

## **Complaints Policy**

### **Our commitment to you:**

We are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, and complaint handling.

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with us. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology to the person making the complaint.

People making complaints will be:

- provided with information about our complaint handling process and how to access it
- listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate, and
- provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.

### **Responsiveness**

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- the complaints process
- the expected time frames for our actions
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- their likely involvement in the process, and

- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).

We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

### **No detriment to people making complaints**

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

### **Anonymous complaints**

We accept anonymous complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will carry out a confidential investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

### **Accessibility**

We will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance. If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/ or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation).

### **No charge**

Complaining to us is free.

### **Objectivity and fairness**

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

### **Confidentiality**

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by us as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

### **Alternative avenues for dealing with complaints**

We will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any internal or external review options available to them (including any relevant Ombudsman or oversight regulatory bodies).

#### Level 1

We aim to resolve complaints at the first level, the frontline. Wherever possible staff will be adequately equipped to respond to complaints, including being given appropriate authority, training and supervision.

#### Level 2

Where this is not possible, we may decide to escalate the complaint to a more senior officer within our organisation. This second level of complaint handling will provide for the following internal mechanisms:

- assessment and possible investigation of the complaint and decision/s already made, and/or

- facilitated resolution (where a person not connected with the complaint reviews the matter and attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties).

### Level 3

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of our review of their complaint, they may seek an external review of our decision (by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission for example).

### **Monitoring of the complaint management system**

We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:

- ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system, and
- monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts.

### **Continuous improvement**

We are committed to improving the way our organisation operates, including our management of the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaint management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

