

Inclusion Australia is committed to managing complaints in an accountable, transparent, timely and meaningful way.

Inclusion Australia is committed to the following complaints management principles:

- ensure complaints can be lodged without fear of retribution
- protect confidentiality and privacy of complainants
- are fair, objective and complaints are assessed professionally
- ensure complaints are resolved in a timely fashion
- ensure the application of natural justice
- integrate complaints information into business improvement processes

### **Scope**

All complaints regarding Inclusion Australia are within the scope of this policy. This policy does not replace, modify or revoke any legislative, contractual or other Australian Government requirements.

The following are not classified as complaints and are out of scope of this policy:

- Feedback obtained during consultation
- Queries and requests for information

### **Applicability**

This policy and supporting documentation applies to all Inclusion Australia employees, including temporary, casual and contracted staff.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to provide:

- a) A uniform and effective mechanism for the management and prompt resolution of complaints;
- b) Meaningful management information designed to highlight adverse trends and systemic problems associated with Inclusion Australia's policies or services. This

information will be considered, and if appropriate, used to improve Inclusion Australia's processes.

## **Rationale**

Inclusion Australia's mission is to champion the rights of people with intellectual disability in Australia and support their full participation in Australian life.

Feedback about our policies and services is highly valued as a means of gauging their efficiency and effectiveness and identifying areas for continuous improvement.

This policy acknowledges member organisations, employees and all other parties who deal with Inclusion Australia have a right to raise concerns and make complaints about Inclusion Australia's policies and services.

Inclusion Australia's Complaints Policy and Procedure is consistent with the Australian Standard ISO 10002:2006 *Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations*

## **Policy and Procedural Elements**

Complaints management in Inclusion Australia reflects the following Inclusion Australia Principles.

### **A. Visibility and Access**

1. Complaints about Inclusion Australia's policy or services can be lodged by any member organisation, client, employee or other stakeholder.
2. Information regarding where and how to lodge a complaint and anticipated response times is readily available through established Inclusion Australia communication mechanisms such as the Internet and through the Inclusion Australia Office.
3. Unless there are legislative, contractual or other Australian Government requirements, complaints are accepted either both verbally and in writing as well as through a variety of means such as face-to-face, by telephone, text message, by letter, email or fax.
4. Inclusion Australia ensures the complaint process is flexible and no one is excluded from making a complaint. People from Culturally and Linguistic Diverse backgrounds; those with a learning disability or those who have decreased literacy skills may only be able to make a complaint in a particular communication format or mode such as through an interpreter, audio CD or audio tape. Inclusion Australia staff, where appropriate and necessary will assist complainants in the process of lodging a complaint.

## **B. Responsiveness**

1. Complaints can be of a sensitive and complex nature and may require detailed investigation and analysis. Timeframes for the management of complaints are to be reasonable and may not be excessively drawn out. Inclusion Australia will meet legislative, contractual and other Australian Government requirements.
2. Inclusion Australia staff will be trained in complaints handling and will be provided with information and education through established Inclusion Australia mechanisms such as induction training and information sessions. This ensures a consistent approach is followed in the management and resolution of complaints across Inclusion Australia.

## **C. Assessment and Action**

1. All complaints are managed in accordance with the principles detailed in section 1 of this policy.
2. Upon receiving a complaint, Inclusion Australia staff must take reasonable steps to ensure that the complaint is properly understood and seek clarification or additional information from the complainant where required.
3. Complaints are assessed, recorded and reported by Inclusion Australia's Executive Director. A complaint received about the service of a particular Inclusion Australia employee is assessed and investigated by the Executive Director or where the complainant is about Executive Director the President.
4. If Inclusion Australia cannot address the complaint, where possible, the complaint will be referred to the appropriate external agency (such as FaCSIA).

## **D. Feedback**

1. The progress of the complaint is monitored until the outcome has been communicated to the complainant and all reasonable avenues have been exhausted.
2. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome they can appeal to the next level:
  - Executive Director
  - President
  - Board Executive
  - Full Board
  - FaCSIA

3. Inclusion Australia ensures continued improvement in its administration through meaningful feedback within its structure about potential improvements identified as a result of complaints.

### **Monitoring Effectiveness**

1. Complaint trends for the organisation are reported to the Executive of the Board on a regular basis.
2. Executive Director is responsible for implementing the Complaints Management Framework within Inclusion Australia.
3. Inclusion Australia will regularly monitor the quality and effectiveness of the Organisation's Complaints Management Framework and revise relevant components where appropriate.

### **Benefits**

This policy provides a structured framework for managing complaints, in compliance with the Australian Standard ISO 10002:2006 *Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations*. It also provides a means to continuously improve the Inclusion Australia's policies and services.

### **Contact Details:**

Executive Director

Mark Pattison

[mark.pattison@ncid.org.au](mailto:mark.pattison@ncid.org.au)

0407 406 647

President

Kevin Stone

[kevin.stone@valid.org.au](mailto:kevin.stone@valid.org.au)

0418 562 922

## Definitions

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Complainant</b>	The person who makes the complaint.
<b>Complaint</b>	The expression of dissatisfaction, orally or in writing, about the policies or services of Inclusion Australia or its staff.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Access to the information is controlled and the information does not have to be of a personal nature.
<b>External complaint</b>	The complainant is making the complaint as a client, as part of a member organisation or as other stakeholder, rather than as an employee of Inclusion Australia.
<b>Internal complaint</b>	The complainant is making the complaint as an employee of Inclusion Australia rather than as a member organisation of Inclusion Australia.
<b>Natural justice</b>	The process by which a fair assessment is made by an objective and unbiased decision maker who is in possession of all the pertinent facts and details of the situation. It is concerned with ensuring that decisions affecting an individual's rights and interests are reached only after the individual has been made aware of the allegations made against him/her and has had the opportunity to present his/her claims in relation to the allegation/s and this response has been fully considered. It also requires that a decision maker should have no personal interest in the matter to be decided, have no bias as to the outcome and act in good faith throughout the process.
<b>Privacy</b>	The information is of a personal nature and reasonable steps are taken to protect the personal information from loss, unauthorised access, use or disclosure.
<b>Systemic Problem</b>	A deficiency in an agencies administrative process, rather than an error in judgement by an officer, which causes or contributes to a complaint

## References

Australian Standard ISO 10002:2006 *Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations*