

Feedback and Complaints Management Policy

Shepparton Access is committed to maintaining a high standard of customer service and ensuring that feedback (positive and negative) is handled in a fair and transparent manner and contributes to the process of continuous improvement.

The Board of Directors recognise the importance of complaints and feedback as mechanisms to improve the quality of our service delivery and enhance customer satisfaction. The Board views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person who has made the complaint.

The Board of Directors will:

- implement appropriate complaints handling processes to ensure that the concerns of individuals are treated seriously and responded to promptly, fairly, thoroughly and courteously.
- create an environment where complaints, concerns, compliments and suggestions are welcomed and viewed as an opportunity for acknowledgement and improvement and ensure that individuals are encouraged to exercise their right to make complaints in a blame-free and resolution-focused culture, respecting an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- provide a clearly articulated process for customer feedback and complaints which is accessible and easy to use for anyone wishing to provide feedback or make a complaint,
- publicise the existence of SA's complaints and feedback procedure so that people know how to contact us to provide feedback or make a complaint,
- ensure that all employees know what to do if feedback or a complaint is received and how to respond,
- ensure that feedback is assessed and treated accordingly and that complaints are responded to and resolved as quickly as possible,
- review information from complaints and feedback for continuous improvement purposes.

To ensure that complaints and feedback are managed appropriately, SA has adopted the following principles:

- **Person centred:** participants have a fundamental right to speak up about the services they receive. All persons are treated with respect and dignity throughout the complaints management process which is respectful of and responsive to a person's individual preferences, needs and values.
- **Consistent:** the process for receiving and responding to complaints is clear and easy to understand, accessible and consistently applied.
- **Accountable:** the response to complaints is appropriately managed. Everyone involved in the management of a complaint understands their role and responsibilities and will be accountable for decisions or actions taken in regard to a complaint.
- **Timeliness:** feedback and complaints will be handled in a timely manner, taking into account the complexity and seriousness of the issues raised, to ensure that all parties have access to an appropriate resolution and that opportunities for further concerns to arise are minimised.
- **Natural Justice and procedural fairness:** all parties will be afforded natural justice and procedural fairness in the handling of complaints and feedback, including:

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- carrying out the feedback and complaint handling process in a transparent manner,
 - all parties to a complaint know what to expect during the complaint and feedback handling process,
 - all parties have equal opportunity to participate in the process,
 - all parties are treated fairly and respectfully, and their concerns are dealt with in an unbiased and objective manner,
 - complainants and respondents are entitled to be assisted by a support person who may be an advocate, a member of the person's family, a friend, carer or other person, and
 - reasons for decisions made are provided.
- **Equity:** in managing all complaints and feedback received, SA will adopt a rights-based principle fundamental to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and ensure that its business practices reflect the highest standards of integrity, fairness and ethical conduct, including full compliance with all relevant legal requirements, consistent with the Company Constitution, *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) (CA), *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Complainants will not be disadvantaged through lodging in good faith, regardless of the outcome.
 - **Confidentiality:** the privacy and confidentiality of all parties will be respected to the extent practicable and appropriate; with acknowledgment that matters may be provided to third parties as necessary e.g. NDIS Commission request or subject to production under the Freedom of Information Act, court order or subpoena.
 - **Recording:** accurate records of complaints and feedback will be kept and recorded in a central register, including reasons for all significant decisions.
 - **Resolution:** where it is within SA's responsibility, fair and reasonable remedies will be offered, where appropriate.
 - **Proportionate:** the nature of any actions following a complaint will be proportionate to the issue raised and any risk of harm to people.
 - **Authority:** individuals involved in handling complaints or feedback will have the necessary authority and management support to carry out the process effectively, and will have (where specific skills are required, such as mediation) access to appropriate training and resources to fulfil their role.
 - **Conflict of interest:** individuals involved in the handling of complaints or feedback, or investigating or adjudicating, must not act where they have a conflict of interest.
 - **Review:** complaints or feedback will be reported and reviewed as appropriate, to consider the findings, the need to take further action and/or implement improvements, and to assess the operation of the complaints or feedback handling process.
 - **Continuous improvement:** the complaints process is outcome focussed and aims to facilitate the ongoing identification of issues and the contributing factors to the complaint being made. Preventative and corrective action will be taken to eliminate the causes of complaints, seek to prevent matters giving rise to complaints from reoccurring and, where appropriate, improve the quality and safety of supports and services and organisational effectiveness.