

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Purpose

- To ensure all complaints, feedback or suggestions are handled promptly and efficiently on behalf of WAAHEC.
- To continually improve the delivery of service through continual quality improvement based on community, researchers and stakeholder feedback.

### Evidence base

- QIC standards
- Australian Standard AS 8000-2003 Good Governance Principles
- Australian and New Zealand Standards AS/NZ 4360 Risk Management
- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research

### Related documents

- Complaints and Feedback Form
- Complaints and Feedback Register

### Policy

The policy is that all researchers and stakeholders, including members of the community have a right to have any concerns dealt with in a manner that respects their contribution to the quality improvement of WAAHEC.

It is important to understand the needs of our members, community and stakeholders. Do not be offended that someone has made a complaint. WAAHEC encourages researchers, stakeholders and community members to contribute in any way to improving our processes with conducting research in the Aboriginal community.

### Managing Feedback

Where a person wishes to make a complaint or provide feedback, in the first instance the secretariat should listen to the person allowing them to explain the situation or 'vent'. Following this, the person is informed that the feedback can be managed by completing a 'Complaints and Feedback form'. **The following procedure is to apply:**

- Offer to provide the form – via email, post or the person may collect one from reception.

### Receiving Verbal Feedback

The person receiving a verbal complaint is to:

- Ask if the individual wants to register this as a formal complaint – if so provide the form.
- If not – continue to listen and allow the person to express what it is they wish to say

Please note: Staff do not have to listen to abusive or offensive language and can terminate a conversation in these circumstances or where they feel threatened, offended or very uncomfortable.

## Confidentiality of Complaints

Complaints will be dealt with in confidence at all times.

## Where the Secretariat Cannot Deal With a Complaint

In circumstances where the secretariat cannot deal with the complaint, the person is to be informed that they can have their complaint sent directly to the Chairperson. Letters should be addressed to the Chairperson, WAAHEC, Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia, PO Box 8493 Stirling Street Perth, 6849 and should be marked 'Private and Confidential'.

## Managing the 'Complaints and Feedback Form'

In all circumstances any complaints or feedback MUST be forwarded to the secretariat of the WAAHEC who will record them in the register.

The Chairperson shall in the first instance determine what action if any is required. This is recorded on the form.

The Chairperson must then present the complaint and or feedback to the next Ethics committee meeting. The Chairperson will review the proposed action and either agrees to the proposed action, amend or add to the proposed action. The form must state clearly who is responsible for the action.

## Follow up of Complaints

A letter of acknowledgment that a complaint has been received should be forwarded to the individual within 14 days. There is no requirement to provide information on action that is being taken but where it does not involve a breach of privacy, Within 28 days the complainant will receive notification of the outcome from the complaint / feedback.

## The Complaints and Feedback Register and Review

The secretariat of the WAAHEC is responsible for maintaining the Complaints and Feedback Register. The Register is an electronic register that can only be accessed by the SPFO Quality & Compliance that documents the date, nature of the complaint or feedback and action required in response to a complaint or feedback.

- The Committee shall review the complaints register at each Ethics meeting. This is done to assist with identifying any structural or procedural changes that could be made towards quality improvement. It also assists the managers to discuss the action taken and to identify areas for quality improvement in managing complaints and planning responses to complaints.