

# Complaint & Feedback Handling Policy

<b>Policy Number</b>	OP6	<b>Version</b>	1
<b>Drafted by</b>	CEO	<b>Approved on</b>	August 2023
<b>Authorised person</b>	Chairperson	<b>Scheduled review date</b>	August 2024

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that we handle complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively.

This policy provides guidance to our staff and people who wish to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

### 1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff (paid and volunteer), contractors and our governing body, receiving or managing complaints from the public and clients made to or about us, regarding our products services and staff, or our complaint handling process.

### 1.3. Principles

**Accessibility:** Zahra Foundation Australia ensures that the complaints and feedback process is accessible to all stakeholders, regardless of their communication preferences or any barriers they may face.

**Confidentiality:** The privacy and confidentiality of complainants and individuals providing feedback will be respected throughout the process, except in cases where disclosure is required by law.

**Fairness:** All complaints and feedback will be treated with fairness, impartiality, and without bias.

**Timeliness:** Zahra Foundation Australia will strive to address complaints and respond to feedback within reasonable timeframes as specified. All complaints will be acknowledged as received within 2 business days. The investigation will commence within 3 business days. The initial response to the complaint will be provided in writing within 5 business days.

**Continuous Improvement:** The organisation is committed to using complaints and feedback as opportunities for learning, growth, and improvement.

## 1.4. Organisational commitment

This organisation expects staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from staff and the way that commitment should be implemented.

Who	Commitment	How
Executive team (CEO and Operational Manager)	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution	<p>Report to the board of Directors trends, types and outcomes of complaints received.</p> <p>Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints, operational manager, senior leadership team members.</p> <p>Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints (Operational manager and senior leadership team members) to resolve them promptly.</p> <p>Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvements.</p> <p>Support recommendations for service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</p>
Senior	Demonstrate	Are responsible for the complaint handling and will treat

<p>Leadership Team members, Executive team and CEO</p>	<p>exemplary complaint handling practices</p>	<p>all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Assist people to make a complaint, if needed.</p> <p>Comply with our policy and associated procedures.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by management.</p> <p>Provide annual training to staff on the complaint and feedback policy.</p> <p>Acknowledge the complaint within 2 business days.</p> <p>Commence the investigation around the complaint within 3 business days.</p> <p>Respond to the complaint in writing with 5 business days.</p>
<p>All staff</p>	<p>Understand and comply with our complaint handling practices</p>	<p>Immediately report complaints to their direct line supervisor or a member of the senior leadership team, or executive team and treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Be aware of our complaint handling policies and procedures.</p>

		<p>Assist people who wish to make complaints access our complaints process.</p> <p>Attend annual complaint and feedback training.</p> <p>Be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints resolve matters promptly.</p>
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## 2. Terms & Definitions

### Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. (AS/NZ 10002:2014)

As well as complaints being made directly to our organisation, remember that some complaints (or at least negative comments) made be made on social media.

### Complaint handling/management system

All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.

### Dispute

An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.

### Feedback

Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

### Grievance

A clear, formal written statement by an individual staff member about another staff member or a work-related problem.

### Policy



A statement of instruction that sets out how we should fulfil our vision, mission and goals.

### **Procedure**

A statement or instruction that sets out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.

## **3. Facilitate complaints**

### **People focus**

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

Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame (as in AS/NZ 10002).

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.

### **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 information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is well publicised, on our website, information in all workspaces and within brochures and documents provided to clients. 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).

### 3.1. How to make a complaint of provide feedback

Complaints or feedback can be made **in person, in writing** or **over the telephone**.

- **In person:** By calling the Zahra main office on 08 8352 1889 and requesting an appointment to make a complaint or provide feedback.
- **In writing:** By posting the complaint to **PO BOX 3082, Hilton Plaza, SA 5033** or emailing [amdin@zahrafoundation.org.au](mailto:amdin@zahrafoundation.org.au)
- **By telephone:** By calling **08 8352 1889** and informing the reception staff that you would like to make a complaint or provide feedback.

Complaints about the Zahra Foundation Australia can also be made to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits (ACNC) Commission as the Zahra Foundation is registered with ACNC.

- The ACNC accepts complaints relating to alleged breaches of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (Cth) (ACNC Act) and *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013* (Cth) (ACNC Regulation), such as allegations of charities being non-compliant with Governance or External Conduct Standards. Examples include allegations and information about possible illegal activity, activities that are contrary to the charity's purpose or the diversion of a charity's resources for private benefit.
- Further information can be found <https://www.acnc.gov.au/about/corporate-information/corporate-policies/commissioners-policy-statement-complaints-about-charities#:~:text=The%20ACNC%20accepts%20complaints%20relating,compliant%20with%20Governance%20or%20External>
- Furthermore, concerns can be raised at [acnc.gov.au/raise-concern](https://www.acnc.gov.au/raise-concern)



## **3.2. Respond to complaints**

### **Early resolution**

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.

### **Responsiveness**

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints within 2 working days.

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 within 1 working day.

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

- 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 within 5 working days 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.

### **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. Internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

### **Responding flexibly**

Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

### **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.

## **3.3. Manage the parties to a complaint**

### **Complaints involving multiple agencies**

Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, we will work with the other organisations/s where possible, to ensure that communication with the person making a complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated.

Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint.

Where a complaint involves multiple areas within our organisation, responsibility for communicating with the person making the complaint and/or their representative will also be coordinated.

Where our services are contracted out, we expect contracted service providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system. We take complaints not only about the actions of our staff but also the actions of our service providers.





### **Empowering of staff**

All staff managing complaints are trained in how to handle the complaint and have authority and delegation to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.

### **Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints**

We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time our success depends on:

- our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- the health, safety and security of our staff, and
- our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

### **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) or details of the ACNC.

### **The three levels of complaint handling**

<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
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<p>Frontline complaint handling and early resolution of complaints</p>	<p>Internal review of complaints and/or complaint handling (may include further investigation of issues raised and use of Alternative Dispute Resolution options).</p>	<p>Escalated to ACNC.</p>
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### **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. All complaints must be reported to the frontline staff member director manager in the senior leadership team, immediately and acknowledged within 2 working days. Outcomes of complaints must be provided in writing to the person, agency or staff member making a complaint within 5 working days.

### **Level 2**

Where this is not possible to resolve the complaint on the frontline or the member of the SLT has assessed that the complaint may impact on the reputation of the organisation, is in relation to staff gross misconduct and / or has the potential for financial liability of the organisation is must be escalated to a member of the executive team 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).

In circumstance the complaint impacts on the reputation of the organisation, has the potential for financial liability and / or is associated with the gross misconduct of a staff member or stakeholder related to the organisation then the Board of Directors.

### **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 at the relevant states Ombudsman or oversight regulatory bodies or the ACNC.

## **4. Accountability and learning**

### **4.1. Analysis and evaluation of complaints**

We will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis by management and the governing body of Directors.

We will run regular reports on:

- the number of complaints received
- the outcome of complaints, including matters resolved at the frontline
- issues arising from complaints
- systemic issues identified, and
- the number of requests we receive for internal and/or external review of our complaint handling

Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Both reports and their analysis will be provided to our CEO and the board of Directors for review quarterly.

### **4.2. 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.

### **4.3. 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



- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system, and
- monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys.
- regularly review the complaint management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data continual monitoring of the system
- seek feedback on the complain system from staff and people making the complaint.

## **Authorisation**

Natasha Malani

22/09/2023

Board Chair