



THE NATIONAL TRUST *of* AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES)

Complaint Handling Policy

Introduction

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) “Trust or Trust’s” is a community based statutory body corporate and a charitable entity that was established through an act of parliament working to protect Australia’s heritage through advocacy, conservation and education. As an independent charitable organisation, the Trust, and the entities that the Trust controls, is supported by memberships, donations, sponsorships, bequests, gifts and volunteers.

Purpose

The Trust takes a client-focused, proactive, and timely approach to managing feedback and complaints about the Trust.

The Trust is committed to resolving complaints received, and recognises the rights of complainants to have their complaint dealt with fairly, effectively and efficiently. The Trust recognises the need to be equitable, objective and unbiased to both the complainant and the organisation.

Definitions

Clients - A client includes Trust Members, Members of the Public, Customers, Volunteers, and Suppliers to the Trust.

Closed - A complaint is closed when the Trust has handled the complaint in accordance with the Policy and provided an answer to its ability given its resources and function.

Complaint - Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint.

Complaint management system - All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by the Trust in the management of complaints.

Complaint Register- Maintains a record of all complaints made.

Dispute - An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of the organisation.

Feedback - Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly to or about the Trust about services or complaint handling.

Complaint handling commitments

The commitments demonstrate to clients what they can expect when they complain to the Trust about services, systems, practices, procedures and products.

1.1 Respectful Treatment

Clients making complaints will be listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate.

The Trust will take all reasonable steps to ensure that clients are not adversely affected because

a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

The Trust will accept anonymous complaints and will carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is sufficient information provided.

1.2 Information and Accessibility

The Trust is committed to making it easy to make a complaint, and the process accessible. A range of methods are available for submitting a complaint including, paper feedback form, in writing (by letter or email), telephone or in person. Information is readily available about the complaint process. This information includes:

- a) available methods to make a complaint
- b) what is involved in the process, for example next steps and timeframes
- c) a contact point to enable the client to obtain more information about the complaint process.

If a client prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, the Trust will communicate with them through their representative. Anyone may represent a client wishing to make a complaint with the client's consent (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament or another organisation etc.).

1.3 Good Communication

The Trust will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

The Trust is committed to managing the expectations of clients, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- the complaint handling process;
- the expected timeframes for the Trust's actions;
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay;
- the client's likely involvement in the process;
- the possible or likely outcome of the complaint.

The Trust aims to finalise the response to a complaint within four (4) weeks of receiving it. The client will be advised as soon as possible when the Trust is unable to meet the timeframe for responding to their complaint and provide the reason for the delay.

1.4 Taking Ownership

The Trust will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

All Trust staff may be required to respond to complaints and will receive guidance and training as required. Senior Management who have the key responsibility for managing complaints will be appropriately trained and will provide guidance to other staff as required.

The Trust will ensure that the staff member handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interests, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, any internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a staff member other than the original decision maker.

1.5 Timeliness

The Trust is committed to dealing with complaints promptly.

The Trust 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 health, safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

The Trust aims to finalise the response to a complaint within four (4) weeks but serious or complex complaints may take longer. If there are unavoidable delays in dealing with a complaint the Trust will inform the client and explain the reasons. Where possible the Trust will also give an estimated timeframe for the outcome.

1.6 Transparency

The Trust will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way in the Complaint Register so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis.

Regular reports will be run on:

- the number of complaints received
- the outcome of complaints
- systemic issues identified.

Regular review of these reports by the Executive Director of the Trust will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of the Trust's customer service and make improvements.

Reports and their analysis will be provided to the Trust's Staff Executive and Finance Audit and Risk Management Committee on a quarterly basis.

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



2.1 Receipt of complaints

The Trust will record unresolved complaints and their supporting information even complaints made verbally.

The record of the complaint (Appendix 1) will document the contact information of the client; issues raised and the outcome/s they want; any additional support the client requires. Information collected by the Trust on the individual will be protected under the Trust's Privacy Policy.

2.2 Acknowledgement of complaints

Complaints submitted will receive an acknowledgement within seven (7) working days.

2.3 Initial assessment and addressing of complaints

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the Trust will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within the Trust's control. The Trust will also consider the outcome/s sought by the client 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, the Trust will consider:

- how serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health, safety or security
- how the client is being affected
- the risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed
- the resources available to the Trust
- whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

2.4 Providing reasons for decisions

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, the Trust will contact the client and advise them:

- the outcome of the complaint and any action the Trust took
- the reason/s for the decision
- the remedy or resolution/s that the Trust has proposed or put in place; and
- any options for review that may be available.

Where the Trust makes any adverse findings about an individual it will abide by the requirements of the Trust's Privacy Policy.

2.5 Closing the complaint, redress and review

The Trust will keep full and accurate records documenting how the Trust 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 that need to be followed up.

If a client is dissatisfied with the response to a complaint they can request an internal review (dispute). The Executive Director will review the complaint and decide whether or not it was handled fairly and reasonable steps were taken to resolve the issue.

Alternatively, clients can ask for their complaint to be reviewed by writing to the Chairman (Treasurer) of the Finance and Risk Management Committee.

Contact: Debbie Mills, Executive Director ext; (167)

Approved at Board Meeting No. 307, 5 May 2021



Mr. Neil Wykes. OAM, President

Approved at Board Meeting number:	BM 307
Date of Approval:	5 May 2021

Responsibility for Review: Executive Director.

Review Cycle: Initially in 12 months, then each four years.

Next Review Date:	Reviewed:	Signed:
...../...../.....	/...../.....	
...../...../.....	/...../.....	

Appendix 1 - Complaint Registration Form (Internal use only)

Receipt Details

Complaint reference	[To be added when entered into the Complaint Register]
Complaint registered by	[Staff or Volunteer name]
Date/time complaint received	
How complaint received letter, email, phone, person	

Complainant details

Client/Authorised Representative name	
Is person making the complaint the client?	Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, does the client have authority to act on the client's behalf? Attach authority	

Contact number(s)	
Contact address or email address	

Complaint Details

Date of event date when complaint took place	
Description of complaint - please provide detail	
Documents sent by complainant – attach if any	
Suggested Desired Outcome	

Notes



The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)

Complaint Handling Process

