



Complaint and Feedback Handling Policy

Policy number	OP6	Version	1
Drafted by	CEO	Approved on	[insert date]
Authorised person	Chairperson	Scheduled review date	[insert date]

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 Leadership Team members, Executive team and CEO.	Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices	<p>Are responsible for the complaint handling and will treat 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. Commence the investigation around the complaint within 3 business days. Respond to the complaint in writing with 5 business days.</p>



All staff	Understand and comply with our complaint handling practices.	<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 and 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).



How to make a complaint or 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
- **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 <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. In particular, 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 organisation/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.

Empowerment 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:

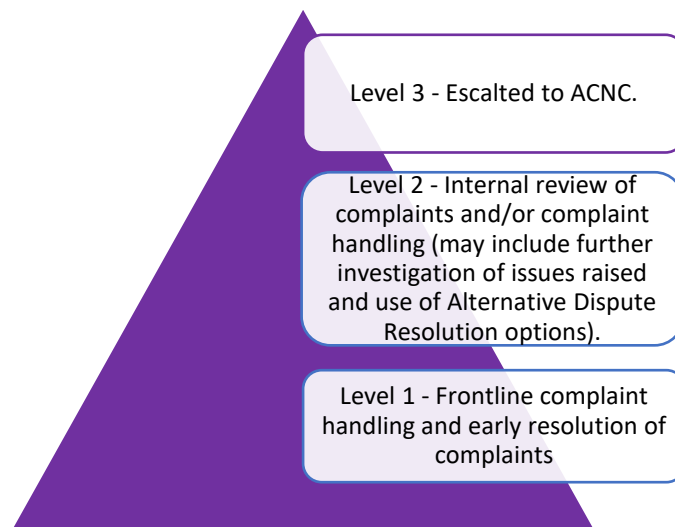
- our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- the health, safety and security of our staff, and
- our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

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



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
- 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.
- Seek feedback on the complaint system from staff and people making the complaint.

Authorisation

[Signature of Board Secretary]

[Date of approval by the Board]

Zahra Foundation Australia

Complaint and Feedback Handling Procedure

Procedure number	OPR6	Version	1
Drafted by	CEO	Approved on	[insert date]
Authorised person	CEO	Scheduled review date	[insert date]

Introduction

When responding to complaints, staff (paid and volunteer) act in accordance with complaint handling procedures as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints.

Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

The five key stages in our complaint management system are set out below



1 Receive

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, we will record the complaint and its supporting information. We will also assign a unique identifier/number to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant information, and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

1.1 Documenting the received complaint in the Complaints and Feedback Register

All feedback received is lodged and progress tracked through the Complaints and Feedback Register.

Each complaint will be recorded by starting a new row in the excel spreadsheet. The ID row cannot be edited. Once you start entering the complaint details into the row, the ID of that row becomes the ID of the complaint the whole way through the process (see Figure 1)

Step 1: Create a file in [XXXX folder in the location of Microsoft Teams] the folder name should be the ID (see Figure 2)

When the complaint is received any relevant documentation (i.e. an email or notes made upon meeting with the person) will be saved into this folder

Step 2: At the start of the process populate columns B – M of the register, follow the italicised instructions in the register for advice on how to populate. Once these columns are populated at the start of the process, there should be no need to edit or update again.

Do not edit this field

Identifying details												Feedback classification		
ID	Date feedback made	Name	Phone or email contact details	Age	Gender	Describe the feedback	Feedback type	Feedback classificat	Service Are	Location	Staff Role	Feedback rol		
001	1/07/2023	Jane Doe	Jane@zaispond.com	Adult 25+	Female	Jane was denied a second slice of cake at the Zahra open house. Her email is saved here: [insert MS Teams folder link]	Complaint	Service Delivery	Open house	Zahra main office	none	Participant		

When complaint/feedback initially made populate columns B-M as soon as possible

Figure 1 – An example of a populated rows in the complaints & feedback register

Documents > General > Feedback and Complaints

Name	Modified	Modified By
001	A few seconds ago	Zahra Admin

Figure 2 – An example of the folder set up using the complaint ID

2 Acknowledge

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, within 2 working days. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

The response should be saved in the folder relating to managing the complaint (see Step 1 above for details on the folder)

3 Assess and investigate

3.1 Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making



a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people’s health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

3.2 Investigating the complaint

After assessing the complaint, we will consider how to manage it. We may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
- Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, or
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

We will keep the person making the complaint up-to-date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. We will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

3.1 Documenting the Investigation & Response in the Complaints and Feedback Register

There are 6 steps in the Complaints and Feedback Register to track the progress of the complaint through: Investigating, Investigation Complete, Action Proposed, Action Complete, Resolved, Unresolved (all in column N).

Step 3: As the complaint progresses through investigation steps, columns N-P should be updated to keep track of progress. (see Figure 3). This field might be updated multiple times over the course of progressing the complaint.

Step 4: Once a response is determined, indicate the response and escalation required in columns Q-S. (see Figure 3)

N	O	P	Q	R	S
Update Complaints and Feedback Register					
Investigation update			Response		
Status ▾	Date investigation updated ▾	Name of staff member entering data ▾	Escalation required ▾	Response action ▾	Actioned by ▾
<i>What is the investigation status of the feedback</i>	<i>Enter date of most recent update to the status column</i>	<i>Enter name of staff member that has made most recent updates (i.e. your name)</i>	<i>Indicate the level of escalation required</i>	<i>Outline the response that Zahra will take</i>	<i>Enter staff/Board members name</i>
Action proposed	10/07/2023	Minne Mouse	Internal	Zahra staff will improve accuracy of catering orders. An apology will be send to Jane from the CEO	CEO



Figure 3 - An example of a populated row in the complaints & feedback register

4 Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- The reason/s for our decision
- The remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

4.1 Documenting the Outcome in the Complaints and Feedback Register

Once actions have been taken and the complainant documented, there is a need to document these outcomes, including the complainant satisfaction as well as whether and policies or procedures will be updated as a result of the feedback

Step 5: Document the outcomes in columns T-X of the register (see Figure 5)

T	U	V	W	X
Outcome				
Date follow-up made	Complainant satisfied	Board reporting complete	Policy # or Procedure	Insert link to associated document
<i>Indicate the date a follow-up or response was provided to the person who provided feedback</i>	<i>Outcome for individual that provided the feedback</i>	<i>Has the information transferred across to the Board reporting spreadsheet accurately? (see the tabs below)</i>	<i>Detail the policy or procedure that has been updated as a result of this feedback - or enter N/A if not relevant</i>	<i>Insert links to any documents that have been updated</i>
17/07/2023	Very satisfied	Yes	Policy12	[Insert link to folder location in MS Teams]

Figure 5 - An example of a populated row in the complaints & feedback register

5 Close the complaint: document and analyse data

5.1 Document



We will keep records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes
- All relevant documentation with be saved in the complaint file (see Step 1)

5.2 Analyse data

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager, senior management or the Chair of our governing body.

Under the Feedback and Complainant register there is a 'Board Reporting' tab. This will provide a deidentified summary of complaints received to the Board.

There is no requirement to update this tab, it will automatically populate based on the information input into the register.

To provide this tab to the Board, copy and paste the table from the 'Board Reporting' tab into a Microsoft Word document.

Authorisation

[Signature of CEO]

[Name of CEO]

[Date]