

IRF Complaints Policy

13.1 Policy

The International RiverFoundation is committed to delivering transparent and quality services to all partners and recipients of charitable works. The IRF will endeavour to respond in a timely and meaningful manner to any feedback or complaints provided either through the Contact page on the website or via Social Media (i.e. Facebook and Twitter).

Complaints are a valuable source of feedback and an important tool for maintaining the integrity of the organisation and for providing opportunities for staff development.

13.2 Scope

This Complaints Management Policy applies to all paid or unpaid staff and Board members of the IRF. This policy does not cover IRF partner organisations within Australia or overseas, and any complaints regarding their staff or activities must be directed to those individual organisations. For a list of IRF partner organisation please see the IRF website.

13.3 Guidelines/Principals

Wherever possible, complaints should be submitted in writing to the IRF so that all aspects of the complaint can be accurately understood and investigated. Verbal and anonymous complaints will be accepted.

- All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with the privacy principles of the IRF.
- All paid or volunteer staff at IRF will be fully trained in the formal IRF complaints management procedures.
- Information regarding the contact process and procedures for complaints to IRF will be made available on the IRF website.
- IRF will maintain an up to date complaints register which will be reported annually to the IRF Governing body.
- Complaints will be dealt with in the timeframes outlined in this policy
- Complaints will be investigated without prejudice to any other right a complainant may have.
- Complaints will be dealt with confidentially and complainants respectfully treated.
- Personal information collected as part of the complaints process will not be released publicly.
- Complainants will not suffer any reprisal from IRF or its employees for making a complaint.
- All parties to a complaint will receive information that clearly explains how and why an outcome was reached.
- The complainant will be informed of any further review mechanism that is available should he/she be dissatisfied with action taken by IRF in relation to their complaint.
- Complaint data will be analysed to identify systemic issues that need to be addressed in order to improve performance and delivery of services.

- Where potential improvements are identified, such feedback shall be communicated to the IRF team for implementation.
- The IRF complaints process will be documented in simple, plain English terminology.
- If the complainant's first language is not English than every effort will be made to ensure that information is provided in the necessary format where possible.

13.4 Procedures

These procedures are based on a staged approach to receiving, recording, processing, responding to and reporting on complaints. The process recognizes that, before a complaint is lodged, every effort will be made to resolve an issue at the point of contact.

The process is as follows:

1. Staff may be able to resolve any complaints in the first instance of being contacted by a third party. Should a complaint or feedback be resolved by the staff member in this first instance no formal complaint is required to be lodged. The staff member will then record the issue and resolution in the Complaints Register.
2. If the staff member cannot resolve the complaint or feedback in the first instance than IRF will advice the third party to lodge a formal complaint in writing via the complaint mechanisms on the IRF website. By lodging the complaint in writing this will ensure that all aspects of the complaint can then be documented and understood by all parties. The complaint will be registered in the Formal IRF Complaints Registry and the outcomes recorded in this registry.
 - a. The complaint will be acknowledged within two (2) business days (Monday – Friday, excluding public holidays)
 - b. IRF will attempt to resolve the complaint within four (4) weeks and will keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and resolution. A formal written response will be provided recording the outcomes
 - c. Once the complainant has been advised of the outcome, and if they are still not satisfied the IRF will recommend that the complainant escalate the complaint to either the Chairman of the IRF Board or to ACFID.
3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the IRF complaints process then they will be advised of their options to escalate the complaint.
4. Should a complainant believe that their complaint sufficient warrants by-passing the IRF CEO and staff, then the Chair of the IRF Board can be conducted. IRF Board names and contact details are listed on the IRF website www.riverfoundation.org.au.