

## Complaints and Appeals Management Policy

### Purpose:

This policy governs the actions of CAA when it receives a complaint or appeal regarding staff, or services it provides. CAA will respond and act confidentially, professionally and responsibly in the management of general complaints regarding staff, services or products it provides.

### Scope:

This document will be supported by all CAA staff including contractors.

### Policy/Procedure:

#### What is a complaint v an appeal?

For the purpose of this policy:

- a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organisation to CAA, relating to the activities of CAA, where a response is expected.
- an appeal is a request by a Provider to CAA for reconsideration of a decision it has made relating to that Provider's certification.

#### Receipt of a Complaint or Appeal

A complaint/appeal can be made in several ways:

- Providers can email [operations@communityaudits.com.au](mailto:operations@communityaudits.com.au) to lodge a complaint/appeal or provide other feedback.
- Providers can discuss their complaint/appeal or feedback with any member of the CAA office or auditing team who will escalate it according to the processes below.
- If a Provider does not wish to address the complaint or appeal directly with CAA, they can contact the relevant body:  
JAS-ANZ                      1800 805 154  
NDIS Commission        1800 035 544  
ACIA                            contact@acia.net.au

Where possible, CAA staff member should seek to obtain key information about the complaint or appeal including (but not limited to):

- The name and contact details of the person making the complaint or appeal (and their role);
- The nature of the complaint or appeal – specifically, whether it is:
  - a general complaint about CAA services, and/or
  - allegation of non-conformance with audit
- The relevant date of occurrence;
- The action/resolution the complainant or appellant is seeking;
- Whether the complainant or appellant wants the complaint to remain confidential;

### **Complaints Handling Process:**

The General Manager or delegate will be informed, and will;

- Document the complaint or appeal into the Complaints Register
- Acknowledge any complaint or appeal within 24hrs of receipt initially by phone if possible and then in writing advising the complainant that at any stage they can escalate their complaint or appeal to JAS-ANZ
- Ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a client, or been employed by a client will not be used by CAA to review or approve the resolution of a complaint for that client within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment

All complaints received by CAA will be acted on (following the procedures above) within three days of receipt of the complaint

The decision resolving the complaint shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, person(s) not involved in the activities related to the complaint, in the first instance being the General Manager or delegate

CAA will ensure the complainant is kept informed of progress in resolving the complaint during the investigation process and potential actions, and whenever possible CAA shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the complaint process to the complainant

Any complaint outcome which is not satisfactory to the complainant can be escalated and referred directly to the CAA Board for final resolution, thereby falling under the appeal management process

### **Certification Appeals Process**

The Appeals process will only be implemented after significant effort has been made by CAA and the organisation to resolve the matter.

Appeals will be resolved within 4 weeks post notification ensuring that the appellant is kept informed throughout the process and final resolution provided in writing.

All appeals will be directed initially to the General Manager or appropriate delegate. Upon receipt of an appeal, the General Manager shall:

- acknowledge the appeal (by phone, and in writing advising the complainant that at any stage they can escalate their appeal to JAS-ANZ)
- register the appeal in the Complaints Management Register
- advise the Audit Team Leader involved
- appoint an independent technical expert (usually the External Risk Committee) to coordinate and manage the process as required
- The General Manager shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal to be provided to the External Risk Committee for consideration
- The General Manager shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal and shall provide the appellant with progress reports and the result of the appeal

Submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. The appeals-handling process includes the following elements and methods:

- an outline of the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions need to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of previous similar appeals
- tracking and recording appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them
- ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken

The decision to be communicated to the appellant will be made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.

CAA will take any subsequent action needed to resolve the appeal.

### **Aged Complaints**

Should a complaint not have been resolved within three months of the date of complaint (aged complaints) it is to be transferred to JAS-ANZ and the complainant/appellant advised accordingly;

Aged complaints are to be referred to JAS-ANZ as follows:

- original complaint;
- records of the review of the complaint;
- response to the complainant;
- any other records that inform the background to the complaint.

JAS-ANZ may at its discretion deal with any complaint that is referred to it at the level of the secretariat, the Accreditation Review Board or, if the matter is sufficiently grave, the Governing Board.

Failure to refer an aged complaint would result in a major nonconformity. Suspension of accreditation may apply to any accredited body which:

- fails to maintain a complaints system;
- suppresses or conceals records of complaints;
- fails to abide by any direction arising from a valid referred complaint.

### **Performance**

- All actions regarding complaints/appeals are to be recorded in the CAA Complaints Register.

### **References:**

*National Disability Scheme Insurance (Approved Quality Auditors Scheme) Guidelines 2018*

*JAS-ANZ Accreditation Manual 2020*

*CAA Complaints Register*

*AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013 Conformity Assessment-Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.*

*ISO/IEC 17000: 2020*