

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

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Responsible person	Chris Armitage	Approved by Board on	6 February 2020
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INTRODUCTION

The Global EverGreening Alliance (the Alliance) is committed to mitigating the risk of damage to the reputation of the Alliance and the broader sector within which the Alliance operates. We recognize that any alleged or real misdeeds of the Alliance may lead to detrimental outcomes in the organization and sector. Accordingly, the Alliance will adhere to the following protocols for investigating and responding to complaints, and commits to maintaining a fair, accessible and transparent complaints system both in Australia and overseas, and to providing staff and volunteers with this policy and training them in its implementation.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- a) provide a structure for and means of responding to complaints made against the Alliance;
- b) communicate and share responsibility with all Alliance members and personnel in responding to complaints; and
- c) ensure sufficiently robust protocols and systems for compliance are in place to ensure consistency and appropriate rigor in the handling of complaints (see the GEA Complaints Handling Procedures).

DEFINITIONS

Complaint means a formal expression of dissatisfaction or discontent about someone or something related to their behaviour or its products or services, or the complaint handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complainant means a person, organisation or its representative, making a complaint.

Inquiry means a request for information or an explanation.

Feedback means opinions, comments, suggestion and expressions of interest in the products or the complaint handling process.

Serious incidents include all misconduct allegations involving vulnerable people, as well as other critical aspects. To help determine whether an incident is 'serious', the Alliance will consider risk; risk to the complainant, risk to others, risk to the agency, and risk to the wider sector. At a minimum, serious incidents include any allegations relation to the sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of vulnerable persons, including children; fraud and financial wrongdoing.

Stakeholder or interested party means a person or group having an interest in the performance or success of the organisation.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Board, staff/volunteers and other representatives of the Alliance. This policy will be extended to implementing partners by MOUs/Partnership Agreements.

POLICY

The Alliance will only consider complaints relating to breaches of Alliance Policies, the ACFID Code of Conduct and/or other relevant laws or regulations; and only where the Alliance's complaints handling process is appropriate to the nature of the complaint. The channels for submitting complaints are described in the Alliances' Complaints Handling Procedures. Where a complaint applies to another organisation, it will be referred on to that organisation.

In addition:

- a) anonymous complaints will not be accepted by the Alliance;
- b) in general, the Alliance will accept complaints made in writing or orally, and where the complainant is willing for his/her organisation (if any) to be made aware of the details of the complaint. The identity and other information relating to the complainant may be kept confidential in exceptional circumstances where the complainant identifies themselves as being at risk if their identity is revealed;
- c) the Alliance will respond to a complaint through the internal complaints handling process of the relevant organization (if any);
- d) where there are more appropriate avenues for dealing with a complaint, (e.g. complaints relating to alleged breaches of Australian law, such as: employment of staff, third party providers, taxation, charities legislation, etc.) the complaint may require external evaluation by the relevant authority in addition to the Alliance's investigation;
- e) where the Alliance chooses not to investigate a matter, the complainant or guardians or advocates (where the complainants are children or young people) will be promptly notified and, where appropriate, provided with advice as to what alternative avenues for dealing with the complaint may be open to the complainant;
- f) the Alliance may initiate its own inquiry into matters related to a complaint;
- g) the Alliance may continue to investigate a complaint against an individual or organisation during the handling process; and
- h) complaints will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality possible without affecting the investigation
- i) the Alliance will prioritise and escalate as per our Complaint Handling Procedure, any complaint that involves a serious incident.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Complaints Handling Procedures
Human Rights Policy and Procedure
Child Safeguarding and Protection Procedures

REVISION HISTORY

Revision Date	Revision no:	Summary description of revision(s) made	Section(s) changed:
19 December 2019	1	Refinement of reporting channels and scope	Introduction and Policy

AUTHORISATION



6 February 2020
Global EverGreening Alliance Ltd