

M098 Feedback and Appeals Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of our Feedback and Appeals Policy is to outline the process for providing feedback and/or lodging an appeal to YWCA Australia and YWCA National Housing (YWCA).

This policy ensures that all employees are aware of and supported in understanding YWCA's position and processes, and that all users of YWCA services and those impacted by them can be confident that all concerns will be fully assessed and investigated.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and volunteers of YWCA (Staff). It is intended to support all external stakeholders including prospective clients or tenants, current clients or tenants, partner agencies and funding bodies.

3. Policy Aim

YWCA embraces all feedback provided to us. Feedback can include complaints, comments and compliments. YWCA recognises that everyone has the right to make a complaint or provide feedback about YWCA and our services and/or to appeal any decisions we make.

The overarching aims of this policy are;

- to ensure our client and tenant rights are upheld
- increase client and tenant satisfaction, and
- to strengthen client and tenant input into services.

We are committed to receiving, managing, and resolving complaints and appeals consistently, impartially, and promptly. YWCA complies with all relevant mandatory reporting and regulatory/statutory requirements in relation to feedback and appeal management.

4. Definitions

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| Advocate | a person who assists the client or tenant making a complaint. The advocate can be a friend, independent person, an employee or a person from an external advocacy service |
| Appeal | when a person asks for a review of a decision made by YWCA |
| Complaint | an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. It relates to a specific episode, occurrence or provision of service that has resulted in an impact on any individual or group. |

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| Complaint Register | a document or database/system that contains the details of all complaints raised including those made anonymously. The Manager lodges details of the complaint on the Register and updates the entry when the matter is resolved/closed |
| Comment | information about reactions to a product, a person's performance of a task, etc. which is used as a basis for improvement |
| Complainant | the person making a complaint |
| Compliment | an expression of satisfaction with one of YWCA's services or with the way the service has been delivered by one or more employees |
| Corrective Action | an action taken to preclude occurrences of an identified hazard or to prevent recurrence of a problem |
| Feedback | the collective term used for complaints, comments and compliments by YWCA |
| Employee concerned | the employee about whom the feedback has been received |
| Receiving employee | the employee who receives the feedback from the client or tenant or their representative |

5. Policy Principles:

- YWCA has a commitment to and a culture of continuous quality improvement.
- Feedback is welcomed and actively encouraged through surveys, feedback forms and ongoing client and/or tenant reviews.
- No person providing feedback will be disadvantaged or face discrimination from YWCA either at the time or after they have submitted their feedback, regardless of the issue being raised.
- The complaints process is fair and respectful to all parties ensuring impartiality, confidentiality and transparency. All complaints, simple or complex, will receive continuing attention and be resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- Information about our complaint process will be visible and accessible.
- Where appropriate and possible, complainants will be informed of the progress and outcome of their complaint. They have the right to appeal if they are not satisfied.
- Assistance will be provided for people who require support to provide feedback or lodge an appeal – this may include support to refer the matter to an external body.
- Complaints are recorded in local and master registers and are monitored to identify systemic issues and where applicable for regulatory requirements.
- Our clients have a right to appeal any decision made by YWCA regarding them and their situation and we are committed to assisting our clients to exercise that right.
- Regular review and improvement of our feedback system and reporting to our Board, ensures best practice service delivery and compliance with relevant national and state standards and quality frameworks.

6. Complaints

Complaints can be made in a variety of ways by any person, or their advocate, impacted by YWCA and its services YWCA will make no distinction in the manner of complaints based on the method in which the complaint was submitted. Methods of complaint can include in person, phone, email, letter or via our website.

We acknowledge that the effective handling of complaints enables learning and guides continuous improvement for our organisation and of our services.

Complaints will be reviewed to identify trends, risks and systemic issues. YWCA will implement improvements and take actions as appropriate from the feedback we receive to build and develop better services and client outcomes.

7. Appeals

Clients have the right to lodge an appeal if they disagree with a decision, and the decision is believed to breach the law (e.g., The Residential Tenancies Act, or Anti-Discrimination legislation), regulatory requirements and/or YWCA's policies and processes. The types of decisions that can be appealed include (but are not limited to):

- rent amount assessment
- rejection of transfer request
- not eligible for housing
- not selected for housing
- allocated inappropriate property

The line manager responsible for receiving the appeal will make a decision on whether the appeal has sufficient grounds for consideration.

Clients may also lodge an appeal if they are not happy with the outcome of a complaint, or the handling of a complaint conducted under the YWCA Complaints Procedure.

Clients will receive formal acknowledgement of receipt of their appeal as well as formal notification of the appeal determination. Clients have a right to appeal the determination, if they are unsatisfied and believe there is with sufficient grounds, and can have the decision reviewed by senior/executive leaders of YWCA.

Clients will receive information on where to lodge their appeal with an external body if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the YWCA appeal process and determination.

8. External Agencies

YWCA will always support our clients to exercise their rights and will help support them to access external agencies to do so should they wish to. The following are other avenues of review that clients of YWCA may wish to employ should they be dissatisfied with decisions and outcomes reached by YWCA.

Victoria

- Tenants Union of Victoria www.tuv.org.au 03 9416 2577
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission www.eoc.vic.gov.au

03 9281 7100 Free Call 1300 292 153

- Victorian Housing Registrar <https://www.vic.gov.au/housing-registrar> 03 7005 8984
- Office of the Victoria Information Commissioner www.ovic.gov.au 1300 006 842
- Ombudsman Victoria www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au 1800 806 314
- Council to Homeless Persons www.chp.org.au 1800 066 256

Queensland

- Queensland Housing Registrar (07) 3008 3450
- The Department of Justice and Attorney General—Dispute Resolution Branch 07 3239 6007 or Free call: 1800 017 288

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

- National Disability Insurance Scheme – Feedback and Complaints www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints 1800 800 110

9. Policy Implementation

This Policy links directly to the YWCA Feedback and Appeals Procedure which is to be followed when a complaint or feedback is received. The procedure outlines clear steps for employees to take when resolving complaints and appeals with the aim to resolve swiftly and informally where possible.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

| Who | Role | Responsibilities |
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| CEO | Oversight Reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reporting to the Board on complaint management and outcomes |
| General Manager /Executive Team Member | Oversight of operational complaint processes and approval of complaint resolution outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve resolution outcomes from complaints • Engage as required in complaint management • Manage internal and external relationships as required • Support and direct regional teams as required • Report to CEO on complaints and resolution process |
| Manager, Quality and Compliance | Support complaint process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Complaint Register • Monitor complaint outcomes • Report to Director on trends and outstanding complaints |
| Regional and other service managers | First point of contact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Complaint procedure. Engage with complainant to ensure resolution of complaint • Advise and seek guidance as required • Maintain local complaint register |
| Employees and Volunteers | Support and Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support clients, tenants and others to understand the complaints process • Engage in the investigation process as required. |

| Document Control Data | |
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| Policy Framework | |
| Responsible Body | Chief Executive Officer |
| Accountable Officer | General Manager, Community Housing |
| Application | All employees of YWCA |
| Supersedes | Previous local policies |
| Associated procedures and policies | Feedback Compliments and Complaints Procedure Feedback Compliments and Complaints Easy Read Child and Young Person Safety and Wellbeing Policy Child and Young Person Protection and Reporting Procedure |
| Legislation | Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) Housing Registrar (Vic): Performance Standards NRSCH: Evidence Guidelines and Regulatory Code Housing Act 1983 (VIC) National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018 Housing Act 2003 (QLD) Housing Regulation 2015 (QLD) Residential Tenancies and Rooming House Acc Act 2008 (Qld) Housing Act 1982 (NT) Residential Tenants Act 1999 (NT) Information Privacy Act 2009 Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Queensland Human Rights Act 2019 The Australian Consumer Law 2011 |

| Approval and Amendment History | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|------------|----------------|
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