

TNC POLICY

Policy Details

Title:	Complaints Management
Effective Date:	11 September 2023
Policy Owner:	Chairperson, Board of Management
Applies To:	All staff and volunteers
Next Review Date:	11 September 2024

Purpose

This policy sets out TNC's policy for managing complaints.

Context

This policy has been developed in alignment with the [TNC Policy Framework](#).

TNC Policy Documents are developed to:

- Assist TNC to meet the objects of the organisation and manage risk effectively
- Assist TNC staff and volunteers in performing their duties
- Outline how TCNC will meet governance expectations
- Provide transparency and clarity to TNC staff and volunteers.

TNC is bound by the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 \(Cth\)](#) and regulated by the [ACNC](#).

Definitions

Term	Explanation
ACNC	Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
BoM	Board of Management
TNC	Toukley Neighbourhood Centre

Principles

Policies always contain a set of principles that provide information relating to the rationale for the document. Staff and volunteers must consider and comply with these guiding principles when performing their duties.

Principle 1: **Any person / organisation using TNC services, or affected by its operations has the right to lodge a complaint or to appeal a decision of the organisation**

Principle explanation

Measurement Criteria

The measurement criteria to validate that this principle has achieved the desired outcomes are:

- All clients are informed of their rights and responsibilities with regards to complaints and appeals at the earliest possible stage of their involvement with TNC.

Principle 2: **Concerns raised will be addressed in ways that ensure access, equity, fairness, accountability, transparency and timeliness**

Principle explanation

Measurement Criteria

The measurement criteria to validate that this principle has achieved the desired outcomes are:

- All complaints are recorded and assessed within one week of being lodged.
- BoM has visibility of complaints through the Complaints Register, presented at each BoM meeting.

Principle 3: **TNC's complaints / appeals management procedure is simple, effectively communicated, and consistently applied**

Principle explanation

Measurement Criteria

The measurement criteria to validate that this principle has achieved the desired outcomes are:

- This policy is published and freely available at all TNC locations (including online).

Procedure

Making a Complaint

A person wishing to make a complaint may do so in writing or verbally to:

- the staff member they were dealing with at the time
- the ~~Centre Manager (or designate)~~ Centre Manager (or designate)
- the Board of Management, or
- the NSW Department of Communities & Justice.

Written complaints should be directed to either:

- PO Box 55, Toukley NSW 226
- admin@tnc.org.au.

The ~~Centre Manager~~ Centre Manager will be responsible for receiving this correspondence and directing it to the appropriate person.

Lodging an Appeal

Clients or their advocates may lodge an appeal if they disagree with a decision made by the organisation, or by a staff member, related to service provision or the manner in which a volunteer or member of staff has dealt with an individual.

Appeals should be in writing and directed to either:

- PO Box 55, Toukley NSW 226
- admin@tnc.org.au.

The Executive Officer will be responsible for receiving this correspondence and directing it to the appropriate person.

Complaint / Appeal Resolution Responsibility

If the complaint / appeal relates to ...	The responsibility for resolution is with ...	And dealt in accordance with ...
Association members, including BoM members	Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNC Constitution
Chairperson	Secretary <u>Vice Chairperson</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of conduct • Board Charter • TNC Constitution
Executive Officer <u>Centre Manager</u>	Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People management policy • Code of Conduct
Social enterprises (Food Care, Op Shop)	Executive Officer <u>Centre Manager</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People management policy • Facilities management policy • Code of Conduct
Staff member	Executive Officer <u>Centre Manager</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People management policy • Code of Conduct

If the complaint / appeal relates to ...	The responsibility for resolution is with ...	And dealt in accordance with ...
TNC generally, including services	Executive Officer Centre Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities management policy
Volunteer	Executive Officer Centre Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People management policy Code of Conduct

Responding to a Complaint / Appeal

The person responsible for resolution of a complaint / appeal will:

1. Process the complaint or appeal:
 - a. Register the complaint or appeal in the Complaints Register
 - b. Inform the complainant that their complaint has been received and providing them with information about the process and timeframe.
2. Investigate the complaint or appeal:
 - a. Examine the complaint within one week of the complaint being received
 - b. Investigate the complaint and deciding how to respond
 - c. Inform the complainant by letter within two weeks of the complaint being received of what is being done to investigate and resolve it, and the expected timeframe for resolution
 - d. As far as possible, complaints or appeals will be investigated and resolved within one month of being received. If this timeframe cannot be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative timeframe for resolution.
3. Resolve the complaint:
 - a. Make a decision or referring to the appropriate people for a decision within three months of the complaint being received
 - b. Inform the complainant of the outcome:
 - i. Upheld (and if so, what will be done to resolve it)
 - ii. Resolved (and how this has been achieved); or
 - iii. If no further action can be taken, the reasons for this.
 - c. Inform the complainant of any options for further action if required
4. Review the complaint:

If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation and proposed resolution of their complaint or appeal, they can seek a further review of the matter by the BoM within the next month.

5. Refer to external procedure:

A formal external complaints procedure may follow Step 4 if the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome. The complainant will be referred to the relevant funding body of the service / program.

Record Keeping

A register of complaints and appeals will be kept in the Complaints Register (currently managed on Smartsheet). The register will be maintained by the Executive Officer and will record the following for each complaint or appeal:

- Details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint

- Date lodged
- Action taken
- Date of resolution and reason for decision
- Indication of complainant being notified of outcome
- Complainant response and any further action
- Correspondence relating to each complaint.

The complaints register and files will be confidential, and access is restricted to ~~Executive Officer~~the Centre Manager and Board of Management.

~~Executive Officer~~Centre Manager will be responsible for reporting details of any complaints / appeals received at each BoM meeting.

Results from this report will be reviewed by Board of Management and used to:

- Inform service planning by including a review of complaints and appeals in all service planning, monitoring and evaluation activities
- Inform decision making by including a report on complaints and appeals as a standard item on staff and management meeting agendas

Change Control

Effective Date	Author	Approver	Comments
11-Sep-2023	Bronwyn Evans	BoM	Initial document
<u>09-Sep-2024</u>	<u>Bronwyn Evans</u>	<u>BoM</u>	<u>Update to refer to Centre Manager instead of Executive Officer, minor role changes</u>



Toukley Neighbourhood Centre

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