

# Complaints Handling Policy

Reconciliation  
Tasmania



## Introduction

This Policy applies to all Reconciliation Tasmania Board members, staff and volunteers who receive or manage complaints about us and/or our services, protocols, products and complaint handling.

Reconciliation Tasmania is committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive culture for everyone. Board members, staff, volunteers, Aboriginal Elders and community members, industry clients, other contacts and members of the public, have the right to make a complaint, and have it dealt with in a manner that is fair, efficient and effective. Complaints will be investigated. The rules of natural justice will apply.<sup>1</sup>

## Complaints process

The following flow-chart outlines the steps involved in the complaints handling process that are outlined in the following sections. Reconciliation Tasmania will make every effort to deal with complaints in a timely manner while ensuring procedural fairness.



<sup>1</sup> Natural justice requires that a person must receive adequate notice and may respond to the complaint made against them and has the right to a fair and unbiased hearing before a decision is made that may negatively affect them.

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## Step 1: Making a complaint

Reconciliation Tasmania will make every effort to ensure that people making complaints (and/or their representative) will be:

- provided with our complaints handling process (this document) and Code of Ethics
- listened to and treated with respect
- not adversely affected by the process
- be kept actively involved and informed of the complaint's progression
- provided with the outcome and options for review

### *Writing a complaint*

Complaints can be made in writing, in person or via phone. The person taking the complaint should seek all relevant information, including (but not limited to):

- what the complaint is about (e.g., what happened, when it happened, where it happened, names and/or positions of people involved)
- the part(s) of the Code of Ethics or service agreements that allegedly have been breached (if relevant)
- any available evidence of the complaint
- any other supporting information
- any specific requests or desired outcomes
- contact information for further information and to advise the outcome<sup>2</sup>

## Step 2: Complaint submission

The complaint should be marked private and confidential, and sent to the appropriate person as outlined below:

1. If the complaint is about a Reconciliation Tasmania staff member, volunteer or member, or a service, product or practice, then the complaint should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer
2. If the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer or a Board Member, the complaint should be sent to the Board Co-Chairs
3. If the complaint is about a Board Chair, the complaint should be sent to a Co-Chair

Complaints may be lodged in person, by telephone, by email or by writing to Reconciliation TAS at PO Box 359, South Hobart 7004. Contact details of the relevant person can be found on the website: <https://rectas.com.au/contact>

### *On receipt of a complaint*

Reconciliation Tasmania will acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the person making the complaint within seven (7) days. The person who is the subject of the complaint (if relevant) will be notified within seven (7) days of the fact but not the detail of the complaint.

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<sup>2</sup> Complaints may be made anonymously. An investigation will be conducted if enough information is provided.

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The complaint will be treated with strict confidentiality until such time as it has been fully investigated and finally determined. The person making the complaint will also be expected to observe confidentiality.

### Step 3: Investigating the complaint

#### *Early resolution*

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact. When appropriate, Reconciliation Tasmania may offer an explanation or apology to the person making the complaint and should always thank the person for providing feedback.

#### *Initial assessment*

When determining how a complaint will be managed, Reconciliation Tasmania 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
- Determine whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations (e.g., Tas Police, WorkSafe Tasmania, professional mediation services, legal services, etc.)
- Appoint an appropriate investigator, ensuring that any conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly
- Inform appropriate persons as soon as possible about the complaints process, the expected time frames, the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delays, their likely involvement in the process and the possible outcomes of the complaint

#### *Investigating the complaint*

Reconciliation Tasmania will implement investigative actions that are appropriate to each complaint and with consideration of any legal requirements. This may include:

- gathering further information and evidence about the claims made about an issue, person or service in the complaint
- assessing and investigating the complaint in an appropriate manner
- facilitating resolution where the investigator reviews the matter and attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties
- making recommendations to resolve the complaint

The person who is subject of the complaint (if relevant) will be given information regarding the nature and evidence for the complaint and, with adequate notice, may respond to the complaint made against them. They have the right to a fair and unbiased hearing before a decision is made that may negatively affect them.

### Step 4: Outcome of the complaint

A report will be delivered to the Reconciliation Tasmania CEO or Board Co-Chair(s) in confidence following assessment and investigation of the complaint. The CEO or Board Co-Chair(s) will consider the report and decide on the recommendations put before it.

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### *Possible outcomes*

The Reconciliation Tasmania CEO or Board Co-Chair(s) will determine the appropriate course of action. Should there be a finding that there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct, the CEO or Board Co-Chair(s) has the authority to impose any or all the following:

- request the person make a formal written apology in relation to the complaint
- request the person undertake a particular training course or receive appropriate instruction
- remove the person from the Reconciliation Tasmania Board or terminate employment or voluntary position
- Expel the person from membership of Reconciliation Tasmania

### *Outcome advised*

Reconciliation Tasmania will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- the outcome of the complaint and any actions taken
- the reason/s for the decision
- the remedy or resolution/s 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 to the ombudsmen
- check satisfaction of the complainant

## Step 5: Documentation of the complaint

Reconciliation Tasmania will keep records about:

- how the complaint was managed
- 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

Reconciliation Tasmania will ensure that any recommendations are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the Chief Executive Officer and the Co-Chairs of Reconciliation Tasmania.

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