



Neighbourhood  
*Collective*  
AUSTRALIA



# FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that community and those involved in our work are aware of their rights to give feedback, that appropriate feedback mechanisms are in place and that those giving feedback receive consistent and timely responses. Further, this policy ensures that mechanisms are in place so that feedback contributes to the continual improvement of NCA's work.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Neighbourhood Collective Australia (NCA) is committed to continual service improvement and to ensuring that communities have genuine opportunities to shape and contribute to our work. Community feedback, including compliments, suggestions and complaints, contribute to NCA's accountability to the community and our funders and allow for continuous improvement. It is also critical in supporting child safety.

NCA will ensure that this Feedback and Complaints Policy is made available to community members. All community members, including children and young people, are welcome to give feedback. Community members will be provided with assistance in lodging a complaint or feedback on request. This assistance can include language assistance such as interpreting services.

All complaints and feedback received will be:

- Treated confidentially
- Recorded
- Acknowledged
- Investigated
- Replied to within the defined response times.

A record will be retained for the purpose of improving services and reporting to external agencies where we are contractually required to do so.

## RESPONSIBILITY

The Board will ensure NCA has a sound policy and framework in place to deal with feedback.

The CEO is responsible for ensuring that:



Neighbourhood  
*Collective*  
AUSTRALIA



- Employees and volunteers are trained, understand and follow this policy
- Feedback is appropriately managed
- Complaints are appropriately investigated and responded to.

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring community members involved in their work are aware of their rights to provide feedback and make a complaint
- Supporting community members to provide feedback
- Following the processes outlined below when managing feedback.

## DEFINITIONS

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction or criticism that is related to NCA's work or staff, where a response or resolution is expected.

A **compliment** is an expression of satisfaction or praise about NCA work or staff.

**Feedback** includes complaints, compliments and suggestions for improvement about a particular service, experience or event.

An **advocate** is someone who is acting on the behalf of another community member who wishes to give feedback. An advocate might be a family member, carer, service provider or anyone else the community member has nominated to act on their behalf.

## PROCESSES

### Providing feedback to NCA

Any community member has the right to lodge feedback to NCA. They have the right to lodge feedback anonymously if they wish.

Feedback can be provided:

- In writing (via email, letter or the Feedback and Complaints Form)
- Verbally (over the telephone or in person)
- Through an interpreter or advocate.

### Privacy and confidentiality

The complainant's privacy will be respected and protected in relation to the recording, investigation and resolution of any complaint. All supporting documentation will be kept securely in either in a lockable drawer or restricted access electronic files.

### Recording feedback



Neighbourhood  
*Collective*  
AUSTRALIA



All feedback received will be recorded on a Feedback and Complaints Form, either by the community member themselves or by the staff member or volunteer receiving the feedback. Any action taken to resolve a complaint will be recorded on the form and any supporting documentation such as letters or emails will be attached.

### **Determining if further action is required**

The completed form will be given to the CEO as soon as practical. Any complaint that is of a serious nature and/or could potentially result in legal proceedings should be referred to the CEO immediately.

In the event that the CEO is the subject of the complaint, the Chair of the Board will handle the complaints procedure.

The CEO will determine whether feedback requires acknowledgement and further action. Complaints always require acknowledgement and further action. Compliments and other forms of feedback may require no further action.

### **Acknowledgement of feedback**

Where acknowledgement is required, the CEO will provide an acknowledgement within five working days. This can be done verbally at the time of the complaint or in writing.

### **Complaints investigation and resolution**

Where practical and where the CEO is available, complaints will be resolved at the time the complaint is made and resolution will involve the staff member or volunteer who the complaint was made to.

If an immediate resolution is not possible or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the following investigation process should be followed:

- Discuss the complaint with the complainant to establish the facts and find out how they would like to see the matter resolved
- Contact any witnesses or outside agencies/individuals involved
- Review the circumstances leading up to any event or situation related to the complaint
- Negotiate with all parties on a possible solution to the complaint and any strategies which could be implemented in order to avoid recurrence
- Review the policy, procedures or any other documentation that relates to the complaint
- Create and maintain written records, including records of discussions and decisions made throughout the course of the investigation.

All complaints will be responded to within 10 working days of receipt.



### Complaints involving allegations of child abuse or breaches of the Code of Conduct

Where complaints involve allegations of child abuse or a breach of the Code of Conduct in relation to children, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy will be followed in addition to this policy. In addition, the CEO will report these complaints immediately to the Board and will be supported by a board member to handle the complaint.

### Complaint mediation

If a complainant is not satisfied with the proposed solution, they will be informed of their right to make a complaint to alternative dispute resolution bodies, as appropriate. These may include:

- The funding body for that particular service or program
- The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- The Commission for Children and Young People
- Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Privacy Victoria

NCA will provide current contact details of these dispute resolution bodies upon request.

NCA will be a willing participant in any mediation involving dispute resolution agencies in order to resolve an ongoing grievance.

### Monitoring and continuous improvement

The CEO will report all complaints to the Board at board meetings. All feedback will be reviewed on an annual basis by the CEO and board. From this review, areas for audit, evaluation or change may be identified.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Client Feedback and Complaints Form
- Child Safety Policy and Procedure

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

|                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Version:</b> 1                    | <b>Approved by board:</b>     |
| <b>Written by:</b> Kate Steenvoorden | <b>Scheduled review date:</b> |
| <b><i>If updated</i></b>             |                               |
| <b>Changes made:</b>                 |                               |
| <b>Updated by:</b>                   |                               |
| <b>Approved:</b>                     | <b>Scheduled review date:</b> |