



## Complaints & Appeals Policy

Any person or organisation using Jacaranda Housing services or affected by its operation has the right to complain. Service users, tenants and members are entitled to be heard and have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

Jacaranda Housing recognise that the issue of the complaint is important to the complainant and must be taken seriously. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and parties to the complaint will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint.

In addressing a complaint, the following principles apply:

- Tenants have the right to Complain
- Tenants have to right to feel safe and secure during their tenancy
- Tenants will not be discriminated against or denied services for lodgement to appeal, or complain
- Tenants will be treated fairly & with respect at all times
- All Tenants can have a support person or advocate assisting, and representing them in dealing with their complaint
- All relevant evidence will be considered
- Decisions will be fair, just and free from bias

## Complaints & Appeals Procedure

Jacaranda Housing ensures that all clients have access to open processes for making complaints about the organisation, individuals within it and/or services provided. Clients are encouraged (not deterred) to make complaints about any aspect of the service with which they are dissatisfied.

We recognise the benefit of receiving client complaints as an opportunity to enhance services provided and will provide all clients with the procedures for making complaints and giving feedback when they enter the service. The Jacaranda Housing Tenant Induction Kit includes the procedure and form for clients to provide feedback, make a complaint or appeal a decision and what they can expect through the process.

Jacaranda Housing supports clients making anonymous complaints however the complainant is advised it will be difficult to provide any information as to the outcome of the complaint or follow up on any information if they do not provide their name and contact details.

A **Complaint** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or concern, either written or spoken, made about Jacaranda Housing's action or lack of action or about the standard of service provided, which requires a response.

A **Neighbour Dispute** is a case whereby someone makes a verbal or written report about a resident of Jacaranda Housing. This may include dissatisfaction about a member of a Tenant's household or visitors to a Tenant's home. These matters will be handled under Jacaranda Housing's Neighbour Disputes & Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

An **Appeal** is defined as a *formal request for a decision made by the organisation to be reviewed.*

Jacaranda Housing will ensure that all tenants are provided with easy to access information about complaints and feedback mechanisms available to them. This includes Jacaranda Housing's Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Brochure and information in the *Induction Kit for Tenants*.

- Clients have a right to complain
- staff have the right to know of complaints made against them and offer a response;
- Clients are not denied continued service having made a complaint;
- All complaints are appropriately investigated in a timely manner;
- All parties are appropriately investigated in a timely manner;
- All parties can be represented or supported by an advocate at any time if preferred;
- All relevant submissions and evidence are considered in making determinations;
- Decisions are fair, just and free from bias; and
- Complainants and respondents can appeal if dissatisfied with the grievance outcome.

### **Grounds for Complaints**

Clients can make a complaint about any experience with Jacaranda Housing they consider being problematic, including but not limited to:

- Breach of confidentiality or privacy
- Inadequate standard of service provision and / professionalism
- Denial of personal rights
- Discrimination or harassment
- Conflict arising from lack of communication or misunderstanding
- Organisational policy issue
- Problem with advice or action recommended

### **Resolving Complaints**

The person taking the complaint can attempt to immediately resolve the complaint informally and verbally. In such an instance, the process is completed once the client is satisfied with the resolution, the outcome is documented and attached to the Complaint Form and the General Manager is informed.

If a Tenant or stakeholder has a formal complaint, the following steps will be taken:

- the complainant will be encouraged wherever possible to resolve a situation directly with the Housing Manager or General Manager.
- If this is unsuccessful then a complaint or feedback form can be provided in writing and assistance will be offered to the client to complete if required.
- If a complaint involves the Housing Manager, or cannot be resolved satisfactorily at this level, then the complainant can refer their complaint directly to the General Manager.
- Jacaranda Housing makes use of community mediation centres in dispute resolution if it is assessed that mediation will assist the situation to be successfully resolved.
- Complainants will be encouraged to seek support from an external agency to make a complaint or offer feedback if they require assistance.
- All staff and board members will be trained to freely offer information about complaints and feedback procedures.
- Where complainants including tenants have limited or no English, then appropriate opportunities will be put in place including translated information and use of interpreters.

Jacaranda Housing will keep the complainant informed by

- Acknowledging the complaint within 2 days of receiving the complaint;

- Outlining next steps;
- Advising of the outcome of the complaint;
- Providing a written response to the Complainant within 20 working days outlining the findings and their right to request a review of the decision of their complaint (an appeal)

Jacaranda Housing will ensure that any application received for review of a decision is not dealt with by the original decision maker. With regard to any application for resolution of a dispute or complaint Jacaranda Housing will ensure that the person dealing with the matter has no personal interest in the matter and will exclude the person who is the subject of the dispute or about whom a complaint is made from dealing with the matter.

#### Appeals

Appeals will be handled as above and responded to within 20 working days.

#### **Complaints & Feedback Register**

A complaints and feedback register will be maintained by the Housing Manager and the General Manager. The Housing Manager is to update the General Manager of all complaints as they are lodged. Complaints against the General Manager will be dealt with by the Chairperson. The General Manager will provide a report against the register which be reviewed by the board on a bi annual basis.

Each matter is reviewed objectively and independently with the aim of identifying what has gone wrong and in the spirit of learning and continuous improvement, considering what can be done better in the future.

The complaints and feedback register will include as a minimum:

- Date (received and response date)
- Nature of the complaint/feedback
- Actions taken including a log of all incremental actions taken to address a situation
- Key responsibility for implementation
- Subsequent policy and procedure change