

World Access for the Blind – Australia

Complaints Management Policy

Introduction

World Access for the Blind – Australia is committed to effective complaints management by managing complaints in an accountable, transparent, timely and fair manner.

We recognise that effective complaints management is integral to good client service; we value all complaints and encourage a people-focused and proactive approach to complaints management.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- fair, accountable, transparent and responsive management of complaints about the company's functions
- complaints are handled promptly and as close to the source as possible
- effective monitoring of complaints
- identification and implementation of business improvement opportunities

Definitions

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction about the company's services or staff that requires a response or resolution.

Principles

The complaint management principles underlying this policy reflect the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10002-2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations.

The company is committed to the following complaints management principles:

- provision of a free and accessible complaints process, that supports natural justice and procedural fairness for all persons with no reprisals or detriment from making a complaint
- people have the right to be supported by a friend, an advocate, an interpreter or a community elder
- provision of information about where to lodge a complaint, how to make a complaint and how complaints will be managed, including referring complaints to external agencies, where required

- opportunity for complaints to be made anonymously, with complainants advised of the limitations of an anonymous complaint
- provision of clear information about what can or cannot be achieved by a complaints process, and providing assistance to anyone who wishes to make a complaint
- responding to complainants in a respectful, fair, objective and timely manner, that respects the confidentiality of personal information
- communicating with parties about the progress of the complaint
- providing a clear explanation of the final decision, any recommendations, review options and any available external review mechanisms
- staff and volunteers adhering to the company's record keeping policy and procedure
- wherever relevant inform the continuous improvement of the company's procedures and practices
- company staff and volunteers receiving complaints must be treated with respect. Abusive, aggressive or disrespectful behaviour towards staff during their interactions will not be tolerated

Scope

The Complaints Management Policy applies to all staff, contractors and volunteers working in the name of World Access for the Blind - Australia

This policy also applies to other parties who have been authorised by the company, through formal agreement, to perform activities or duties or provide a service or services on behalf of the company.

This policy applies where a person expresses dissatisfaction about:

- a decision the company has made or not made
- the service the company has provided or not provided
- a service that is funded by the company
- the behaviour of the company's staff, contractors and volunteers
- an act or practice of the company in relation to the individual's personal information that may be a breach of the company's obligations under the *Information Privacy Act 2009*

A complaint about a decision or action of the company must be made no later than 12 months after the complainant was notified or made aware of the decision or action. Complaints made outside this time period will only be reviewed if the company considers that exceptional circumstances warrant consideration of the out-of-time complaint.

Exclusions

The following complaints will be managed in accordance with the relevant legislation, and the company's policies and procedures.

- matters currently being dealt with or have been previously dealt with by a court, tribunal or external complaints agency
- matters where employees have not conducted themselves in accordance with the Code of Conduct or Service Standards when dealing with their customers which have been referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission for investigation
- matters that have already been subjected to an Internal review and an outcome has been determined
- allegations of suspected harm or risk of harm to a child will be actioned immediately by urgent referral or reporting to the Regional Intake Service or Child Safety Service Centre

Complaints Management

- Frontline staff are empowered with clear delegations to resolve less serious complaints (low complexity complaints) wherever possible at first contact.
- Serious complaints (medium and high complexity complaints) are referred to the managing director.
- All complaints must be entered into the company's electronic complaints management tool.

Internal Review

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the process undertaken to manage a complaint, an internal review can be requested within 12 months of the outcome being provided to the complainant.

External Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after progressing through Stages 1 and 2, they can pursue external options - e.g. alternative dispute resolution; complaints agency such as the Queensland Ombudsman or other avenues of appeal or review.

Reporting

Regular de-identified complaints reports will be made available to company staff and the board of directors for analysis to identify trends, systemic issues and potential improvements.

Review and Auditing

World Access for the Blind – Australia is committed to continually improving its services and will monitor agreed system improvements resulting from the review of complaints.

Regular reviews and self-audits of the effectiveness of the entire complaints management system will occur and include an evaluation of the major elements of the system including; compliance with the policy, procedure and guidelines including complaints capture, recording and internal reporting, time taken to manage complaints, correctness of complaint outcomes.

The Complaints Management Policy and associated procedures will be reviewed every two years.

Authority

Public Service Act 2008

Disability Services Act 2006

Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009

Ombudsman Act 2001

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2010

Information Privacy Act 2009

Related legislation, procedures, and guidelines

Complaints management procedure

Complaints management guidelines

Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1002-2014 Guidelines for complaints management in organizations

Child Protection Act 1999

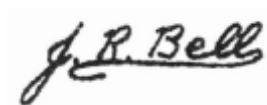
Community Services Act 2007

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995

Human Services Quality Standards

Forensic Disability Act 2011

Authorisation



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