

## Australian Council of Social Service

Policy No:GOV-09	Policy Name: <b>External Complaints Management Policy</b>
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Approved by:	Board
Date:	18 <sup>th</sup> August
Version:	1
Next review date:	July 2023

Specific responsibility	Board
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Policy context: this policy relates to the following:	
Standards or other external requirements	ISO 10002:2014 Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling
Legislation or other requirements	Australian Charities and Not For Profits Commission Act 2012 (Cwlth) Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)
Contractual obligations	N/A

### Policy Statement

ACOSS is committed to developing strong and effective relationships with members, organisations, and individuals who contribute to our policy development processes, and who use the information and products we generate.

We encourage anyone to give feedback or lodge a complaint about:

- ACOSS operations, outputs, and work.
- The actions, decisions or conduct by ACOSS staff or Board members.
- Our practices and procedures.

Feedback and complaints are important sources of information and assist ACOSS to improve the quality of our work, consistent with our vision and values. Complaints can also highlight unmet expectations and misunderstandings.

In responding to complaints, ACOSS acts in accordance with the best practice complaints handling standards set out in ISO10002:2014. This means that:

- The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness apply, and each complaint is addressed in an equitable and unbiased manner.
- The process for making a complaint is easy for complainants to access and understand.
- Complaints are acknowledged promptly, addressed according to urgency, and the complainant is kept informed throughout the process.
- The complaints management process is standardized and objective, and accountabilities for complaints handling are clearly established.
- Complaints are treated confidentially and dealt with in a positive manner without fear of intimidation, retribution, or discrimination.
- If a complaint is upheld, a remedy is provided.
- There are opportunities for internal review about our response to a complaint. In certain circumstances, the complainant may also seek redress through the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission.
- Any complaints raising issues of a criminal nature are immediately referred to the police or other external agency for investigation.
- The ACOSS Board receives regular reports from the CEO and senior management on the number and nature of complaints received. Complaints of substance lodged by key ACOSS stakeholders are also brought to meetings of the Board Risk and Audit Committee for noting and discussion.

## Scope

This policy applies to the Board and ACOSS workers.

## Definitions

A **complaint** is any expression of dissatisfaction or conflict including in relation to unfair treatment or improper conduct. A complaint may be made by or on behalf of a member or stakeholder, either verbally (in person or by phone) or in writing (by SMS, email or letter).

A **complainant** is any person or organisation making a complaint.

**Serious complaint** – a complaint made in relation to an event or issue that constitutes high or extreme risk for ACOSS. Serious complaints include those made in relation to matters which are complex or disputed, or which may result in financial loss or legal action against ACOSS.

**Feedback** means comments that can be positive or negative, or suggestions to improve services.

## Documentation

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	Code of Conduct Workplace Grievances Policy Risk Management Policy
Related procedures	External Complaints Management procedure Workplace Grievances procedure
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	18 <sup>th</sup> August 2021	Board	July 2023
2			
3			