



T H I R R I L I

Complaints Policy

Purpose

This Policy is to be applied when a client, stakeholder or member or member of the public makes a complaint about Thirrili Ltd or the conduct of its staff, contractors or consultants working on behalf of Thirrili Ltd.

Scope

This Policy sets out the process to be followed by Thirrili Ltd's employees and contractors (collectively referred to as "staff") when a client or other stakeholder makes a complaint.

Definitions

Board: refers to any member of the Thirrili Board, either past or present, including any a

Complaint (service): is any expression of dissatisfaction with a service (or failure to provide a service) by any person and may relate to a single occurrence or a pattern of occurrences.

Complaint (employee): is any expression of dissatisfaction with a member of the Thirrili staff or Board, in relation to their behaviour, or failure to provide a service, by any person and may relate to a single occurrence or a pattern of occurrences.

Complaints Officer: This position will be held by the Executive Manager, Corporate or other staff member authorised to act in this role.

Client: is a person to whom Thirrili Ltd provides a service.

Stakeholders: are people or services with whom Thirrili Ltd has a relationship or interaction with but who are not clients. This may include extended family members of clients or Elders of the local community; other community based organisations and Government departments or their representatives.

Staff member: is an employee or contractor working with Thirrili Ltd.

Policy

Thirrili Ltd values feedback and complaints as it helps us improve our services and become more open and accountable to our clients. Thirrili Ltd will respond fairly to all complaints made by clients and other stakeholders about our services or the conduct of our staff in a reasonable timeframe.

All clients will:

- receive high quality, appropriate, respectful and culturally responsive services
- be given information about the services available from Thirrili Ltd

- participate in all decisions concerning the support they receive
- be able to refuse support they believe is unsuitable or not appropriate for their needs
- ensure all client communications and records remain confidential, except where legal requirements override this, and
- be able to make a complaint about Thirrili Ltd services if this policy has not been followed and if there is a failure to investigate a complaint promptly and fairly.

Where complaints are made, Thirrili Ltd will at all times respectfully acknowledge, listen and seek understanding of the person's concern.

In responding to a complaint, the Four A's of successful resolution should be followed:

- Acknowledgement - listen to the complaint.
- Answers - where appropriate, seek the views of clients or stakeholder making the complaint about possible solutions to the problem.
- Action - impartially and promptly investigate the complaint and try to help resolve the problem or issue being raised.
- Apology - ensure a genuine apology is provided to the person.

All complaints will be recorded in a confidential Complaints Register kept by the Complaints Officer. We will record all complaints we receive and collate data to help us understand what types of problems are most prevalent, how well we resolve them, and what we need to do to prevent problems occurring.

All persons making complaints will be kept informed of the progress and outcomes of their complaint.

Making a complaint

Information about making a complaint is:

- on the Thirrili Ltd website, and
- provided to clients when we first meet with them

Clients are encouraged to raise any concerns directly with staff member(s) to assist resolve issues in a timely manner.

Where clients are uncomfortable doing this, they can raise concerns by phone or email to the Complaints Officer.

If for any reason there are concerns about raising issues with the complaints officer, the complainant can raise the matter directly with the Chief Executive Officer.

Rights

Clients, and stakeholders have the right to make a complaint, appeal a decision, or provide feedback relating to their support without compromising the services they receive.

Clients who do not feel confident to raise issues themselves, have the right to have an advocate present to support them raise issues or represent them. Where someone is representing a client, it is important the client provides us with documentation that shows they have authorised the advocate to represent them.

Clients have the right to be involved in the resolution and throughout the complaint process.

Complainants can withdraw their request in writing at any time.

Responsibilities when receiving a complaint – Staff

Staff members who have complaints raised directly with them by the client about the services they are receiving should listen carefully and explore with the client what the issue is and what they would like to have happen differently, so the matter can be resolved as quickly as possible

to the client's satisfaction. All complaints must be notified to the Complaints Officer and recorded in the Complaints Register.

Where the staff member feels the matter could be resolved, but they need assistance to resolve the issue, they should consider seeking the assistance of their Manager, in the first instance to resolve the matter.

If an on-call National Indigenous Postvention Advocate needs support to resolve an issue out of normal business hours they should:

- seek the assistance of the Regional Implementation Manager in the first instance to resolve the matter
- if this is not successful either:
 - contact the Executive Manager, Programs & Policy to gain support to resolve the matter, or
 - provide the complainant with the Complaints Officer's contact details. This should be followed up with an email to the Complaints Officer detailing the interaction had with the complainant.

Staff members have the responsibility to report all complaints made to Complaints Officer, who will record the complaint in the Complaints Register.

Anyone receiving a complaint should endeavour to obtain information as to:

- *What has happened to cause the complaint?*
- *Who is involved with the complaint?*
- *What is reason for the complaint?*
- *What they would like to see happen as a result of their complaint?*
- *What their contact details are?* so the person who will investigate the complaint can follow up with the client/stakeholder, as required.

Responsibilities when receiving a complaint – Complaints Officer

On receipt of a complaint directly from a service user, stakeholder, or staff member the Complaints Officer should:

- ensure the complaint is recorded in the relevant Complaints Register
- clarify any content of the complaint with the client, stakeholder and/or staff member as required
- acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 48 hours
- ensure the rights of the complainant are met
- determine if the matter needs to be referred to an outside organisation (such as the Police), and
- advise the client or stakeholder making the complaint when they can expect to hear back from the organisation.

Where the complaint is investigated by the Complaint's Officer, they will:

1. If required, obtain a more detailed understanding of the complaint by interviewing the client or stakeholder (with their consent) and the staff member(s) to whom the complaint relates and documenting those discussions and the outcomes of those discussions
2. Provide the client or stakeholder with a record of any discussions they are involved in
3. Document the complaint, the investigation process, the investigation findings and recommendations for further action, and update the Complaints Register and

4. Advise the client or stakeholder of the result of the investigation, and their ability if they are not satisfied, to raise the matter to the relevant State/Territory Health Complaints Commissioner or equivalent

The Complaints Officer has the responsibility to ensure all persons making complaints are kept informed of the progress and outcomes of their complaint.

Responsibilities when receiving a complaint – Chief Executive Officer and Executive Managers

The Chief Executive Officer and Executive Managers will be responsible for taking action in response to any complaints substantiated in whole or in part and recording the action to be taken in the Complaints Register.

Determination of Complaints

The Complaints Officer or other persons investigating complaints should make one of the following determinations:

1. The complaint is substantiated, in whole
2. The complaint is substantiated, in part, or
3. The complaint is not substantiated.

When the complaint is substantiated

If the complaint is substantiated, Executive Managers will:

- accept responsibility and apologise
- explain what went wrong and why and seek to make things right by addressing the complainant's concerns
- seek to learn from our mistakes and will make changes to our policies and practices as identified in the investigation.

Complaints Register

The Complaints Officer has the responsibility to keep a confidential central register of complaints, review the register every three months and identify any themes in the data. In reviewing the data, they will develop recommendations on how the quality of our service can be improved through changes to our policies and procedures.

The Complaints Officer has the responsibility to ensure recommended actions are implemented.

Complaint to an external agency

Any person, at any time, may make a complaint to an external agency, and we will cooperate with their investigations, to resolve issues for clients.

Appeals

Complainants may appeal a decision; in which case a review of the investigation process will be undertaken by a staff member not involved in the original investigation and review to identify if it was fair and reasonable.

If a decision is upheld, the complainant will be informed in writing, including justification of the decision, and be supported in their right to make the complaint to the relevant external agencies and authorities.

External Reporting

The Complaints Officer will provide an annual report detailing all complaints and compliments to the Thirrili Ltd Board.

Related Policies and Procedures & Forms

Client Rights Policy

Privacy Policy

Approval

Authority to approve	Board
Approved by Chief Executive Officer 25 September 2020 Approved by Board 5 October 2020	
REVIEW	
Review date:	July 2022
Policy Owner:	Executive Manager, Corporate

Version control

Date	Version	Description
10 July 2017	1.0	Approved Policy
5 October 2020	2.0	Approved by Board