



Psychotherapy & Counselling
Federation of Australia

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set the framework within which PACFA works to respond to people coming to it with criticisms of its practices, allegations of breaches of its rules or policies, or any other expression of concern to do with its operations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, committees, members and volunteers of PACFA.

This policy does not apply to grievances and complaints brought about the ethical practice of members and registrants. These matters are dealt with under PACFA's Professional Conduct Procedures.

POLICY

PACFA believes that it is accountable to its members and stakeholders for the integrity and efficiency of its operations. Any person drawing attention to shortcomings in its operations is performing an invaluable service and should be encouraged and supported. Any person working for PACFA as an employee or a volunteer will be expected to cooperate with the organisation's processes for resolving these matters.

PACFA will as far as practicable ensure that:

- Every complaint received by PACFA under this Policy will be received by a Complaints Officer with appropriate training.
- Every person submitting a complaint to the Complaints Officer will receive every assistance in maximizing the effect of their complaint under the applicable procedures. (The Complaints officer is not, however, the complainant's advocate, but rather a facilitator).
- Every complaint received by PACFA will be initially directed to the person or section it properly concerns for a formal response (for example, the responsible Manager or Committee Chair).
- If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with this first response, the formal complaint process will be followed.
- Any person who is the subject of, or who is otherwise involved in, any such complaint against the operations of the organisation will receive procedural fairness.
- Findings from complaints will be reported to the Board at its next meeting or no later than one month from the time of resolution of the complaint, together with any recommendations for action. The Board shall receive any such reports and consider any such recommendations.

- Any defect in the organisation’s policies or procedures revealed by the complaints process, whether or not it involves a breach of any of the applicable law, rule, guideline, policy, constitutional provision, code, or by-law, will as far as practicable be corrected as soon as possible.

AUTHORISATION



Zoe Krupka
PACFA Secretary
25 May 2020

Version	1	Approved by Board on	25 June 2020
Responsible person	Secretary	Scheduled review date	25 June 2022



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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Board** is responsible for:

- nominating a Complaints Officer for PACFA
- ensuring that the Complaints Officer receives appropriate resourcing and training for that role.

Complaints Officer is responsible for:

- receiving, documenting, and processing complaints concerning PACFA from any person
- assisting the person to lodge the complaint
- directing the complaint to the relevant person for response
- communicating the initial response back to the complainant

Complaint Investigators are responsible for:

- conducting an investigation process when required
- communicating findings relating to such complaints to the complainant.

Employees, members and volunteers are responsible for:

- responding in writing to complaints directed to them for response in a timely manner
- assisting the Complaints Officer and the Complaint Investigator when requested

Management is responsible for:

- Providing support and management for the Complaints Officer in their role
- Ensuring the Complaints Officer and Complaints Investigators receive appropriate training in complaints management

PROCESSES

1. Any employee, member or volunteer of PACFA shall, upon receiving a verbal or written complaint from any person, refer that person to the Complaints Officer, unless the complaint would involve the Complaints Officer in any conflict of interest,¹ in which case the matter will be dealt with by the PACFA Operations Manager.
2. Upon receiving a verbal or written complaint from any person, the Complaints Officer will:
 - a. Ask the complainant whether they wish the matter to be considered as feedback to PACFA which will be taken into account to improve PACFA's policies and practices, or whether they wish to invoke PACFA's formal complaints procedure (a copy of which shall be provided to the complainant)

¹ This caveat applies to but shall not be repeated in every subsequent provision.

- b. Depending on which of these two options is chosen, request the complainant to fill out the Feedback or Complaint section of the Complaints and Feedback Form and provide their contact details.
 - c. In the event of the complainant having a disability, having difficulties with language or literacy, or in any other way being disadvantaged by the formal procedures, the Complaints Officer shall as far as possible assist them in filling out the complaint or documenting a verbal complaint on the form.
 - d. The Complaints Officer shall then ask the complainant whether they consent to their identification as complainant in the course of any subsequent proceedings, explaining that
 - i. if anonymity is sought, while all efforts will be taken to maintain this, the subject of the complaint may be able to make deductions from the nature of the complaint, and the maintenance of secrecy cannot be guaranteed; and
 - ii. if anonymity is maintained, this may limit the options for any subsequent investigation.
3. The Complaints Officer shall then identify which framework(s) should apply to the complaint, selecting from:
- a. complaints about PACFA's services, activities, policies, or performance
 - b. claims from any party that PACFA's policies have been breached by some employee, volunteer, or section of the organisation
 - c. claims from any member that PACFA's constitution or by-laws have been, or are proposed to be, breached
 - d. claims from any employee that PACFA is in breach of
 - i. state or federal industrial relations law
 - ii. health and safety requirements
(in which case the Complaints Officer should refer the matter to the relevant PACFA Human Resources procedures, conclude the complaints procedure, and notify the complainant)
 - e. claims from any party that PACFA, or any of its employees, members or volunteers, is in breach of the criminal code
(in which case the Complaints Officer should refer the matter to the police, conclude the complaints procedure, and notify the complainant)
4. The Complaints Officer shall request a response to the complaint from the person responsible for the area to which the complaint refers, for example the responsible Manager or Committee Chair and provide the response to the complainant.
5. If the complaint is not resolved, the Complaints Officer will determine whether
- a. the issues at stake are sufficiently material to justify further investment in initiating an investigation: and
 - b. the prospect of obtaining determinative testimony is sufficient to justify further investment in initiating an investigation
6. Where an investigation is appropriate, the Complaints Officer will identify the most appropriate person to undertake the investigation. For a complex complaints, more than one person may be appointed to investigate the complaint.
7. The Complaints Investigator(s) will consider written information provided by the parties to the complaint and seek further information from the parties to the complaint and third parties if required.
8. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Complaints Investigator(s) will make a preliminary finding.

- 9. The Complaint Investigator(s) will provide that finding to the complainant and to the person(s) complained of, and considering any responses in the preparation of their final decision as to whether the complaint
 - a. Has been made out
 - b. Has been made out in part
 - c. Has not been made out
- 10. The final decision of the Complaint Investigator(s) will be documented in a Complaint Findings report which will be provided to the complainant and the person or section complained of.
- 11. The maximum time to complete an investigation is 45 business days.
- 12. The Complaints Investigator(s) shall report their findings to the Board at its next meeting or no later than one month from the time of resolution of the complaint, together with any recommendations for action. The Board shall receive any such reports and consider any such recommendations.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
- Whistleblower Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedures
- Grievance and Discipline Policy and Procedures

AUTHORISATION



Maria Brett
CEO

25 June 2020

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Responsible person	CEO	Scheduled review date	25 June 2022

Complaints and Feedback Form

This form is to be completed to make a complaint or to provide feedback about PACFA personnel, services or activities. The form is designed to collect sufficient information for a PACFA to consider the complaint or feedback.

Please see PACFA's [Complaints and Feedback Procedures](#) for more information about making a complaint about PACFA.

Before completing this form, please contact PACFA to discuss your complaint and a Complaints Officer will be appointed to assist you.

Have you spoken to someone at PACFA about your Complaint? Yes / No

If Yes, who did you speak to at the PACFA Office: _____

If No, please contact PACFA on 03 9486 3077 or email admin@pacfa.org.au for a call back.

Details of the person with a complaint			
Surname:		First Name:	
Address:		State:	Postcode:
Email:		Phone No:	
Main language:		Interpreter required:	Yes / No

Details of your complaint or feedback	
Who or what are you complaining about?	
Do you wish to:	
Provide feedback to help PACFA improve our policies, services, activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
OR	
Make a formal complaint to achieve a particular resolution	<input type="checkbox"/>
OPTION 1 – PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO PACFA	
Please provide details of your feedback here	

What changes would you like to see as a result of your feedback?

OPTION 2 – MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT TO PACFA

Please provide details of your complaint here

What resolution are you seeking by making a formal complaint?

Confidentiality

Do you wish to be identified as the complainant or do you wish to complain or provide feedback anonymously?

- If anonymity is sought, while all efforts will be taken to maintain this, the subject of the complaint may be able to make deductions from the nature of the complaint, and the maintenance of secrecy cannot be guaranteed; and
- If anonymity is maintained, this may limit the options for any subsequent investigation.

I consent to my identity as the complainant being disclosed to the person(s) I am complaining about

OR

I wish to complain anonymously

YOUR SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Please sign electronically or print and sign to return this form to PACFA.

Please send this form to the PACFA Complaints Officer at complaints@pacfa.org.au