



MONARO RETIREMENT VILLAGES

COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY

Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that we handle complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively. This policy provides guidance to our clients (the residents) and members who wish to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

This policy is intended to provide:

- (a) a process for the resolution of complaints made by residents, including complaints made by persons acting on behalf of residents, and
- (b) a process for the resolution of internal disputes between a resident and the operator, or between 2 or more residents.

1.2 Definitions

“The organisation” are the members from time to time, including committee members, of Monaro Retirement Villages Limited.

“the committee” is any member from time to time of the Monaro Retirement Villages Limited management committee.

“the client” or *“the resident”* is a resident who ordinarily resides in a unit managed by the Monaro Retirement Villages committee and Monaro Retirement Villages Limited.

“staff” are all volunteers or otherwise who assist in the management of the Monaro Retirement Village units, including members of the committee.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors and our governing body (the committee), receiving or managing complaints from the public and clients made to or about us, regarding our units, services and staff, or our complaint handling process.

This policy also applies to all residents who may have a complaint about another resident, or between two or more residents.

1.4 Organisational commitment

This organisation expects clients, staff and members at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. We expect all staff to treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints. The committee undertakes to assist people to make a complaint, if needed; to be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints to resolve matters promptly; to comply with our policy and associated procedures; to consider ways to improve our complaints management system; and to implement changes arising from individual complaints from the analysis of a complaint, if the need arises.

Terms

2.1 Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

An expression of dissatisfaction made by one resident with respect to the behaviour of another resident or residents.

2.2 Complaint handling/management system

All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.

2.3 Dispute

An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.

2.4 Feedback

Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

2.5 Grievance

A clear, formal written statement by an individual staff member about another staff member or a work-related problem.

2.6 Policy

A statement of instruction that sets out how we should fulfil our vision, mission and goals.

2.7 Procedure

A statement or instruction that sets out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.

Simplifying complaints – Our People Focus

- 3.1 We are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures and complaint handling. Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame.

People making complaints will be:

- provided with information about our complaint handling process
- listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate, and
- provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.

- 3.2 No detriment to people making complaints

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

3.3 Anonymous complaints

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.

3.4 Accessibility

We will ensure that information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is easily accessible on request. We will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance. If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/ or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation).

3.6 No charge

Complaining to us is free.

Response to complaints

4.1 Early resolution

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with us. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology to the person making the complaint.

4.2 How We Facilitate complaints

Step 1: Facilitate complaint

Step 2: Acknowledge & respond to complaints

Step 3: Manage and resolve the complaint.

4.3 Responsiveness

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints. We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately. We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- the complaints process
- the expected time frames for our actions
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- their likely involvement in the process, and
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate). We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

4.4 Objectivity and fairness

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about. Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly.

4.5 Responding flexibly

The committee are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives. We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

4.6 Confidentiality

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by us as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

Managing the parties to a complaint

5.1 Complaints involving multiple agencies

Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, we will work with the other organisation/s where possible, to ensure that communication with the person making a complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated. Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint. Where our services are contracted out, we expect contracted service providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system. We take complaints not only about the actions of our staff but also the actions of our service providers.

5.2 Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints

We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time our success depends on:

- our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- the health, safety and security of our staff, and
- our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

5.3 Alternative avenues for dealing with complaints

We will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any internal or external review options available to them (including any relevant Ombudsman or oversight regulatory bodies).

MONARO RETIREMENT VILLAGES
PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINT HANDLING

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When responding to complaints, the committee (paid and volunteer) act in accordance with complaint handling procedures as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints. We will also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

The five key stages in our complaint management system are set out below

1. Receive

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, we will record the complaint and its supporting information.

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant information, and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

2. Acknowledge

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and within 5 working days. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

3. Assess and investigate

3.1 Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people’s health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

3.2 Investigating the complaint

After assessing the complaint, we will consider how to manage it. We may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation;
- Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, or
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

We will keep the person making the complaint up-to-date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. We will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

4. Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- The reason/s for our decision
- The remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

We will advise the complainant of the result of their complaint, and finalise management of the complaint, within 60 days of receiving it.

5. Close the complaint: document and analyse data

5.1 Document

We will keep records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations), and

- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes.

5.2 Analyse data

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the committee.