

ECWA DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Open communication and feedback are regarded as essential elements of a satisfying and productive environment.

Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd understand that its stakeholders include its welfare recipients, volunteers, government and non-government agencies, business, and a wide network of Bishops and community leaders.

This complaints policy and dispute resolution process will be followed for all complaints against Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd, its operations, staff or contractors by external stakeholders. For internal stakeholders there are existing HR processes in place which should be used in the first instance where appropriate.

Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd encourages its stakeholders to resolve any issues or concerns that they may have at the earliest opportunity with the Complaints Handling Director.

The preferred process involves stakeholders resolving issues to their satisfaction internally with the Complaints Handling Director, without feeling they have to refer to external organisations or to authorities for assistance.

The Board of Directors of Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd will appoint a Complaints Handling Director at each Annual General Meeting of the Directors.

DEFINITIONS

“Complaint” is defined in the Australian Standard (AS ISO 10002-2006) as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation relating to its products, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected’.

“Complainant” is defined as any person or entity making a complaint.

“The Australian Standard AS ISO 10002-2006” is the Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide an avenue through which stakeholders to resolve complaints as they arise and to establish easily understood standards and procedures under which Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd will respond to and aim to resolve complaints and disputes at the earliest possible opportunity.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd will be guided in its response to complaints by the Australian Standard for Customer Satisfaction –Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations (AS ISO 10002– 2006):

<i>Guiding Principle-</i>	<i>Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd will:</i>
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Visibility	Resolution Process is displayed prominently in the Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd offices.
Accessibility	Ensure copies of the Complaints Policy and Dispute Resolution Process are readily available for collection.
Responsiveness	Acknowledge each complaint when it is received, investigate as required, and respond in a timely manner. Where complaints involve a number of steps in the process, complainants will be kept informed of progress.
Objectivity	Treat every complaint with courtesy and respect and ensure appropriate review or investigation by staff other than those directly subject to the complaint.
Charges	Not impose any charge for responding to a complaint.
Confidentiality	Protect personal information relating to the complaint and ensure it is not disclosed without the written consent of the complainant or anyone else whose personal information may be involved.
Investigation	Investigate all relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint before reaching a determination.
Customer Focus	Approach each complaint with a view to understanding the concerns or needs of the complainant, and to respond in a way which is fair, effective and appropriate.
Resolution	Aim to resolve each complaint within its internal complaints handling procedures, and to facilitate external review of complaints which it is unable to resolve.
Continuous Improvement	Review periodically the efficiency and effectiveness of the Complaints Policy and Dispute Resolution Process to identify areas for improvement and implement results.

POLICY

Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd will establish mechanisms to promote fast and efficient resolution of issues.

Stakeholders should feel comfortable discussing issues with the Complaints Handling Director in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

All formal avenues for handling of grievances will be fully documented and stakeholders wishes will be taken into account in determining the appropriate steps and actions.

No stakeholders will be intimidated or unfairly treated in any respect if they utilise this Policy to resolve an issue.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

1. Making a Complaint

All complaints are to be addressed to the Complaints Handling Director:

Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd Complaints Handling Director:

By phone: 0427 404 952 or on 02 9750 5514

By email: info@ecw.org.au

By Post: 82 Joseph Street, Lidcombe, New South Wales, 2141

2. Responsibilities of the Complaints Handling Director

It is the responsibility of the Complaints Handling Director to ensure that:

1. They identify, prevent and address potential problems;
2. They are aware of, and are committed to the principles of communicating and information sharing with external stakeholders;
3. Any grievance is handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity, in a timely, thorough and appropriate manner;
4. All stakeholders are treated fairly and without fear of intimidation.
5. The complainant will be treated with courtesy and respect and kept informed throughout the process.

If the complaint investigation results in the identification of a significant incident or required system improvement, it is the responsibility of the Complaints Handling Director to ensure that corrective action will be tabled at an Extraordinary General Meeting of Directors of Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd to be held within 14 days of the outcome of the investigation.

3. Dealing with Stakeholders

All directors, managers and supervisors of Eastern Christian Welfare Australia Ltd should be aware of the possible ramifications of their actions when dealing with stakeholders of the organisation.

They must ensure that all stakeholders are treated with fairness, equality and respect. If there are any doubts or queries in relation to how to deal with a particular set of circumstances, managers or supervisors should contact the Complaints Handling Director for advice at the earliest opportunity.

4. Grievances and Dispute Resolution

Once a stakeholder makes a complaint, the Complaints Handling Director is to immediately discuss the matter openly with the Complainant and work together to achieve a desired

outcome. The Complaints Handling Director should check for clarification of the issue to ensure they fully understand the complainant's concern.

The Complaints Handling Director should follow the steps outlined below:

1. Outline the process that is to be followed.
2. Inform the parties that any information obtained in the conduct of the review is confidential.
3. Listen to the complainant and diagnose the problem.
4. Take accurate and detailed notes of all conversations (including dates, people involved) and attach any supporting documentation.
5. If deemed necessary, provide the stakeholder with a written summary of the meeting and clarification of the next steps to be taken.

The Complaints Handling Director must ensure that the manner in which the meeting is conducted will be conducive to maintaining positive working relationships, and will provide a fair, objective and independent analysis of the situation.

All parties are to maintain complete confidentiality at all times.