

1. Introduction

Irabina Autism Services (Irabina) is committed to providing a high quality complaints management service.

Effective resolution of complaints enables clients, stakeholders, and staff to participate in continuous improvement strategy. Everybody is encouraged and supported to make a compliments, feedback and complaints in a way that is comfortable for them, their family, carer, or staff for services and supports to better meet their needs and expectations.

We are committed to:

- Enabling all clients, staff, and stakeholders to make complaints.
- Responding to complaints by taking action to resolve complaints in timeline manner.
- Learning from complaints to improve our services.

This policy provides a framework to ensure Irabina:

- Handles complaints effectively, ensuring our clients, stakeholders and staff can raise their complaints with ease and with confidence.
- Listens to all clients, stakeholders, and staff concerns, and being responsive.
- Manages received complaints fairly, objectively and in a timely manner.

We treat every complaint we receive on its individual merits, through clear and consistent processes. Our complaints handling procedure (which supports the administration of this policy) continues to be reviewed and updated to assist Irabina in the effective management of complaints, responding to complaints, and continuous improvement for the benefit of our clients, stakeholders, and staff.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide an outline of the complaints process at Irabina so that our clients, stakeholders, and staff are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our organisation.
- Ensure that all complaints managed in a timely, effective, fair, and respectful manner.
- Contribute to the continuous improvement of the Irabina services.

3. Scope

Irabina welcomes clients, stakeholders, and staff feedback on services and performance as a means of monitoring and improving service delivery, as well as enhancing organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

This policy establishes procedures for all clients, stakeholders, and staff are able to express their views to the organisation.

This policy relates to complaints brought by Irabina's clients, stakeholders and staff to all matters relating to Irabina. In some limited instances, the complainant may need to be referred to external government body process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions.

This Complaints Policy applies to all complaints from clients, stakeholders and staff and their decisions. It does not apply to complaints about individual staff.

4. Policy Statement

Irabina acknowledges the right of clients, stakeholders, and staff to express their opinion (Compliment, feedback, or complaints) about services Irabina provides. They also have a right to be informed about the procedures that Irabina follows to manage complaints and feedback effectively, and how Irabina will learn from these processes.

Irabina management, staff and volunteers also abide by the Duty of Care / Children & Young People Safety policy which governed by the [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#).

Compliments, feedback, and compliment must be handled respectfully, effectively, and promptly and recorded for coordination, analysis, and reporting.

Irabina provides a responsive, objective, and fair feedback process consistent with the [ISO 10002:2014 Quality management — Customer satisfaction](#).

5. Principles

The management of feedback and complaints at Irabina is underpinned by the following principles:

Accountability	Accountabilities for managing feedback and handling complaints are clearly established and responses to them are monitored and reported to senior management and the Irabina Board.
Continuous quality improvement	Feedback (including compliments) and complaints are a source of improvement for Irabina. Information recorded will be used to inform planning, service and practice change, and continuous quality improvement.
Natural justice	The standards of natural justice will apply to the management of all complaints at Irabina. Natural justice means that a person whose rights or legitimate expectations may be affected by a decision has the right to know the detail of any allegations against them and relevant information relating to the making of the decision and be provided with a reasonable opportunity to respond and/or make submissions about such matters.
Outcome	All complaints will be addressed with the intent of achieving a transparent and fair outcome.
Privacy and confidentiality	Details of complaints will be limited to appropriate persons depending on the nature of the complaint, line manager, and privacy considerations.
Procedural fairness	Complaints will be managed in accordance with the standards of procedural fairness. The complainant and/or the respondent can request a review of their complaint by an independent person from within Irabina if they believe that it has not been managed fairly.
Responsiveness	Feedback and complaints will be acknowledged promptly, addressed according to urgency, and complainants (and respondents) will be kept informed throughout the process.

Visibility and access

The process for making a complaint and investigating it (or providing feedback) is communicated clearly, is easy to access and understood by stakeholders.

6. Preparation for raising a Compliments, feedback, or complaints

Irabina encourages clients, stakeholders, and staff who may wish to submit compliments, feedback, or complaints to:

- Carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss.
- Remember you may not have all the facts relation to the issues that you want to raise.
- Think about how the matter could be resolved.

They can submit the Compliments, feedback or complaints via either:

- Email to feedback@irabina.com
- Website <https://www.irabina.com/contact-us/>
- Call us on 03 9720 1118
- Visit any of our site in Bayswater, Pakenham, or Bundoora. Our reception team is to assist you.
- Post to Irabina Autism Services, 52 Stud Road Bayswater Victoria 3153

7. Irabina complaint process

Irabina's complaint policy and process is in place to assess and aim to resolve all complaints received.

- Complainant may nominate a person they want as the key contact regarding this complaint.
- Complainant will receive acknowledgement within 5 working days of your complaint being received.
- Quality team will investigate your complaint and if necessary, will contact the complainant to obtain further information.
- Quality team will resolve the complaint within 28 days and will keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation. Quality team will also contact the complainant if the issue requires a longer time to process.
- If Quality team are unable to investigate the complaint, they will contact the complainant and let them know the reason.

All anonymous complaints will be recorded in the Irabina internal complaints register.

7.1 Complaint received

Once compliments, feedback, or complaint received by the Quality team via the above method, we can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for the client, stakeholders, or staff, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.

The clients, stakeholders and staff have the right to complain anonymously or confidentially; the Quality team will explain how these options may limit what we can do to resolve complaints.

If external advice is required while responding to the complaint, it will be sought anonymously, or Irabina will contact the complainant to seek consent.

7.2 Information gathering

Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Quality Team or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.

7.3 Response

Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Quality team to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting the Quality team are unable to resolve the complaint together, the Quality team will work with the complainant to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. In some circumstances, the Chief Governance, Risk and Compliance Officer may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.

7.4 Timeline

The Quality team will acknowledge receipt of complaint within five (5) working days and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the Quality team may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of the complaint. Quality team is to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 28 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, the Quality team will consult with the complainant and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

7.5 Resolution

Where appropriate, Irabina may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- An apology or expression of regret.
- A change of decision
- A change of policy, procedure, or practice.
- Other actions consistent with Irabina's values that are intended to support the clients, stakeholders, and staff.

7.6 Escalation

If the complainant prefer to take the complaint to an external oversight body, they can be referred to these organisations at any stage of the complaints process:

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) is an independent Commonwealth agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services.

A complaint can be made to the NDIS Commission through one of the following:

- Phone: 1800 035 544 or TTY 133 677
- National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a [complaint contact form](#).

Disability Services Commissioner

The Disability Services Commissioner works with people with a disability, and disability services to resolve complaints in Victoria.

Contact the Disability Services Commissioner via phone: 1800 677 342 or submit an [online form](#).

Health Complaints Commissioner

The Health Complaints Commissioner receives and resolves complaints about healthcare and the handling of health information in Victoria.

Contact the Health Complaints Commissioner via phone: 1300 582 113 or submit an [online form](#).

Mental Health Complaints Commissioner

The Mental Health Complaints Commissioner can assist you if your complaint is about a public mental health service in Victoria.

Contact the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner via phone: 1800 246 054 or submit an [online form](#).

Victorian Ombudsman

The Ombudsman has the power to investigate complaints about State and local government authorities. The Ombudsman investigates complaints made about decisions, actions, or inaction by these bodies.

Contact the Victorian Ombudsman via phone: 1800 806 314 or submit an [online form](#).

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

If you're concerned your personal information has been mishandled, you first need to complain to the organisation or agency you think has mishandled it. If they don't respond to your complaint within 30 days or you're not happy with their response, you can lodge a complaint with the OAIC.

Contact the OIAC via phone: 1300 363 991 or submit an [online form](#).

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)

You can make a complaint about any service provided by the department or one of its funded service providers.

Contact the DFFH via phone: 1300 884 706 or submit an [online form](#).

8. Key Responsibilities

All Executive Team members and Managers are responsible for:

- Promoting a culture of effective complaint management in their area of responsibility.
- Managing complaints in accordance with the Complaints Management Policy.
- Conformance with specific requirements of funding bodies and contracts in regard to complaints management.

Role	Responsibility
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures there is an effective Complaints Management System in place and reviews the adequacy of the system in managing complaints on a regular basis. • Provides resources to ensure the implementation of policy and procedures relating to complaints management. • Managing escalated complaints and complaint reviews. • Reporting any significant complaints to the Irabina Board and/or the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.

Compliments Feedback and Complaints Policy

Role	Responsibility
Executive Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the effective management of complaints in their portfolios. Analyse feedback and manage escalated complaints, make decisions on complaint resolution for escalated complaints. Drive and facilitate relevant process and quality improvements. Communicate with complainant and respondent for escalated complaints where required.
Quality Team / Chief Governance Risk and Compliance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate complaint resolution with Irabina Management, Executive Team member or CEO where required. Ensure each complaint, resolution and relevant decisions are recorded; follow up with relevant Manager or Executive Manager where required. Prepare quarterly Complaints and Feedback Report
Chief Financial Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures there is an effective system to record and manage complaints and reviews the adequacy of the system in managing complaints on a regular basis. Reports any significant complaints to Irabina Board or to the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure complaints received are responded to and resolved within timelines specified in this Policy. Record all complaints, resolutions, and decisions in a relevant register, as specified by Quality team. Escalate complaints as required. Pass feedback received from stakeholders to relevant staff, analyse changes required and make relevant recommendations to Executive Team where required.
Employees/Volunteers	<p>Irabina employees are responsible for ensuring complaints are acknowledged, recorded and are accountable for actions taken as a result of a complaint.</p>

9. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Client	All end users (parents/guardian/carers, those with autism and related conditions, Professionals, Schools, etc) of goods or services provided by Irabina or is directly affected by the services
Complaint	In this policy, the term 'complaint' is defined as being: "[an] expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products or service, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response to resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected." (Australian Standard, AS ISO 10002-2014)
Complainant	The person making a complaint.
Compliment	A compliment is an expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude about a service that is funded, regulated, or provided. It may be about an individual staff member, a team, or a service.
Feedback	An opinion, suggestion, or expression of interest in services or the complaint handling process that may not require a formal investigation but will inform continuous improvement.
Respondent	The Irabina staff member/s who are the subject of a complaint.
Stakeholder	Includes current and ex-clients and their families or carers, members of the public and other service providers.

10. Related Documents

Consumer Charter

Continuous Improvement Policy

Records Management Procedure

11. References

[Australian Standard, AS ISO 10002-2014](#)