



Complaints Policy

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Great Barrier Reef Foundation's policy on handling complaints and provide a clear and accessible procedure for receiving, investigating and responding to complaints.

2 Scope

This policy applies to any complaint about the GBRF's operations and activities, GBRF staff (including contractors), consultants engaged by the GBRF, GBRF Board members and ventures or entities effectively controlled by the Foundation.

Complaints may originate internally from staff, contractors or consultants or externally from the public, supporters, funders, partner organisations or people in the communities in which GBRF operates.

This policy does not apply to workplace grievances involving GBRF employees and contractors. Workplace grievances will be dealt with in accordance with the Grievance Policy.

3 Policy

3.1 Definitions

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction or concern, where a response and some resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
Feedback	Refers to opinions, comments and suggestions about the GBRF's processes and activities.

3.2 Policy Statement

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) is committed to the highest standards of conduct and ethical behaviour and full compliance with the law in all aspects of its business. This policy is part of GBRF's commitment to achieving high standards of practice, being accountable to our stakeholders and continuous improvement and learning as an organisation

We are committed to promoting a culture that values feedback and complaints and gives importance to fair and effective resolution of complaints and concerns raised.

We are committed to ensuring that making a complaint is as easy as possible.

We are committed to maintaining complaints procedures that are managed in accordance with the principles of respect, fairness, responsiveness, transparency and efficiency.

We will provide:

- a clear and accessible complaints procedure
- time-bound processes for investigation, escalation (including the possibility of escalation to the Board) and response
- a process which is fair and avoids conflicts of interest and provides due process and natural justice for the complainant and the subject of the complaint, and
- prompt, firm, and fair corrective action where wrongdoing is identified.

3.3 Making a complaint

A complaint can be made via email to info@barrierreef.org or by phone on +61 7 3252 7555

We will accept and investigate complaints relating to our staff (including contractors), Board members and consultants engaged by the GBRF. Complaints about GBRF's projects, ventures, processes, decisions, systems and activities will also be accepted and investigated.

Each complaint will be responded to with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

3.4 Receiving, investigating and responding to complaints

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the Procedure outlined in this policy.

Complaints about GBRF staff and processes will be addressed by the Head of Corporate Services and/or Managing Director.

People making complaints will be:

- provided with information about our complaint handling process and what to expect
- listened to, treated with respect and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate
- provided with reasons for any decisions, and
- provided with options for redress or review.

We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

We will avoid conflicts of interest and ensure that the person handling a complaint is not the person whose conduct or service is not the subject of the complaint.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and, if possible and appropriate, provide advice about where such issues or complaints may be directed.

Internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision-maker.

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 and confidentiality obligations.

We will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any internal or external review options available to them, including notifying the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission \(ACNC\)](#) or lodging a complaint with the [Fundraising Institute of Australia \(FIA\)](#).

4 Procedure

The Complaints Procedure consists of five stages as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Complaints Procedure

Stage 1. Receive

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, we will record the complaint and its supporting information in the Complaints Register.

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant information and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires

Stage 2. Acknowledge

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within five business days. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate method (e.g. email, phone) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

Stage 3. Assess and investigate

3.1 Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we 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, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

3.2 Investigation

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

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
- Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, or
- 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.

Stage 4. Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we 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.

Stage 5. Close the complaint: document and analyse data

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), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes.

A summary of complaints will be shared with the Managing Director and reviewed by the GBRF's Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee annually.

5 Review

The GBRF Board will be responsible for the approval of the Complaints Policy. The Head of Corporate Services will be responsible for conducting a regular review of this policy in accordance with the GBRF Policy Framework. The Review Date of this policy is 3 years from the date of approval.

6 Related Policies

- Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality Policy
- Grievance Policy
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Refund & Cancellation Policy](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)

7 Authorisation

Endorsed by Managing Director, Anna Marsden	14 October 2020
Endorsed by Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee	20 October 2020
Approved by Board	29 October 2020

8 Version Control

Version	Date approved	Scope of amendment
1.0	29 October 2020	Draft Complaints Policy
1.1	3 November 2021	Minor adjustments to reflect current operational arrangements

Policy Category	Governance
Policy Owner	Board
Contact Officer	Head of Corporate Services