

<b>Complaint &amp; Feedback Handling Policy</b>	<b>Effective date</b>	Sep 2021
	<b>Next review date</b>	Sep 2023
	<b>Sponsor</b>	People & Culture Manager
	<b>Board committee</b>	FARM
<b>Level / Class</b> <b>Corporate      Organisation</b>	<b>Approval / authorisation</b>	CEO

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the intent and approach of Australian Volunteers International (AVI) in relation to the receiving and handling of feedback and complaints from external stakeholders and to establish an explicit framework for their management.

## 2. SCOPE / PERSONS AFFECTED

This Policy covers the management of feedback (which includes compliments and suggestions for improvement) as well as complaints (expressions of dissatisfaction) regarding such things as:

- service provision,
- customer service,
- operating procedures,
- organisational performance,
- environmental and safety hazards and breaches,
- organisational accountability to values and principles of operation,
- website and communications,
- external stakeholders or visitors experience of AVI staff, contractors or subcontractors, conduct or performance

Feedback and complaints can be made from external and internal stakeholders which can include staff.

This Policy does not cover interpersonal staff grievances (including bullying, harassment and discrimination allegations), matters that relate to the employment relationship, or conduct or performance issues between staff. These matters are covered by Bullying, Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy, Code of Conduct, and the Enterprise Agreement.

This Policy does not cover WHS incident reporting for AVI staff in AVI workplaces. These incidents are covered in the AVI WHS Policy and WHS Manual.

The scope of this Policy covers all AVI stakeholders within Australia and overseas, including: the Board, the President (when appointed), Members, Executives, Employees, contractors, subcontractors, office volunteers, partner organisations, program participants including on the Australian Volunteers Program, supporters of AVI and any other interested members of the public.

### **3. PRINCIPLES**

This policy is based upon the principles underpinning AVI Code of Conduct, the ACFID Code of Conduct, certain principles specified in the ACFID Code of Conduct in relation to complaint handling (section 7.3.3) and AVI's articulated values of equity, social justice, diversity, inclusion, partnership and respect for human rights.

AVI acknowledges the value and importance of respectfully acknowledging feedback and complaints and operating under the principles of continuous quality improvement. AVI will provide and manage a responsive, timely, objective, and procedurally fair and lawful feedback and complaints management system.

### **4. POLICY**

AVI acknowledges its accountabilities to its various stakeholders and is committed to stakeholder engagement and responding to complaints and feedback in an effective and clearly defined manner. Accordingly, AVI will:

- ensure this policy is available to all stakeholders via the AVI website and internal communication channels for Melbourne and country office staff;
- provide accessible, safe and discreet points of contact for stakeholders in Australia and countries where AVI works.

In the event of a complaint being lodged with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee, AVI will:

- comply with the complaints handling process as set out in the ACFID Code of Conduct Guidance;
- comply with ACFID Code of Conduct Committee requests for information within all reasonable time limits set;
- comply with any corrective and disciplinary action agreed with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee, in the case of a breach of the Code;
- comply with requirements set by the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee to put in place measures to minimise the risk of the breach recurring.

### **5. WORKING WITH PARTNERS**

In the countries where we work, complaints can be made to AVI personnel in-country, through email or via the Stopline portal.

AVI works with partners and personnel in-country to ensure:

- Partners in-country understand AVI's Complaint Handling mechanisms, procedures and processes
- Due diligence checks are conducted to ensure Partners have adequate complaint handling processes in place organisationally
- Complaints are handled (where relevant) in line with AVI's requirements
- Complaints are recorded and reported where required to AVI

Where support is requested, AVI will consider and may work with partner organisations to support the development and implementation of complaint investigation processes.

Receiving complaints and feedback from program participants and stakeholders is important to AVI. It forms part of the monitoring and evaluation of our programs and projects. AVI will continue to work with our partners to strengthen their own feedback and complaints mechanisms where relevant.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board of Directors has ultimate responsibility for ensuring AVI's compliance with federal and state laws and any contracts, agreements or other mechanisms that are binding upon the organisation.

This policy reflects certain ACFID Code of Conduct requirements to which AVI, through its officers and employees, is duty-bound.

AVI's Organisational Leadership Team (OLT) and managers are responsible for ensuring this policy is effectively communicated and followed. Employees of AVI are responsible for carrying out their duties in line with this or any other AVI policy.

## **7. GUIDELINES**

- For program participants, the relevant complaint/grievance handling or dispute settlement processes should be followed, according to the program-specific code of conduct, handbook or agreement; otherwise AVI's general complaint handling procedure can be followed as set out in the Complaints Handling Process.
- If any complaint entails an alleged breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct, the complainant should be advised of their ability to lodge a complaint with the [ACFID Code of Conduct Committee](#).

## **8. EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

Compliance with this policy will be assessed annually as part of the annual compliance self-assessment process under the ACFID Code of Conduct requirements.

Criteria for assessment will include:

- verification of appropriate systems and procedures across AVI to ensure policy compliance
- review of any relevant compliments or complaints.

Any risks of non-compliance with this policy are primarily in terms of AVI's reputation and brand; other disciplinary actions may follow relating to AVI's signatory status under the ACFID Code of Conduct and financial penalties associated with breaches of certain laws.

## **9. RELATED POLICIES**

- AVI Enterprise Agreement 2014 (Section 34: Dispute and Grievance Resolution)
- Australian Volunteers Program Guidebook
- AVI Privacy Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy
- Fraud and Corruption Control Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Australian Volunteers Code of Conduct

- Student Program Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy
- Whistle-blowers Policy

## 10. REFERENCES

- ACFID Code of Conduct
- ACFID Code of Conduct Implementation Guidance
- ACFID Guidance for the Development of a Complaints Handling Policy

## 11. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision Number	Change(s)	Reference Section(s)
12 Sep 2012	1.0	New policy	
28 May 2014	1.1	Minor wording amendments	3, 5, 6.2
6 Feb 2015	1.2	Definitional updates; clarification of awareness, training and in-country aspects; procedural update	5, 6, 8
7 Feb 2017	1.3	Sponsor and Board committee update	-
6 Dec 2018	1.4	Updated sections and word amendments	3, 6, 7, 8, 9
August 2020	2.0	Re-write to include feedback in general.	
July 2021	2.1	Addition of new ACFID Code of Conduct Verifier	3
		Addition of section 'Working with Partners'	5