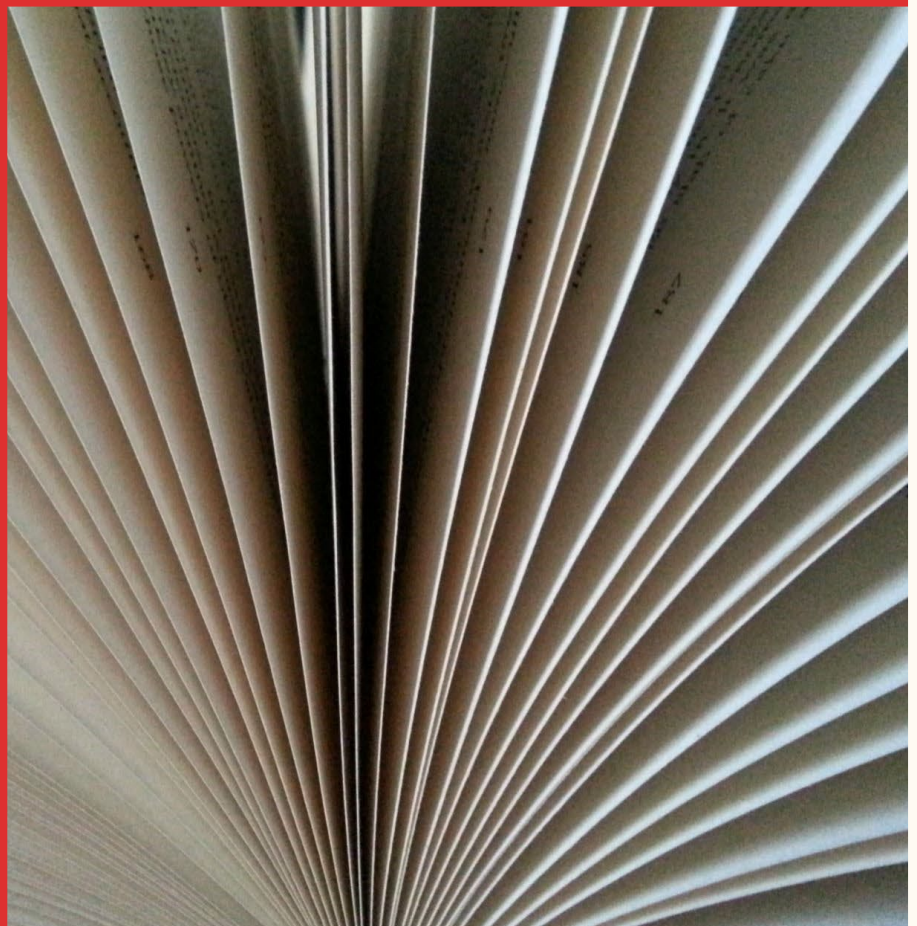


Complaints Policy

23 August 2021 v3.1



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Purpose

This policy explains how complaints can be brought against Members of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), and how PIA will respond to and process such complaints.

PIA Members agree to abide by a Code of Professional Conduct (the Code), available online at www.planning.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/PIA/About/Code-of-Professional-Conduct.pdf

Members commit to practice their profession with the highest ethical and professional standards. Members are required to abide by their commitment to the Code to meet and maintain these standards and conduct themselves in a way that inspires trust and confidence.

The Code is framed around four core principles:



PIA's commitment to complaint handling

PIA takes all complaints about PIA Members seriously. PIA is committed to the following principles when handling a complaint about a Member:

Accessibility – information on how and where a complaint can be made, and what happens when a complaint has been made, will be easily available.

Equity – a complainant will be provided with an accessible and fair process for the lodgement and management of their complaints, and the respondent will be provided with a fair opportunity to reply to the complaint(s) and alleged breaches of the Code.

Responsiveness – a complainant will receive acknowledgement that their complaint has been received, and a respondent will be informed a complaint has been made against them in a timely manner. The complainant and respondent will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint.

Objectivity – every complaint will be addressed in an equitable, objective and impartial manner.

Confidentiality – all complaints are treated confidentially, with information being shared only with staff and volunteers essential to the complaint handling, investigative and decision-making processes. For instance, a

complainant's identity may be disclosed to the respondent when the respondent is informed a complaint has been made against them. In some circumstances PIA's Board will receive details of the complainant in order to reach an informed decision. Information collected is handled in accordance with PIA's Privacy Policy.

Continuous improvement – the outcome of investigations about complaints may assist to inform periodic reviews of the Code of Professional Conduct and other supporting material.

Who can complain about a PIA Member?

Any person, whether or not a PIA Member, may file a complaint about a PIA Member.

In making a formal complaint, complainants are required to provide their name and address and nature of involvement in the matter at hand. If acting on behalf of a public agency, organisation or community group, written authorisation for the complainant to make a complaint on behalf of such an agency, organisation or group must accompany the complaint.

What can be complained about?

Written complaints can be lodged about the conduct or behaviour of a PIA Member only based on an alleged breach (or breaches) of the Code of Professional Conduct. A breach is considered to have occurred if a PIA Member demonstrably fails to comply with any provisions set out in the Code.

Which complaints will not be investigated?

- Complaints that are made anonymously. If you do not provide your name and contact details along with your complaint, this will be considered to be an anonymous complaint.
- Complaints relating to the conduct or behaviour of a planner who is not a PIA Member.
- Complaints about the decisions of local authorities, government and non-government bodies.
- Allegations of poor administration on the part of local authorities, government and non-government bodies or other organisations.
- Complaints about matters that are the subject of a police investigation or legal action at the time of the complaint being lodged, or reasonably likely to occur in the near future, or that become such at any time during PIA's investigative process.
- A complaint where PIA considers the conduct of the person making the complaint is unreasonable. Unreasonable conduct may include (but is not limited to):
 - excessive or persistent repetition of an issue;
 - inappropriate demands or expectations;
 - abusive, trivial or vexatious behaviour; or
 - persistent contacting of PIA while a complaint is being investigated or after an outcome has been provided.

How to lodge a complaint

Complainants must provide details of the complaint and what action and/or remedy is sought. A copy of the complaint, including the complainant's name, will be provided to the Member against whom the complaint is being made (the respondent). (The complainant's name will only be withheld from the respondent in exceptional circumstances.)

Complaints must specifically:

- Identify the person making the complaint (the complainant) including name, address, phone number and email address
- Identify the PIA Member against whom the complaint is brought (the respondent)
- Describe the conduct at issue
- Cite the relevant provision(s) of the Code of Professional Conduct
- Explain the reasons that the conduct is thought to breach the Code
- Include all relevant documentation the complainant has available
- Contain all relevant information with the initial submission as more information will not be accepted unless PIA or the Panel request it from you
- Include a declaration of any relationship or interest the complainant has with PIA or the respondent
- State the nature of your interest in the matter of the complaint (e.g. if you are an objector to a development, or a customer of a Member, etc.)

A complaint must be in writing (optional complaint form available [here](#)) and sent to:

Email: membership@planning.org.au

Postal address: Chief Executive Officer
Planning Institute of Australia
PO Box 5427
KINGSTON ACT 2604

All information provided will be collected and handled in accordance with PIA's Privacy Policy.

How does PIA respond to complaints?

In response to a complaint PIA:

- Will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and indicate whether the complaint meets the criteria in this policy and will be reviewed by an Investigation Panel
- Will explain the steps PIA will take to investigate the complaint
- Will notify the respondent that a complaint has been made against them, give them a copy of the complaint and invite them to respond
- May seek further information from the respondent or complainant
- Will clearly identify the outcome and what action has or will be taken.

The steps and timing involved with an investigation is shown in the Flow Chart at Appendix One.

Who is on an Investigation Panel?

When a complaint is received and is determined by the Chief Executive Officer to meet the criteria for investigation, PIA convenes an Investigation Panel to undertake that investigation.

Panelists:

- Are PIA volunteers who are senior PIA Members (Registered Planners, Fellows or Life Fellows)
- Have signed confidentiality agreements and have no conflict of interest with respect to the complainant, respondent or the matter at hand.

The names of panel members will not be disclosed to the complainant or the respondent.

What can I expect from an investigation?

Where a full investigation is undertaken, outcomes may include:

- That despite being satisfied that a breach has occurred, the matter is determined to not warrant the Members' suspension or expulsion from PIA
- The Member is suspended from the rights and privileges of membership for a period determined by the PIA Board
- The Member is removed as a PIA Member
- Any other recommendation the Panel feels is appropriate
- The PIA Board determines another course of action.

The complainant and respondent will both be informed of the outcome of the investigation and reasons for decisions will be provided. The decision of PIA's Board is final and there is no further provision for appeal in this process.

Version Control

Authorising Entity: Chief Executive Officer

Version	Author	Revision Notes	Date Approved
1.	Code of Professional Conduct Workgroup 2017	Original document.	2 March 2018 (Board)
2.	Brenda Payne, Board Secretariat	Added clarity around disclosure of names and removed reference to CPP.	21 April 2021 (CEO)
3.	Brenda Payne, Board Secretariat	Miscellaneous updates. Minor update 24 April 2023 – new link to Code. Minor update 15 November 2023 – no investigation during police investigation or legal action, etc.	23 August 2021
3.1	Brenda Payne, Executive and Board Coordinator	Minor update 30 April 2025 – fixed web links, N/A transferred to new brand template.	

National Office

Unit 16, Level 3

11 National Circuit

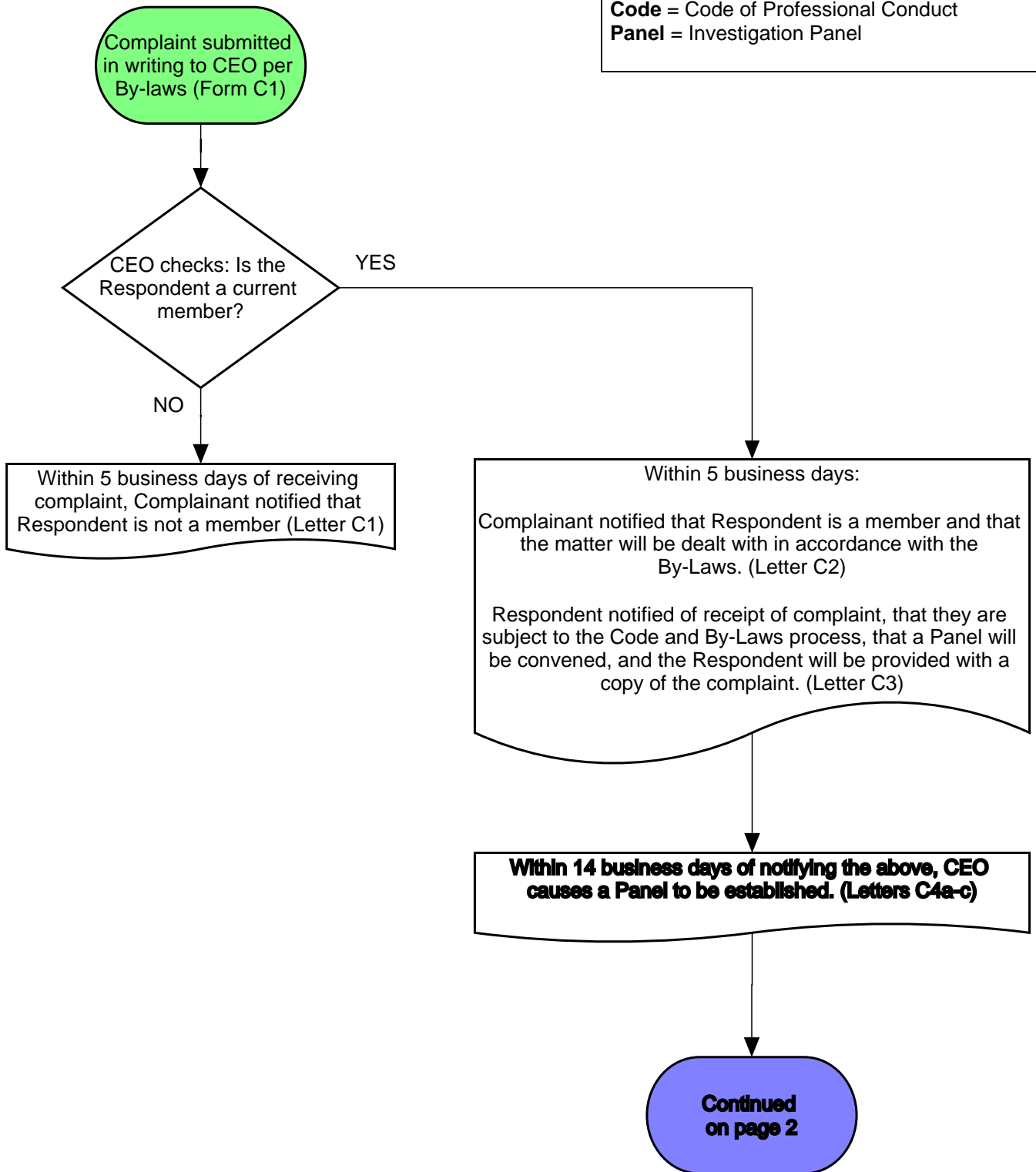
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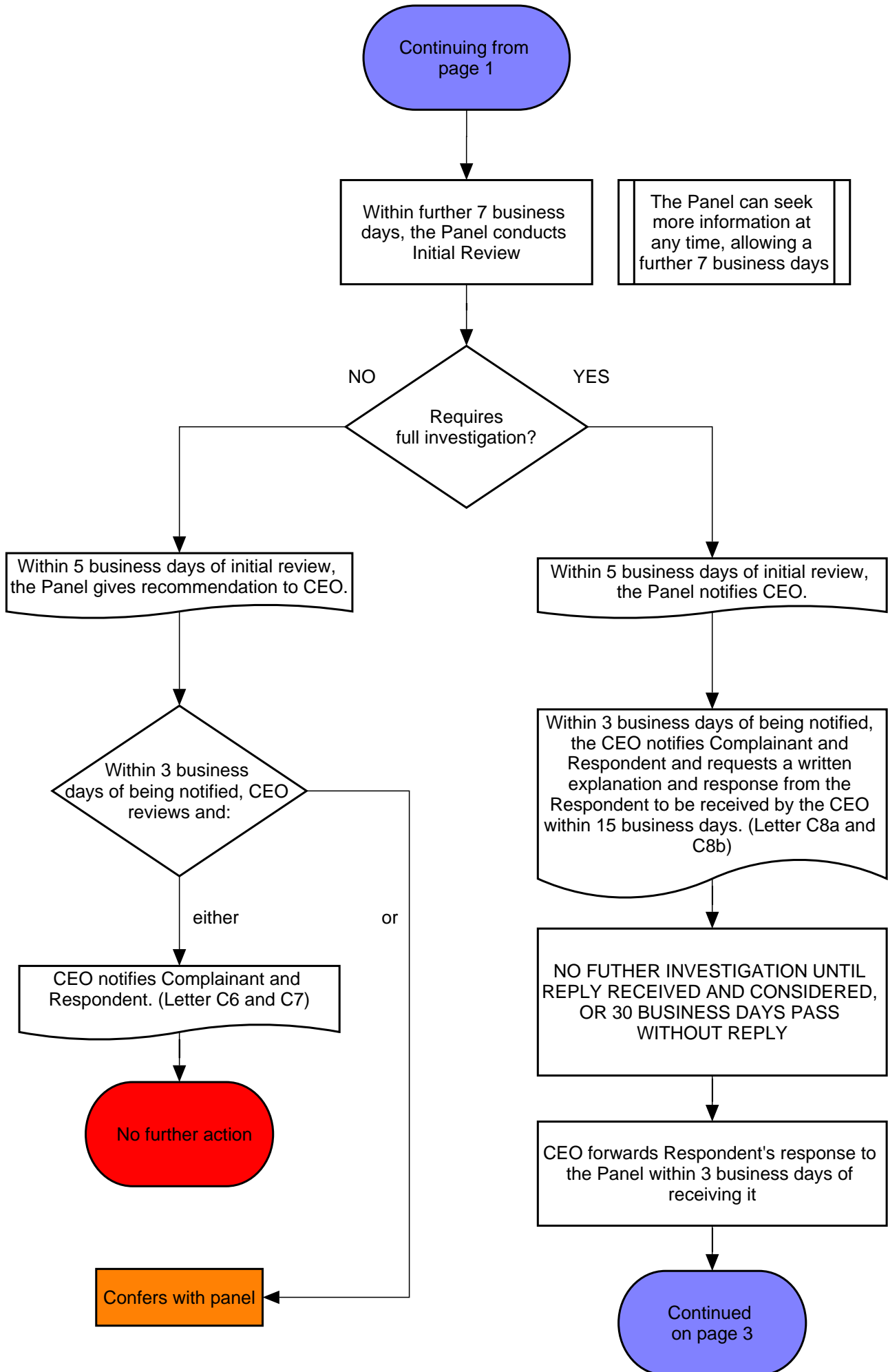
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**FLOW DIAGRAM
INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED BREACH OF
CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Abbreviations:
Complainant = Person making the complaint
Respondent = Person about whom the complaint has been made
Code = Code of Professional Conduct
Panel = Investigation Panel





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Within 15 business days of receiving the response, the Panel completes full investigation including preparation of final report and delivery to CEO. (Report C1)
During the full investigation, the Panel may seek more information or clarity on existing information relating to the matter in accordance with the By-Laws.

The report must include whether the Panel is satisfied that a breach has occurred or not.

If the Panel is **satisfied that a breach has occurred**, they must make a recommendation within the report regarding the course of action being either that:

- a) despite being satisfied that a breach has occurred, it does not warrant the Respondent's suspension or expulsion
- b) the Respondent be suspended for such period as determined by the Board
- c) the Respondent be removed as a Member; and/or
- d) any other recommendation the Panel feels is appropriate.

If the Panel is **satisfied that a breach has not occurred**, it may choose to recommend to the Board that further advice be given to the Respondent regarding their conduct.

The CEO will, within 5 business days of receiving the report, advise the Board of the Panel's recommendations.

Within 10 business days of receiving the advice, and based on the Panel's report, the Board must resolve to either accept the Panel's recommendations, or determine its own course of action.

Within 5 days of the Board's determination, the CEO advises it to the Respondent and Complainant. (Letter C9a and C9b)

No suspension or
removal

If the Panel or Board are satisfied that no breach of the Code has occurred, or that a breach has occurred but it's not sufficiently serious to warrant suspension or expulsion, it may choose to provide further advice to the Respondent regarding the Respondent's conduct.

Suspension

Member suspended per
By-Laws Clause 1.12.9
and 1.12.10 and 1.12.13

Removal

Member removed per
Constitution Clause 9.5