



# Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure

<b>Applies to:</b>	<b>All staff, volunteers, visitors, participants and their families and representatives, board members and others who have contact with Minimbah</b>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>CEO</b>
<b>Responsibility:</b>	<b>CEO</b>
<b>Issued:</b>	<b>March 2020</b>
<b>Last Review Date:</b>	<b>December 2023</b>
<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	<b>October 2025</b>

## 1. Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that we handle complaints fairly and promptly and that we provide guidance to our staff and people on how to make a complaint or provide feedback in relation to any aspect of their contact with Minimbah.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Board members, client and their families and representatives and anyone who has contact with Minimbah.

## 3. Responsibilities

All people covered by this Policy and Procedure have an obligation to support the Complaints handling process. This involves ensuring that complaints are not made frivolously or maliciously and that once received, the complaint is responded to in a professional, fair and timely manner. Specific responsibilities and obligations are described below:

Who	Commitment	How
CEO	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution	<p>Report to the Board on the nature of complaints and how they are managed.</p> <p>Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints.</p> <p>Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvements.</p> <p>Support recommendations for service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</p>
Staff whose duties include complaint handling (including the CEO)	Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices	<p>Treat all people who make complaints with respect, and assist people to make a complaint, if necessary.</p> <p>Comply with our policy and associated procedures.</p> <p>Provide regular feedback to management and/or the Board on issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Provide suggestions to management on ways to improve our complaints management system.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by management.</p>
All staff	Understand and comply with our complaint handling practices.	<p>Treat all people who make complaints with respect and be aware of our complaint handling policies and procedures.</p> <p>Assist people who wish to make complaints access our complaints process.</p>



## 4. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy and Procedure, the following definitions apply:

**Anonymous Complaint:**

means a complaint that does not identify the complainant and which is investigated by Minimbah if there is sufficient information to do so

**Complaint:**

means an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about Minimbah, our services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response to or resolution of an issue is expected by the person making the complaint

**Complainant:**

means the person making a complaint

**Complaint handling/management system:**

means the policies, procedures, practices and any computer-based systems used to record and manage/resolve complaints

**Dispute:**

means an unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside Minimbah

**Feedback:**

means opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly to or about Minimbah, our services or staff/volunteers

**Grievance:**

means a clear formal written statement by an individual staff member/volunteer about another staff member/volunteer or a work-related problem

**Respondent:**

means Minimbah or a person named in a complaint as being the cause of the complainant's complaint

Sharepoint: Policies and Procedures/Feedback and Complaints Policy & Procedure Minimbah Disability Support Services Limited	Last Updated: Dec 2023 Next Review: Oct 2025
This document is uncontrolled when printed	Page 3 of 10

## 5. Policy

Minimbah is committed to ensuring that our complaints handling processes are widely known, accessible to all people and effective. Our approach to complaints is summarised in the diagram below:



Minimbah is also committed to ensuring that people who make complaints do not suffer any detriment as a result of making the complaint and we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that complainants do not suffer any form of detriment

We will ensure that information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is well publicised, on our website (if available). We will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.

If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/ or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation). Similarly, Minimbah will respect and accept anonymous complaints and feedback.

## 6. Procedure

### 6.1 Responding to complaints

Minimbah maintains a confidential database of complaints received in order to ensure that we have detailed records for audit and quality improvement purposes. We acknowledge all complaints received and act promptly to deal with complaints.

We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- the complaints process
- the expected time frames for our actions
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay



- their likely involvement in the process, and
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).

We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

## **6.2 Objectivity fairness and confidentiality**

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by us as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, we will work with the other organisation/s where possible, to ensure that communication with the person making a complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated.

Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint.

Where a complaint involves multiple areas within our organisation, responsibility for communicating with the person making the complaint and/or their representative will also be coordinated.

Where our services are contracted out, we expect contracted service providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system. We take complaints not only about the actions of our staff but also the actions of our service providers.

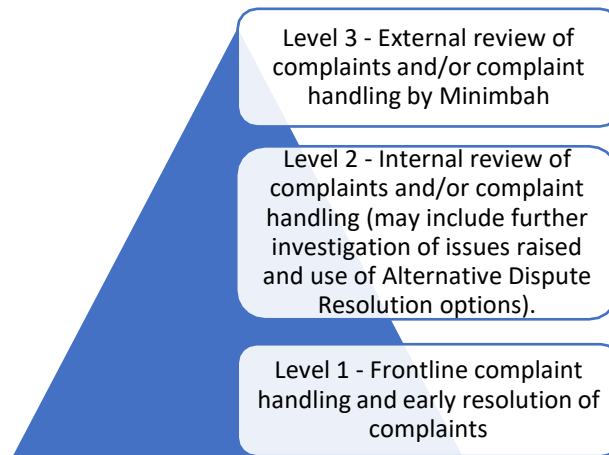
Sharepoint: Policies and Procedures/Feedback and Complaints Policy & Procedure Minimbah Disability Support Services Limited	Last Updated: Dec 2023 Next Review: Oct 2025
This document is uncontrolled when printed	Page 5 of 10

### 6.3 Anonymous Complaints

Minimbah acknowledges that some people may have concerns when making a complaint and may wish not to disclose their identity. Minimbah will acknowledge and process anonymous complaints. An anonymous complaint can usually only be assessed on the information disclosed. Because seeking clarification or additional information from a person is not necessarily possible, it may be more difficult to evaluate the allegations and therefore less likely to warrant an investigation. Whilst supporting every person’s right to make an anonymous complaint, in making the decision about whether to make your identity known or remain anonymous, you should consider how likely it will be to determine that wrongdoing occurred based on the information provided. Anonymous complaints can be made over the phone, in writing or using an unidentifiable email address. Using an unidentifiable email address will allow for ongoing communication to assist in the process

### 6.4 The three levels of complaint handling in Minimbah

Minimbah strongly believes in resolving complaints promptly and fairly. Our approach to responding to complaints is illustrated in the diagram below:



#### Level 1

We aim to resolve complaints at the first level, the frontline. Wherever possible staff will be adequately equipped to respond to complaints, including being given appropriate authority, training and supervision.

#### Level 2

Where the Level 1 approach is not possible, we may decide to escalate the complaint to a more senior officer within our organisation. This second level of complaint handling will provide for the following internal mechanisms:

- assessment and possible investigation of the complaint and decision/s already made, and/or
- facilitated resolution (where a person not connected with the complaint reviews the matter and attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties).



### Level 3

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of our review of their complaint, they may seek an external review of our decision (for example, by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission).

## 7. Accountability and learning

We will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis by management and the Board.

We will run regular reports on:

- the number of complaints received
- the outcome of complaints, including matters resolved at the frontline
- issues arising from complaints
- systemic issues identified, and
- the number of requests we receive for internal and/or external review of our complaint handling. Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Both reports and their analysis will be provided to our CEO, senior management and to the Board for review, at least annually.

We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:

- ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system, and
- monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts.

We are committed to improving the way Minimbah operates, including our management of the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaint management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

Sharepoint: Policies and Procedures/Feedback and Complaints Policy & Procedure Minimbah Disability Support Services Limited	Last Updated: Dec 2023 Next Review: Oct 2025
This document is uncontrolled when printed	Page 7 of 10

## 8. Complaint Handling Procedure

The five key stages in our complaint management system are set out below



### 1. Receive

When we receive a complaint, we will assign a unique identifier/number to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant information, and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

### 2. Acknowledge

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 5 working days, where appropriate to do so.

### 3. Assess and Investigate

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations. After assessing the complaint, we will consider how to manage it. We may:
  - Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
  - Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, or
  - Investigate the claims made in the complaint.





We will keep the person making the complaint up-to-date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. We will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

#### **4. Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision**

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- The reason/s for our decision
- The remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

#### **5. Close the complaint: document and analyse data**

We will keep records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager, senior management or the Chairman of the Board.

### **8. Related Documents**

- Minimbah Code of Conduct
- NDIS Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Respectful Workplaces Procedure
- Staff Discipline Procedure
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Corporations Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act 1975
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Fair Work Regulations 2009
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001

Sharepoint: Policies and Procedures/Feedback and Complaints Policy & Procedure Minimbah Disability Support Services Limited	Last Updated: Dec 2023 Next Review: Oct 2025
This document is uncontrolled when printed	Page 9 of 10



## 9. Document Control

This policy will be reviewed from time to time to take account of new laws and technology, changes to our operations and practices and the changes to the business environment.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Amendment Notes</b>
March 2020	CEO	Initial document
January 2022	CEO	Updated for change of company structure
September 2022	CEO	Minor grammatical corrections
November 2022	CEO	Addition of additional information re: making anonymous complaints
December 2023	CEO	Document reviewed and updated with new logo

Sharepoint: Policies and Procedures/Feedback and Complaints Policy & Procedure Minimbah Disability Support Services Limited	Last Updated: Dec 2023 Next Review: Oct 2025
This document is uncontrolled when printed	Page 10 of 10