

1. Introduction

The value of feedback and complaints, and our commitment to good complaint handling. FEBC (Australia) recognises the importance and value of listening and responding to feedback, concerns and complaints. We are committed to achieving the highest standard we can in every area of our work and to continuous improvement. This applies especially to our overseas support and programs, the way we seek donations and interact with our supporters, and our accountability to all stakeholders generally. Receiving feedback, concerns and complaints is one of the most important ways of learning what we need to do to improve our work.

This policy applies to all our people - employees and volunteers – and they are familiarised with it. Those with particular relevant responsibilities are trained in its application. We make clear the value we place on receiving feedback, concerns and complaints in all relevant communications. We advise how a copy of this policy may be obtained and we provide clear information on how complaints may be made.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 We have adopted the following principles for our complaint policy and procedures:

- 2.1.1 Visibility - we will clearly publicise information about how and where to complain.
- 2.1.2 Accessibility - we will ensure that our complaint handling process is as accessible as we can practically make it to all complainants.
- 2.1.3 Responsiveness - we will respond to a complaint according to our predetermined timeframes.
- 2.1.4 Objectivity - we will address all complaints in an equitable, fair and unbiased manner using evidence submitted by both the complainant and our personnel through the complaint handling process.
- 2.1.5 Confidentiality - we will observe strict confidentiality in complaint handling.
- 2.1.6 Supporter/person-focused approach - the interests of our supporters/stakeholders are foremost in our approach to complaint handling.
- 2.1.7 Accountability - we will ensure that accountability for and reporting on the actions and decisions with respect to complaint handling is clearly established.
- 2.1.8 Continual improvement - continual improvement of the complaint handling process and the quality of our mission work is one of our permanent objectives.

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction made to FEBC (Australia) related to our services, communications, or mission work/programs; and/or the complaint handling process itself where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
- Complainant: a person, organisation or its representative, making a complaint.
- Complaint handling/management system: all policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.
- 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.

- Inquiry: a request for information or an explanation.
- Stakeholder or interested party means a person or group having an interest in the performance or success of the organisation.

4. Policy Scope

This policy applies to any complaint, regardless of who makes it. We will accept complaints relating to our staff, our volunteers, our partners, our contracted service providers or anyone else acting on our behalf. A person may make a complaint to whom we deliver services or goods or who is affected by our services or goods, a partner, a local organisation with which we work, our staff, volunteers, donors, supporters or a member of the public. Anonymous complaints can be made, but obviously, our ability to investigate them may be limited because of this.

5. Training

This policy has been distributed and made available to all our staff, our volunteers, our partners, and all others acting on our behalf. We require all those who may be involved in any way with a complaint to formally signify their commitment to this policy.

To familiarise them with this policy we run induction programs for our governing board members and all relevant personnel. Personnel directly involved in complaint handling are fully trained in all aspects of this policy and its implementation. We take special care to train our field personnel to encourage and receive feedback and concerns, and to handle complaints, taking into account language issues and cultural sensitivities.

Where appropriate we will ensure that personnel working in communities we serve have all necessary training to encourage and handle inquiries, expressions of concern and making of complaints so as to take account of cultural and gender sensitivities and to ensure that cases involving children are appropriately handled.

6. Accessibility

This policy is located on our website in the About Us page under Policies, Terms and Conditions. Where literacy is a constraint, we invite oral expressions of feedback and complaints. We will take care to give this invitation in a way that is culturally appropriate recognising that in some cultures people require greater encouragement to provide feedback or make a complaint. We will take special care to facilitate complaints from vulnerable populations including children and marginalised groups. If required we will make use of pictorial means of communication.

We ensure that providing feedback or making a complaint to us is as easy as possible. We will gather feedback using a number of different methods including in person, over the phone, supporter surveys, email and any other written means, social media and FEBC (Australia) website. We will receive complaints orally, in person, over the phone and by any written means.

We will do our very best to assist a complainant to put their complaint in writing or to write it down ourselves as faithfully as we can. We will explain our procedures for receiving and handling complaints including:

- where or to whom complaints can be made;
- time periods associated with various stages in the process;
- the complainant's options for remedy, including external means;
- how the complainant can obtain feedback on the status of the complaint.

COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

1. Receive and Acknowledge Complaint

We can receive complaints orally in person or by telephone, and in writing by post or email. Where complaints are made orally, we will ensure our write up of the complaint contains all the information the complainant wishes to provide.

Note: Complaints may be made by a friend or advocate of the complainant on their behalf to:

- Office address – 1/365 Kingsway Caringbah NSW
- Phone – 1300 720 017
- Email – office@febc.org.au
- National Director – kevin.keegan@febc.org.au

Where appropriate, for some field projects/programs we may establish a complaints committee involving representatives from partner organisations and members of the field or community we are serving.

Where appropriate we may utilise a complaint/suggestion box. We recognise that in some circumstances complainants may wish to remain anonymous. Because such complaints can alert us to problems that need fixing, we will accept them as feedback, for clearly it will not be possible to provide a remedy to an individual.

1.1 Oral complaints - we will:

- 1.1.1. Identify ourselves, listen, record details, and determine what the complainant wants;
- 1.1.2 Confirm that we have understood and received the details;
- 1.1.3 Show empathy for the complainant but not attempt to take sides, lay blame, or become defensive;

1.2 All complaints - we will:

- 1.2.1 Seek from the complainant the outcome/s they are expecting;
- 1.2.2 Make an initial assessment of the severity of the complaint and the urgency of action;
- 1.2.3 Clearly explain to the complainant the course of action that will follow:

- if the complaint is out of our jurisdiction;
- if we may exercise a discretion not to investigate;
- if preliminary enquiries need to be made, or further consideration needs to be given: or
- if the complaint is to be investigated.

1.2.4 Not create false expectations but assure the complainant that the complaint will receive full attention;

1.2.5 Give an estimated timeframe or, if that is not possible, a date by which we will contact them again;

1.2.6 Check whether the complainant is satisfied with the proposed action and, if not, advise them of alternatives;

1.2.7 Ensure that the complaint is appropriately acknowledged;

1.2.8 Follow up where necessary and monitor whether the complainant is satisfied;

1.2.9 Register all complaints on a feedback and complaints register.

We will ensure that a complainant is not required to express their complaint to a person implicated in their complaint. We will also ensure that a person implicated in a complaint is not involved in any way with the handling of that complaint.

2. Initial Assessment of Complaint

We will first assess whether there is more than one issue raised in the complaint and whether each needs to be separately addressed.

2.1 Criteria - to determine how a complaint should be managed, we will assess it in terms of the following criteria:

2.1.1 severity;

2.1.2 health (including mental health) and safety implications;

2.1.3 financial implications for the complainant or others

2.1.4 complexity;

2.1.5 impact on the individual, public and organisation;

2.1.6 potential to escalate;

2.1.7 systemic implications; and

2.1.8 the need for and possibility of immediate action.

If we assess the complaint as significant in terms of one or more of these criteria, we will classify the complaint accordingly.

We will endeavour to deal immediately with inquiries and minor complaints. However, as far as possible, we will ensure that the inquirer or complainant is completely satisfied with the information and or resolution provided.

On receipt of a complaint we will attempt to determine expeditiously whether investigation is required or not, depending on jurisdictional questions and whether the complaint is ill conceived.

If the complainant disputes an assessment that a complaint should not be investigated, the member of staff handling the complaint will refer it to a more senior colleague for review. If such a dispute is unresolvable, we will refer the complainant to our governing Board.

3. Timeframes

We will acknowledge written complaints within five (5) working days.

We will acknowledge oral complaints immediately.

We will aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and within 30 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a complaint is not resolved within 30 working days, we will inform the complainant of progress and keep them informed of progress every two weeks.

4. Investigation and Response

The National Director or a senior manager delegated by him/her will normally make the decision on a complaint that has required investigation (that is not a minor complaint).

Decisions on serious complaints may be referred to our governing Board.

We will make every reasonable effort to investigate all the relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint. The level of investigation will be commensurate with the seriousness and frequency of the complaint.

We will communicate our decision on a complaint as soon as is practical. Our communication will be in writing in the appropriate language by email and/or post.

We will encourage the complainant to respond and advise whether they are satisfied with our decision. In our decision, we will advise that if a complainant is not satisfied, we will be prepared to consider any additional information they may provide and to review our decision.

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of our review of their complaint, they may seek an external review of our decision (e.g. by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission).

We will ensure that all relevant personnel are informed of the outcomes of complaints and the implications for our services, procedures and processes.

We will take all required remedial actions. We will be prepared to change the way in which we operate and improve or undertake further training of staff. Where needed, we will counsel or discipline staff or volunteers. Where appropriate we will consult and take advice from other relevant regulatory/enforcement authorities.

5. Confidentiality

We will not reveal a complainant's name or personal details to anyone in or outside our organisation, other than staff involved in handling the complaint, without obtaining the complainant's permission.

6. Complaint Data

6.1 We will register all inquiries and complaints. We will ensure that the following information is contained in written complaints and in the case of oral complaints, record this information ourselves.

6.2 Information recorded includes:

6.2.1 date of receipt

6.2.2 description of the complaint and relevant supporting data;

6.2.3 requested remedy;

6.2.4 service(s) and/or practice or procedure complained about;

6.2.5 due date for a response;

6.2.6 immediate action taken (if any) to resolve the complaint

7. Reports

All complaints will be reported at our regular (weekly) Team meetings and noted in the National Director's report to our governing Board meetings. Minor complaints will be reported in summary form. Major complaints will be reported in detail. An analysis will be included in the complaints report provided with the complaints data.

8. Continuous Improvement

8.1 FEBC (Australia) is committed to improving our products, services and processes informed by supporter feedback and complaints. We will monitor the effectiveness of our complaint handling processes and make improvements as appropriate.

We will:

8.1.1 maintain data collection on complaints for the purpose of identifying trends, enhancing information management and service provided;

8.1.2 keep abreast of best practices (both locally and overseas) regarding complaint handling;

8.1.3 foster a supporter/person focused approach;

8.1.4 undertake specific training and retraining of staff to foster better complaint handling practices;

8.1.5 encourage innovation in complaint handling development; and

8.1.6 recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling behaviour.

Feedback / Complaint Form			
Name:			
Address:			
Phone:			
Date of Submission:			
Describe in detail the nature of your feedback/complaint and (where applicable) include names of individuals involved, dates, witnesses of the incident, and any proof you might have to support your submission:			
What actions or recommendations should the company take in order to effectively manage your feedback/complaint?			
Please give any additional comments that would be helpful in managing your feedback/complaint:			
Signature:		Date:	
OFFICE USE:			
Submission received by:		Date:	
Nature of Submission:			
Recommended Response (if required):			
Response required by (date):			

FEEDBACK / COMPLAINTS POLICY

This document, approved by the FEBC (Australia) Board, is controlled by the Chairman & National Director. The electronic copy is accessible via the FEBC (Australia) Sharepoint Library and is a "read only" master controlled copy.

DOCUMENT HISTORY	
MANUAL / GROUP IDENTIFIER	RESPONSIBLE PERSON / COMMITTEE / GROUP
GOVERNANCE	BOARD
LEGISLATIVE OR OTHER POLICY REQUIREMENT [ACT/REFERENCE] – ACNC, CMA STANDARDS	

VERSION	APPROVAL DATE	REVISION DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGE
1.0	02/02/2017	05/02/2020	Approved by Board
2.0	26/3/2020	2023	Reformatted policy to clearly distinguish policy from procedures. Reviewed policy against ACNC requirements and model policy developed by Justice Connect (ACNC website). Expanded information on Feedback.