

Complaint Management Policy

Policy Owner	National Human Resource Manager
Effective Date	30 April 2020
Last Revised	20 April 2020
Replaces	N/A
Approved by	Markus Bucy, COO

Preamble

Team Rubicon Australia (TRA) is a professional disaster relief organisation with a unique culture and history. We are dedicated to the service of communities in need and each other, and governed values that place a high value on servant leadership, maturity, integrity, team work and determination. In the context of our work, our team will regularly be placed in stressful situations, often whilst living in austere conditions. The attitude, humour and maturity of our people is what helps us to our objectives despite adversity. This policy does not seek to change our cheeky, 'get-it-done' attitude. We expect that our people are resilient and respectful, that they will behave as adults, and that everyone is well intentioned.

Purpose

We acknowledge that sometimes we may get a decision wrong or something might go awry with one of our processes. At other times there might just be the perception of a mistake. It is important in these instances that we receive a complaint as they serve as information to identify the source of problems, resolve them where we can, and to identify improvements.

The aim of this Complaints Policy is to ensure that our complaints handling process reflects the importance we place on listening and responding to concerns and complaints from our supporters, partners and the communities we serve.

We will address all complaints in an equitable, fair and unbiased manner using evidence submitted by both the person making the complaint and our staff and volunteers. We will observe strict confidentiality in complaint handling and ensure that the process is as accessible as possible to all complainants.

Scope

This policy is specifically to address the mechanism of complaints by our supporters, partners and the communities we serve.

The following must comply with this Policy in the course of their work and when representing TRA (and will be referred to generally in this policy as *staff*):

- TRA employees, volunteers and board members
- all spontaneous and corporate volunteers coordinated by TRA
- any contractors, members of partnered organisations accompanying TRA

This policy applies to all staff (paid and volunteer), contractors and our governing body, receiving or managing complaints from the public and clients made to or about us, regarding our products, services and staff, or our complaint handling process.

Note: TRA staff complaints, grievances, complaints of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with through other policies and procedures in the TRA Human Resources Manual and the TRA Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy.

Definitions

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, members or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. (AS/NZ 10002:2014). As well as complaints being made directly to our organisation, some complaints (or at least negative comments) may at times be made on social media and TRA should respond where practicable.

Complaint handling/management system: All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.

Dispute: An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.

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.

Policy: A statement of instruction that sets out how we should fulfil our vision, mission and goals.

Procedure: A statement or instruction that sets out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.

Policy

An effective complaint handling system must be modelled on the principles of fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and integration into TRA's organisational culture. We are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling. Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame.

People making complaints will be:

- provided with information about our complaint handling process
- listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate, and
- provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.

No detriment to people making complaints

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

Complaints regarding ACFID members

Any legitimate and well-founded concerns about another NGO should be resolved in accordance with [ACFID's complaint process](#)

Anonymous complaints

We accept anonymous complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will carry out a confidential investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided. Complaints can be emailed direct to feedback@teamrubiconaus.org using the form at Annex B.

Responding to complaints

Early resolution

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with us. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology to the person making the complaint. Where practicable and safe to do so, persons/ parties are encouraged to maturely address their concerns with the persons/ parties involved in order to responsibly resolve their concern prior to escalating via the complaints process.

Responsiveness

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints. We 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 safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible. We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate). We will also advise people as soon as possible when

we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

Objectivity and fairness

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

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

Responding flexibly

Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives. We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

Confidentiality

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by us as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints

We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time our success depends on:

- our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- the health, safety and security of our staff, and
- our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

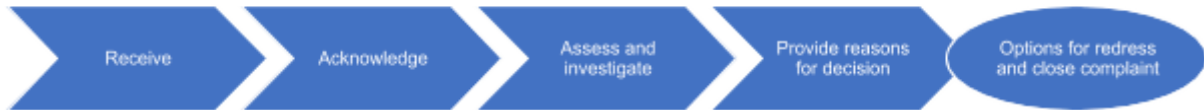
Related Policies

- TRA Code of Conduct
- TRA Child Safeguarding Policy

- TRA Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- TRA Human Resources Manual
- TRA Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- TRA Quick Assessment and Investigation Procedures
- TRA Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy
- TRA Whistleblower Policy

Annex A

Complaint Management Procedures



When responding to complaints, staff should act in accordance with these complaint handling procedures. Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

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

Receipt of complaint

Any TRA staff in a designated leadership position can receive a complaint, with the receiver notifying the TRA Chief Operating Officer (COO) and National Human Resources Manager (NHRM) as soon as practicable. Complaints can also be emailed direct to feedback@teamrubiconaus.org using the form at Annex B.

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, we will record the complaint and its supporting information. The NHRM will send the complainant a Complaint Report Form (Annex B to the policy). We will also assign a unique identifier to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

- the contact information of the person making a complaint
- issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- any other relevant
- any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

Acknowledgement of complaint

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, in writing by email, and preferably within five working days. The manager who receives the complaint is to advise that the complaint has been escalated accordingly. Any further queries from the complainant are to be directly to the COO and or the NHRM.

Assessment and investigate complaint

Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the NHRM will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint 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, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is?
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety?
- How the person making the complaint is being affected?
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed?
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations?

If concerns on child safety are raised during the initial assessment, the Child Safeguarding Focal Person (TRA National Human Resource Manager) will be notified and engaged immediately in the handling of the complaint in accordance with the TRA Child Safeguarding Policy.

Addressing complaints

After assessing the complaint, we will consider how to manage it. To manage a complaint we may:

- give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
- gather information from the product, person or area that the complaint is about
- investigate the claims made in the complaint.

We will keep the person making the complaint up to date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. We will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

Providing reasons for decisions

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, the NHRM will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- the outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- the reason/s for our decision
- the remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

If in the course of investigation, we make any adverse findings about a particular individual, we will consider any applicable privacy obligations before sharing our findings with the person making the complaint.

Closing the complaint, record keeping, redress and review

We will keep records about:

- how we 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
- any outstanding actions that need to be followed up.
- we will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager and/or senior management.

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of TRA's review of their complaint, they may seek a review of our decision in writing to the TRA Chief Executive Officer.

Where a person believes that there has been a breach of the Australia Council For International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct, they are able to make a complaint regarding an alleged breach direct to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee.

Conclusion

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager, senior management or the Chair of our governing body.

Annex B

Complaint Management Form

This form is intended for the documentation of reportable activities. If possible, this report should be completed as soon as possible after the reported activity. This forms a preliminary report that may lead to an investigation by designated leadership of Team Rubicon Australia (TRA).

Completed Forms to be converted to PDF and emailed to feedback@teamrubiconaus.org.
Note, all information requested is optional – you may submit this form anonymously

Name	
DRT Manager/ Direct Report (if applicable)	
Contact Telephone	
Address	
E-mail	
Are you a member of TRA or how did you become involved with TRA?	

TRA will treat all reports made under this policy as confidential as much as is possible to be consistent with conducting a full and fair investigation. Even if you disclose your identity through this report, we will seek to keep it confidential. Once a formal investigation is launched your identity may be disclosed to the other staff only to the extent it is necessary to conduct a thorough and fair investigation.

1. Describe in detail the Reportable Activity: (if you require more space please indicate that you have attached additional information and attach it to this complaint)

2. Date you became aware of Reportable Activity:

3. Reportable Activity is (please check):

- Ongoing
- Completed
- Unclear whether ongoing or completed

4. Where did the suspected of Reportable Activity occurred:
 - Operation _____
 - Event _____
 - DRT _____
5. Member(s) suspected or involved of Reportable Activity:

6. How did you become aware of the Reportable Activity?

7. Describe steps, if any, you took prior to completing this Report (e.g., informed Direct Report).

8. Describe what happened after you reported your concern to TRA.

9. What do you want to happen for your Complaint/Grievance/Dispute to be resolved?

10. Are you making this report on behalf of another person? (Y/N) _____

If yes, please provide the following information

Name	
Contact Telephone	
E-mail	
What is your relationship to the person you are referencing?	
Is this person a member of TRA or what is their relationship to TRA?	

In the absence of a written consent or evidence that you are the guardian, we may not be able to provide personal information about the affected person in response to your complaint.

Please attach additional pages as required

Signature/(E-Signature) _____

Date _____