

HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED

GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE 2025

ACN: 689 132 778

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any grievances raised by board members, directors, members, beneficiaries, or stakeholders associated with HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED are handled in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED is committed to fostering a positive environment where concerns can be freely expressed and resolved in a professional and confidential manner.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals involved with HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED, including but not limited to:

- Board members and directors
- Members
- Beneficiaries or service users
- Any other stakeholders involved in the HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED's activities

It covers grievances relating to:

- Conduct of other board members, directors, or members
- Organisational practices or decisions
- Discrimination, harassment, or bullying
- Service delivery complaints

DEFINITIONS

Grievance: A concern or complaint raised by an individual related to the conduct of other board members, directors, members, or service delivery.

Complainant: The person lodging a grievance.

Respondent: The individual(s) against whom the grievance is lodged.

Investigator: A designated person responsible for investigating the grievance.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Fairness and Impartiality:** Grievances will be handled without bias, ensuring all parties are treated fairly.
- **Confidentiality:** HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED will respect the confidentiality of all parties involved, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis.
- **Timeliness:** All grievances will be acknowledged and addressed promptly.
- **No Retaliation:** Individuals raising grievances in good faith will not be subject to any form of retaliation.
- **Transparency:** The process of addressing grievances will be transparent, ensuring that all involved understand the steps being taken.

PROCEDURE

Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, individuals are encouraged to resolve grievances informally before escalating to formal procedures. Informal discussions between the complainant and respondent can often resolve misunderstandings or concerns.

Steps for Informal Resolution:

1. The complainant should raise their concern directly with the respondent or a board member (if appropriate).
2. The board member may facilitate a meeting between the complainant and the respondent to discuss and resolve the issue.

3. If the issue is resolved informally, no further action will be required unless the complainant or the HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED wishes to keep a record for future reference.

Formal Grievance Lodgement

If the grievance is not resolved informally or the complainant prefers a formal approach, they may submit a formal grievance.

Steps for Formal Grievance:

1. **Lodgement:** The complainant must submit the grievance in writing, detailing the nature of the complaint, parties involved, dates, and any relevant information.
 - Grievances should be submitted to the designated Grievance Officer or a board member.
2. **Acknowledgment:** The Grievance Officer will acknowledge receipt of the grievance within 5 working days.
3. **Preliminary Review:** The Grievance Officer will review the grievance to assess if it falls within the scope of the policy and if formal investigation is warranted. If necessary, they will appoint an independent investigator.
4. **Investigation:** A thorough investigation will be conducted by the Investigator, who will:
 - Gather relevant information, including interviewing the complainant, respondent, and witnesses (if any).
 - Review documentation, policies, and any relevant records.
5. **Decision and Outcome:** Based on the investigation, the Investigator will prepare a report with findings and recommendations for action. The Grievance Officer or appropriate board member will review and make a final decision.
 - If the grievance is upheld, appropriate actions (such as mediation, training, disciplinary action, or changes in procedures) will be implemented.
 - If the grievance is not upheld, the reasons will be communicated to the complainant.

External Mediation and Support

In cases where the grievance is complex or cannot be resolved internally, HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED may engage an external mediator or refer the matter to relevant authorities. External mediation can be arranged through recognised QLD-based organisations that provide professional and independent mediation services, including:

- **Queensland Dispute Resolution Centres (DRCs):** Offering community-based mediation services across QLD.

Far North Queensland Dispute Resolution Centre

Level 1, State Government Office Building 10-12, McLeod Street Cairns Qld 4870

drc.fnq@justice.qld.gov.au

1800 671 680

North Queensland Dispute Resolution Centre

8 Blackhawk Boulevard Thuringowa Central Qld 4817

drc.nq@justice.qld.gov.au

1800 809 605

Mackay-Whitsundays Dispute Resolution Centre

Old Court House 12 Brisbane Street Mackay Qld 4740

drc.mkywhit@justice.qld.gov.au

1800 501 576

Central Queensland Dispute Resolution Centre

Courts Precinct 46 East Street Rockhampton Qld 4700

drc.central@justice.qld.gov.au

1800 817 927

Wide Bay Dispute Resolution Centre

Level 1, Brendan Hansen Building, 50-54 Main Street Pialba Qld 4655

drc.wb@justice.qld.gov.au

1800 681 109

South Queensland Dispute Resolution Centre

Level 1 363 George Street Brisbane Qld 4001

drc.sq@justice.qld.gov.au

1800 017 288

- **Queensland Ombudsman:** Can investigate complaints about the administrative actions of Queensland public agencies, including non-profit organisations where applicable.

<https://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au/>
 Level 18/53 Albert St, Brisbane City QLD 4000, Australia
 +61 7 3005 7000
- **Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC):** Provides a range of services, including dispute resolution for human rights complaints and discrimination issues.

<https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/>
 Level 20/53 Albert St, Brisbane City QLD 4000, Australia
 +61 1300 130 670
- **Legal Aid Queensland:** Offers mediation services for specific issues and legal advice for disputes.

legalaid.qld.gov.au
 1300 65 11 88

Mediators from these organisations are impartial and help facilitate discussions between parties to reach a fair and mutually agreed resolution. The costs of engaging an external mediator, if any, will be covered by HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED, unless otherwise agreed.

Right to Appeal

If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the outcome, they may lodge an appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of receiving the outcome, detailing the grounds for appeal (e.g., procedural errors, new evidence, perceived unfairness).

Steps for Appeal:

1. **Submission:** The appeal must be submitted to the Board of Directors, or an independent panel designated by the HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED.
2. **Review:** The appeal will be reviewed, and an independent panel may conduct a further investigation if warranted.

3. **Final Decision:** The panel's decision will be final, and both the complainant and respondent will be informed of the outcome in writing.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD KEEPING

All grievances, investigations, and outcomes will be documented and stored securely by HFI SUPPORT AUSTRALIA LIMITED. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process, and access to grievance records will be limited to those directly involved in the investigation and resolution.

REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This Grievance Policy and Procedure will be reviewed annually or as required to ensure it remains effective and compliant with relevant laws and regulations.