

## SurfAid International Australia Complaints Policy

### Goal

SurfAid is committed to operating in accordance with guiding principles of honesty, transparency, clarity and balance. We are committed to achieving or exceeding the standards required by the Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID) Code of Conduct. Complaints assist us to improve how we operate and deliver our services.

This policy has been designed to assist supporters, stakeholders, and staff. SurfAid is committed to consistent, fair and confidential complaint handling and to resolving complaints as quickly as possible. We aim to make it easy for people to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied and we will treat all stakeholders making a complaint equally and with respect.

We will prominently display our complaint handling policy so that supporters and stakeholders feel assured of our practices and ethics.

### Definition of a complaint

Complaints are defined as any expression of dissatisfaction or grievance made to SurfAid or its staff by a staff member, Board member, supporter, partner, beneficiary or member of the public in relation to our organisation or activities.

### Receiving complaints

We are able to receive complaints orally in person, by email ([feedback@surfaid.org](mailto:feedback@surfaid.org)), by telephone (*Australia: + (61) 2 9965 7325 ; Indonesia: + (62) 61 8211 215*) and in writing by post (*Australia: 681 Barrenjoey Rd, Avalon, NSW 2107 ; Indonesia: Komplek Tasbi Blok V no. 33 , Setia Budi, Medan Sumatra Utara 20132*).

Complaints may be made by a friend, family member, advocate, legal guardian or representative of the complainant on their behalf, for example in the case of a child.

All complaints made, verbal or written, will be recorded at the time the complaint is made; and immediately passed on to the SurfAid Complaints Officer. If a resolution that is fully acceptable to the complainant is not immediately arrived at, the CEO is to be briefed on the complaint. The complaint should be recorded by the staff member who took the details. Records of all complaints, whether resolved or not, are to be provided to the CEO.

When taking a complaint, staff will record the name and contact details of the complainant, as well as full details of the complaint including the date. We recognise that in some circumstances complainants may wish to remain anonymous. If a complainant reasonably requests anonymity,

staff will acknowledge this, respect their request, and only record such details as the complainant agrees to.

Details of all communication with the complainant and any actions to resolve the complaint should be recorded in the same place.

Recorded complaints will also be monitored for any ongoing trends by management and efforts made to resolve any ongoing issues.

Complainants' personal details or details of their grievance will not be divulged to third parties unless we have their written consent or there is a legal or regulatory obligation requiring us to provide those details.

A complainant may also refer a complaint alleging a breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct directly to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee.

## **Complaints Process**

Beyond the initial receipt and recording of a complaint, the following process will be initiated:

### **Informing complainants of progress**

We strive to resolve all complaints promptly. Written complaints will be acknowledged promptly.

### **Responding to complaints**

All persons making a complaint will be treated with courtesy. Where possible, complaints will be resolved at the first point of contact.

If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the complainant will be given a contact person and further details of the complaint handling process. In most cases, the staff member taking the complaint will be the contact person.

Following this initial response we endeavour to resolve all complaints within 45 working days, as we work in remote areas where access to communication technologies is limited, which may delay reporting and investigation processes.

### **Escalation of complaints**

If the complaints process cannot resolve a complaint, it may be referred to the Board of Directors. The complainant is to be informed and given an amended timeframe for resolution. All complaints of breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct are to be reported to the Board.

If the grievance cannot be satisfactorily resolved, SurfAid will inform complainants where,

externally, they can take further action (e.g. ACFID, ASIC). A board member will also contact the complainant.

## Outcomes of complaints

We will ensure that all relevant personnel are informed of the outcomes of complaints and the implications for our services, goods, procedures and processes.

We will take action as required. We will be prepared to change the way in which we operate and improve or undertake further training of staff. Where needed we will counsel or discipline staff or volunteers.

Where appropriate we will consult and take advice from ACFID and/or other relevant regulatory/enforcement authorities.

## Continuous improvement in complaint handling

We will continually monitor and review the effectiveness of our complaint handling and make improvements as appropriate.

Approved: February, 2018

Date for next review: February, 2020

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SurfAid International Australia is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The Code requires members to meet high standards of corporate governance, public accountability and financial management. Complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by any signatory agency can be made by any staff member or member of the public to the [ACFID Code of Conduct Committee](#). More information about the ACFID Code of Conduct can be obtained from SurfAid International and from ACFID at: W: <http://www.acfid.asn.au/> E: [code@acfid.asn.au](mailto:code@acfid.asn.au)