

Feedback and Complaints Guidelines

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1. Documentation and Approvals

1.1 Document Location

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Version	Date	Description	Author

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2. About

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines are to ensure feedback and complaints contribute to the continual improvement of our services, and feedback and complaints to Mental Health Australia are appropriately heard.

Mental Health Australia is committed to dealing with feedback and/or complaints in a professional and consistent manner that complies with the expectations of its members and the general public. Mental Health Australia ensures that all feedback is dealt with fairly and within a timely manner.

2.2 Scope

These guidelines apply to:

- Feedback (including compliments and suggestions) from any person, and
- Complaints made by Mental Health Australia's members and the general public.

These guidelines **DO NOT** apply to the following complaints:

Bullying complaints are to be managed in accordance with Mental Health Australia's No Bullying Policy.

Equal Opportunity complaints are to be managed in accordance with Mental Health Australia's Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

Employee complaints (grievances and disputes) concerning matters in relation to employment are to be managed in accordance with the Employee Dispute Resolution Process.

Complaints (grievances and disputes) between Board members, a Board member and Board Committee, or Board member and the organisation are to be managed in accordance with the Board Grievance/Dispute procedure.

2.3 Definitions

Feedback

- A comment may be an explanation or reaction, a suggestion, or a statement of fact, opinion, attitude, conclusion or judgement.
- A compliment is an expression of praise or commendation.



Complaint

- An expression of dissatisfaction or grievance.

2.4 Reporting Feedback and Complaints

The attached Feedback and Complaints Form may be completed for compliments or for suggestions for improvement and should be addressed to the Deputy CEO, or the CEO where the feedback concerns the Deputy CEO, or the Company Secretary (Board) where the feedback concerns the CEO.

2.4.1 Feedback

Feedback can be provided to Mental Health Australia in several ways:

- online at www.mhaustralia.org
- by phone: 02 6285 3100
- by mail: PO Box 174, Deakin West, ACT, 2600.
- by facsimile: 02 6285 2166
- by email: info@mhaustralia.org

Not all individual instances of feedback received by Mental Health Australia will require a formal response. However, Mental Health Australia will still seek to record, analyse, and report on feedback, however received, as part of continuous improvement processes.

2.4.2 Complaints

Complaints are important in terms of Mental Health Australia's accountability to our members and the general public and will be acknowledged and responded to, unless a person has expressly indicated a preference not to receive a response, or the complaint has been made anonymously.

The attached Feedback and Complaints Form should be completed for complaints and addressed to the Deputy CEO, or the CEO where the complaint concerns the Deputy CEO, or the Company Secretary (Board) where the complaint concerns the CEO.

Complaints can be provided to Mental Health Australia in several ways:

- by email: info@mhaustralia.org
- by mail: PO Box 174, Deakin West, ACT, 2600.
- online at www.mhaustralia.org
- by facsimile: 02 6285 2166
- in person, by prior arrangement, at Mental Health Australia's office, 9/11 Napier Close, West Deakin ACT
- by phone: 02 6285 3100 (and if unable to make the complaint in writing)

There may be instances where an employee needs to record a person's verbal feedback or complaint on their behalf, such as if the person for accessibility reasons cannot make use of a written feedback/complaint's process. A copy of the feedback/complaint that has been transcribed will be provided to that person to ensure the feedback or complaint has been accurately recorded.



All employees have a right to a safe working environment. As conduct and behaviours may vary considerably by those providing feedback and/or complaints, the attached "Traffic Light System for External Feedback and Complaints" (refer to Clause 5) is a tool to guide/assist employees in identifying the warning signs of unreasonable conduct and when it may be appropriate to seek support from their manager and/or Deputy CEO/CEO.

If feedback or a complaint is expressed in a manner which is intimidating, or a cause for upset or offence, employees may conclude the contact. Employees should immediately notify their manager and record in the Difficult Calls Log (TRIM Document 17/765). Also refer to Difficult Call Guidelines.

Feedback and complaints affecting the viability of Mental Health Australia or its members, as determined by the CEO (or delegated person), will be brought the immediate attention of the Board.

2.5 Processing feedback and complaints

Mental Health Australia will seek to respond to feedback and complaints at the earliest practicable opportunity, with a level of formality that is consistent with the feedback or complaint.

Generally, Mental Health Australia will seek to respond to feedback and complaints within 10 business days.

If the feedback or complaint is complex and additional time is required, we will write to the provider of the feedback or complaint and advise accordingly.

In the case of a complaint, Mental Health Australia will investigate the complaint in accordance with applicable organisational policies and procedures. Mental Health Australia will seek to reach an acceptable resolution to the issue. How this occurs will depend on the nature of the complaint.

Mental Health Australia will document the resolution and any action it has committed to undertake as the result of the feedback or complaint. In the case of a complaint regarding lack of policy or poor process within Mental Health Australia that requires further action, information will be used in Mental Health Australia's organisational evaluation and planning. This information will be used specifically for the purpose for which it is collected and will be treated confidentially.

Comments and compliments will be passed on to the appropriate employee(s) upon receiving the feedback. A response, if required, will then be sent out within ten working days.

All feedback and complaints will be assessed on a case by case basis. Whilst Mental Health Australia will take all reasonable action to address the feedback or complaint and achieve a satisfactory resolution for all parties, this outcome may not always be possible.

Mental Health Australia will redirect feedback or complaints that are received in error.



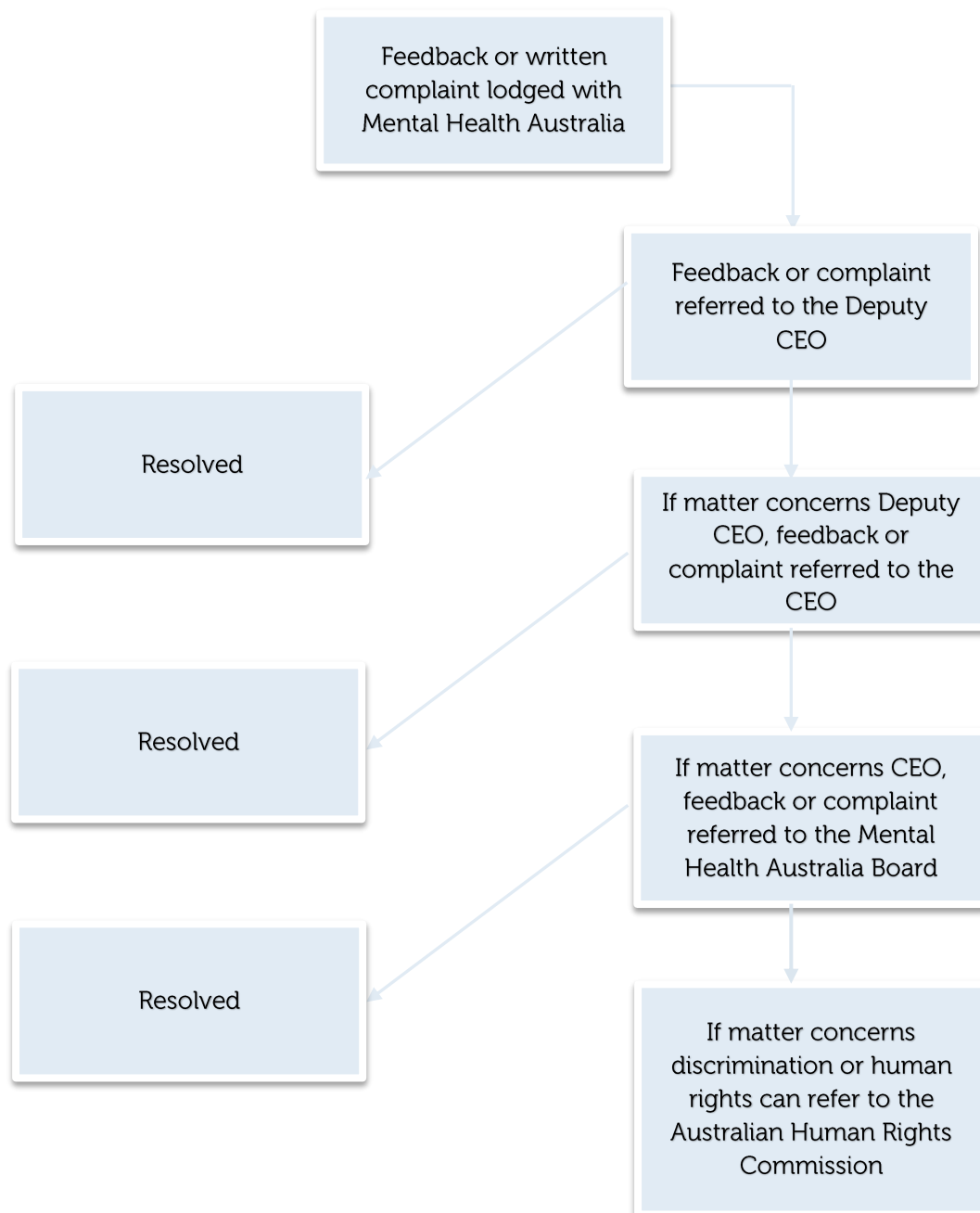
2.6 Further Action

If you are dissatisfied with the feedback and complaints process, including the response or outcome of the feedback or complaint, you should first contact Mental Health Australia to have the feedback or complaint reviewed. If you continue to be dissatisfied the matter can be referred to the Mental Health Australia's Board. For matters concerning discrimination or human rights, these can be referred to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

All feedback and complaints received and the actions taken are reported to the Mental Health Australia Board on a quarterly basis.



3. Feedback and complaints flowchart



4. Feedback & Complaints Form

Mental Health Australia values your feedback. Your feedback may be a compliment, suggestion for improvement or a complaint. Please complete the form below, clearly stating what your feedback or complaint is about. Our policy is to resolve all complaints within 10 working days. If this is not possible, we will contact you regarding our progress.

DATE:

NAME:

Contact ph. number(s)

Email address:

WHAT TYPE OF FEEDBACK ARE YOU PROVIDING (please select):

- Compliment
- Suggestion for improvement
- Complaint

Please provide details: Important to describe your feedback or complaint as completely as possible, including the nature of the matter and persons involved. Please be as specific as possible. Please print. Attach sheet if insufficient space.

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OUTCOME SOUGHT (to be completed for complaints):

.....
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.....

Do you wish to be contacted regarding this matter? Yes No



5. Traffic Light System for External Feedback and/or Complaints

Warning signs of unreasonable conduct may include one, but more likely a number of the following:

GREEN (can be dealt with by the employee)	AMBER (employee should seek assistance / intervention from their manager)	RED (matter should be referred to the Deputy CEO, CEO or if necessary, the Board)
First time made a complaint with organisation	Previously made a complaint with the organisation	History of excessive contact with the organisation
Able to moderate behaviour / language	Sought advice from other government agencies, MPs, etc. about the current complainant	Previously requested a number of reviews about the same or related issues
Able to accept explanations provided	Giving forceful instructions on how the complaint should be handled	Expanded the subject matter to include other people or conspiracy theories. Refuses to define the issues.
Seeking reasonable outcomes	Resistant to employee's explanation if this runs counter to own views	Rude, confronting, angry or aggressive
Has realistic expectations of the organisation	Becoming argumentative, reframing complaint to have it taken up again	Showing an inability to accept an explanation
	Seeking an inappropriate outcome(s), eg. apology where this is not apparent	Seeking illogical or irrational outcomes (amounts to revenge or retribution)
	Stating desired outcomes in terms of morals, justice, principles or the public interest	Giving forceful instructions about how the complaint must be handled
	Raising issues about the employee's integrity or competence in handling the matter	Making excessive demands on resources out of proportion to the seriousness of the complaint
	Raising a range of minor or technical issues, arguing that these call into question the merits of the decision	Refuses to accept the employee's and/or manager's decision



GREEN (can be dealt with by the employee)	AMBER (employee should seek assistance / intervention from their manager)	RED (matter should be referred to the Deputy CEO, CEO or if necessary, the Board)
	Requesting a review because it is available, but not arguing a case for a review	Insists a particular solution is the correct one in the face of valid contrary or alternative arguments
	Wanting what is not appropriate – eg. copies of sensitive documents, names and contact details of staff, etc	Persists in interpreting the law or policy in a way that is not in accordance with generally accepted or expert views
	Wanting lengthy contact where this is not warranted	Making an issue out of anything
	Refusing to define the issue(s), or is presenting a large quantity of information that is not logical/organised, or is presenting information in dribs and drabs at the outset	Displaying unhelpful behavior – withholding information, being dishonest, etc.
	Insisting on the importance of an issue that is clearly trivial	Continues to raise new issues
		Arguing the clearly bizarre
		Making threats of self-harm, or harm to others



6. References

Difficult Call Guidelines

Difficult Call Register

No Bullying Policy

Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Employee Dispute Resolution Process

Board Grievance/Dispute procedure.



Mental Health Australia



Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities

Mental Health Australia is the peak independent, national representative body of the mental health sector in Australia.

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