



Complaints Policy

Purpose

Our Complaints Policy purpose is to be a guide to what is define as feedback, complaint or dispute, and procedures for handling in a fair and equitable manner. A copy of this policy will be given to all Board members, volunteers and employees prior to commencing their position with WFAV.

Scope

This policy applies to all WFAV activities within Australia and Ethiopia. It forms part of the WFAV governance framework and applies to staff and volunteers . This policy adheres to relevant ACFID clauses identified in the WFAV compliance matrix.

WFAV believes that such mentioned above, from here will be defined as “feedback”, and while not desirable, will form part of WFAV quality assurance process and can assist with continuous improvement of the organisation.

Policy

In line with the Complaints Policy intent,

- WFAV is committed to an environment in which feedback, complaints or disputes, can be raised and received in a constructive manner and resolved in a mutually agreeable and timely way.
- All feedback will be taken seriously.
- All complainants or those giving feedback will be treated respectfully
- All feedback will be treated confidentially in line with our Privacy Policy. However, in some circumstances we may need to share your information with the appropriate agencies e.g. police, parents, Municipal Government and/or other authorities.
- All feedback will be investigated with further action being taken after the investigation, if necessary.
- All feedback will be addressed and managed in a timely manner, considered acceptable by all relevant parties e.g. complainant, WFAV Board and ACFID, ACNC and other governing bodies.
- Feedback may be made by anyone, in person, via email, in writing, by phone to the CEO or any Board Member. Feedback may also be made through an advocate nominated by the complainant or feedback provider.
- Receiving feedback and responding to them is central to our accountability and continuous improvement
- A skilled interpreter is available to assist with in country stakeholders who wish to share any feedback with the CEO or to Board Members.

How can a Feedback be Made?

Feedback regarding WFAV’s activities or any member or employee of WFAV behaviour, may be made at any time:

- Verbally to any Board member,
- By email to president@waterforavillage.net.au
- By mail to PO Box 91, New Town, Tasmania 7008
- WFAV breaches of ACFID’s Code of Conduct can be lodged at complaints@acfid.asn.au.



In Ethiopia, the CEO conducts regular ongoing feedback research with Beneficiaries, Municipal Government and Contractors, via an interpreter, to uncover and address feedback. Many are illiterate, so it is therefore crucial that this research takes place and always forms an integral part of each season's project schedule. Additionally, feedback may be given at any time to the:

- WFAV CEO or In-Country Manager when in the field
- Relevant Municipal Government - the feedback will then be passed to WFAV via the interpreter
- Water Specialist for the area - the feedback will then be passed to WFAV via the interpreter.

Procedures

1. In the first instance, feedback/disputes will be reported to the Board and a Board member nominated to investigate (CEO in Ethiopia and default in Australia is the President).
2. Each feedback will be investigated. The person handling the feedback will establish the facts and gather relevant supporting information, and if necessary, interview those involved.
3. After the investigation, if it is felt that there is a case to answer (Board majority vote), then the appropriate disciplinary and other organisational policies and procedures will be followed as determined by the CEO and/or Board, and in line with WFAV policies. All relevant laws in Australia (precedence) and in Ethiopia, WFAV Policies, ACNC and ACFID Code compliance requirements, will be taken into account in determining the appropriate action and response.
4. Complainants will receive a response outlining the outcome of the feedback, or if it is a more complex matter, when it will be investigated further and the likely timeline for its resolution, or to whom the matter has been referred in the case of legal or code compliance matters. In some instances where complainant is in remote Ethiopia, direct feedback may be difficult to receive, however through our in-country contacts, feedback will make its way back to the executive.
5. Disclosure of very serious feedback relating to our program/in-country programs may be referred to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the peak body for Non-governmental Organisations (NGO's) in Australia, or to local in-country authorities. Serious matters may also be referred to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), ATO, ASIC, WorkCover or other relevant authority for guidance.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of a feedback, they may make an appeal to an external third party such as Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) or the Municipal Government.
7. If the parties concerned are unable to mutually resolve the feedback or dispute it will be referred to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee for suspected breaches of the Code by a signatory organisation.
8. Feedback received and the resolution process followed for each feedback will be documented and presented at the next Board meeting for review and further action if considered necessary e.g. continuous improvement.