



Policy: Complaints

Approved by: Board

Date: November 2014

Scope: WaterAid Australia and
WaterAid Australian
managed Country
Programs

Next review: November 2020

Responsibility: Chief Executive

Complaints Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. WaterAid Australia is committed to ensuring the accessibility of its Complaints Policy, procedures and systems for making a complaint, across the breadth of our work
- 1.2. We try to ensure that our stakeholders can hold us to account and in doing so we will improve the quality of our work.
- 1.3. WaterAid Australia strives to uphold the highest standards of excellence in all that it does but recognises that this cannot always be the case. When we make a mistake we want and need to be informed. We will use the information to endeavour to put things right and to help us to become more effective.
- 1.4. This policy should be read in conjunction with WaterAid's Whistleblower's Policy, Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by WaterAid Australia or its staff, volunteers or anybody directly involved in the delivery of our work. It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed.
- 2.2. The Complainant. A complaint can be made by any supporter, partner organisation, community or individual with whom we work or any member of the public whether an individual, company or other entity in Australia or anywhere else in the world. Any of these people or entities is hereafter referred to as the "Complainant".
- 2.3. Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):
 - Concern from someone with whom we work about the quality of program delivery
 - Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular fundraising approach or campaign
 - Concern about the behaviour of staff, volunteers or contractors.
- 2.4. A complaint has to be about an action for which WaterAid Australia is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.
- 2.5. A complaint is not:
 - A general query about WaterAid Australia's work
 - A request for information
 - A contractual dispute
 - A request to amend records e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation
 - A request to unsubscribe from a WaterAid Australia 'service' e.g. a newsletter or email.

3. Principles

- 3.1. **Accessibility.** Complainants should be able to make a complaint as easily as possible: written correspondence, email, telephone, verbally, via a third party, etc. We are committed to making communication with us as easy as possible.
- 3.2. **Timeliness.** WaterAid Australia aims to resolve complaints within 14 days of receipt. In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved within this timeframe the complainant will be informed about the progress made to date and when they can expect to receive a response.
- 3.3. **Complaints should be made within a reasonable time following the relevant incident.** In exceptional circumstances WaterAid Australia may be able to respond to a complaint that is older, although the passage of time may make it harder to resolve the complaint satisfactorily.
- 3.4. **Confidentiality.** Some complaints need to be kept confidential in order to safeguard those making or involved in the complaint. However in some instances we might judge that the complainant will be better served if others are involved in the resolution of a complaint. Third parties will only be included in the resolution of confidential complaints on a case-by-case basis and with the agreement of the complainant.
- 3.5. **Documented.** Some complaints may be both made and resolved verbally, e.g. by telephone or face to face. Where they are unable to be resolved verbally, complaints must be made in writing. Outside of Australia you may need assistance to do this, and WaterAid Australia will help you to present your complaint.
- 3.6. **Right to appeal.** Complainants who have launched a well-founded complaint and who are unsatisfied with WaterAid Australia's response to that complaint have the right to appeal. Appropriate appeal processes are outlined in the documents published with this policy.
- 3.7. **After an Appeal.** After the internal appeal, there is no further internal process. You may however still contact our peak body ACFID. Outside of Australia, we will notify you if there is an external procedure, but in any event you may contact ACFID.
- 3.8. **Mutual Respect.** Everyone who makes a complaint to WaterAid Australia will be treated with courtesy and respect. In return, WaterAid Australia expects people who make a complaint to communicate their concerns fairly and appropriately. Where complainants harass staff, behave abusively, or unreasonably pursue complaints, WaterAid Australia reserves the right to withdraw or modify its complaints process.
- 3.9. **Part of a learning process.** We will log and monitor all serious complaints and results of such complaints and this information will be brought, regularly, to the attention of appropriate senior managers in order that we learn from what we do and how we do it. This information will not necessarily be available to the public.

- 3.10. WaterAid Australia will keep this policy under review and an annual report will be produced on its implementation for submission to WaterAid Australia's Finance, Audit and Risk Management (FARM) Committee of the Board.
- 3.11. This report will also include consideration and comment on the application of lessons learned from previous years' reports.
- 3.12. WaterAid Australia's Chief Executive (as owner of this policy) will convene a regular meeting with the Senior Management Team to decide how WaterAid Australia will apply lessons learned.
- 3.13. An overview of complaints including number and analysis will be published, although to respect the privacy of individuals the details of individual complaints will not be public. (Refer to WaterAid's Privacy Policy).

4. Other WaterAids.

- 4.1. WaterAid Australia is a member of WaterAid international (www.wateraid.org). There are four other members of the WaterAid international federation: Canada, USA, Sweden and the United Kingdom listed in the WaterAid international website.
- 4.2. This policy covers WaterAid Australia only.
- 4.3. However, if we become aware of any complaint received which relates to WaterAid international or another WaterAid member we will notify the complainant accordingly and forward to the other WaterAid for attention.

5. Complaints Procedure

- 5.1. The purpose of the WaterAid Complaints Process and Procedure is to establish a holistic approach to complaints handling. A copy of this document is available on WaterAid Australia's website www.wateraid.org/au/complaintspolicy.

6. How to contact WaterAid

Through the website: www.wateraid.org/au using the Contact link

By email: info@wateraid.org.au

By mail: WaterAid Australia
Level 9
176 Wellington Parade
East Melbourne, VIC, 3002
Australia

By phone: +61 1300 858 022

In countries where WaterAid Australia operates country programs, complaints can be made in person to the Country Representative, or submitted by mail to the Country Office.

Copies of this Complaints Policy with specific contact details will be made available to all project implementing partners upon signing of Agreements. Dissemination and sharing of the complaints procedures, and underlying principles and purpose, will be undertaken upon inception of new projects with all implementing partners.

Publicly displayed information in local languages will provide a confidential complaints handling contact point, mailing address and email address at all registered offices of WaterAid in country programs. Handout material in local languages with a summary of the complaints handling policy and confidentiality arrangements will be available upon request at each registered country office.