

COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY

This policy is intended to ensure that Homeward Bound handles complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively.

This policy has been designed to provide guidance to program participants on the manner in which Homeward Bound receives and manages your complaint.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that:

- You are aware of our complaint lodgment and handling processes
- Both you, and our staff and volunteers, understand our complaints handling process
- Your complaint is investigated impartially with a balanced view of all information or evidence
- We take reasonable steps to actively protect your personal information
- Your complaint is considered on its merits taking into account individual circumstances and needs.

2. DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

In this policy, a complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction by a program participant relating to service provided by us.

3. HOW A COMPLAINT CAN BE MADE

If you are dissatisfied with a service provided by us, you should in the first instance consider speaking directly with the staff member/s you have been dealing with.

If you are uncomfortable with this or consider the relevant staff member is unable to address your concerns you can lodge a complaint with us in one of the following ways:

- By emailing us: feedback@homewardboundprojects.com.au
- By completing a feedback form on our website:
<https://homewardboundprojects.com.au/feedback/>
- By telephoning us on +613 8400 5288

If we receive your complaint verbally and we consider it appropriate, we may ask you to put your complaint in writing.

4. THE INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED TO TELL US

When we are investigating your complaint we will be relying on information provided by you and information we may already be holding.

We may need to contact you to clarify details or request additional information where necessary.

To help us investigate your complaint quickly and efficiently we will ask you for the following information:

- Your name and contact details
- The name of the person you have been dealing with about your program participation
- The nature of the complaint
- Details of any steps you have already taken to resolve the complaint
- Details of conversations you may have had with us that may be relevant to your complaint
- Copies of any documentation which supports your complaint.

If you prefer or need another person or organisation to assist or represent you in the making and/or resolution of your complaint, we will communicate with you through your representative if this is your wish. Anyone may represent you to make a complaint with your consent.

We accept anonymous complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will carry out a confidential investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided. You can submit an anonymous complaint via our webform (see above for the link).

5. THE RECORDING OF COMPLAINTS

When taking a complaint, we will record your name and contact details. We will also record all details of your complaint including the facts and the cause/s of your complaint, the outcome and any actions taken following the investigation of your complaint. We will also record all dates and times relating to actions taken to resolve the complaint and communications between us.

As part of our ongoing improvement plan, complaints will be monitored for any identifying trends by management and rectification/remedial action taken to mitigate any identified issues. If you lodge a complaint, we will record your personal information solely for the purposes of addressing your complaint.

Your personal details will actively be protected from disclosure, unless you expressly consent to its disclosure. Where a third party supplier, such as a ship operator, was involved in the service delivered to you, we may be required to speak with them to fully investigate your complaint.

6. FEEDBACK TO PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Homeward Bound is committed to resolving your issues at the first point of contact, however, this will not be possible in all circumstances, in which case a more formal complaints process will be followed.

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five (5) business days. Once your complaint has been received, we will undertake an initial review of your complaint.

There may be circumstances during the initial review or investigation of your complaint where we may need to clarify certain aspects of your complaint or request additional documentation from you. In such circumstances we will explain the purpose of seeking clarification or additional documentation and provide you with feedback on the status of your complaint at that time.

We are committed to resolving your complaint within 10 business days of acknowledging your complaint, however, this may not always be possible on every occasion. Where we have been unable to resolve your complaint within 10 business days, we will inform you of the reason for the delay and specify a date when we will be in a position to finalise your complaint.

During the initial review or investigation stage we may need to seek further clarification or documentation from you to assist us in resolving your complaint.

If we have sought clarification or additional documentation from you and we are waiting on you to provide this information, we may not be able to meet our 10 business day finalisation commitment. In such circumstances upon receipt of your clarification or additional documentation we will indicate to you when we expect to be able to finalise your complaint.

Once we have finalised your complaint, we will advise you of our findings and any action we have taken. We will do this in writing, unless it has been mutually agreed that we can provide it to you verbally.

You have the right to make enquiries about the current status of your complaint at any time by contacting us.

7. HOMEWARD BOUND'S SIX POINT COMPLAINTS PROCESS



We acknowledge

Within five business days of receiving your complaint we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint.

We review

We undertake an initial review of your complaint and determine what if any additional information or documentation may be required to complete an investigation. We may need to contact you to clarify details or request additional information where necessary.

We investigate

Within 10 business days of acknowledging your complaint we will investigate your complaint objectively and impartially, by considering the information you have provided us, our actions in relation to your dealings with us and any other information which may be available, that could assist us in investigating your complaint.

We respond

Following our investigation we will notify you of our findings and any actions we may have taken in regards to your complaint.

We take action

Where appropriate we amend our business practices or policies.

We record

We will record your complaint for continuous improvement process and monitoring through regular review, your personal information will be recorded in accordance with relevant privacy legislation.