



## COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

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| ORGANISATION:                 | Kokoda Track Foundation |
| ACN:                          | 103 660 948             |
| POLICY TITLE:                 | Complaints Handling     |
| VERSION:                      | 4.0                     |
| STATUS:                       | Final                   |
| ALLIED POLICIES / PROCEDURES: | Code of Conduct         |
| OWNER:                        | Senior Management       |
| APPROVED BY:                  | CEO & Board             |
| LAST UPDATE:                  | 01.06.2018              |
| NEXT REVIEW DATE:             | 01.06.2019              |

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### PURPOSE

KTF seeks to resolve difficulties, grievances, and complaints in a prompt, impartial and just manner. Via the process of resolving complaints KTF seeks to improve the quality of its work, enhance the trust and confidence of stakeholders, identify areas of work that need to be improved, and ensure that KTF learns from the feedback provided through this process.

This Complaints Handling Policy outlines the processes to be undertaken by stakeholders and KTF in order for complaints to be appropriately dealt with and that will ensure a fair and timely complaints handling process, ultimately strengthening KTF's accountability and efficiency as an organisation.

### DEFINITION

KTF defines complaints as:

“Any expression of dissatisfaction or grievance made against the Kokoda Track Foundation or against one or more of its directors, staff, suppliers, partners, volunteers or anyone else acting on its behalf, where the organisation has allegedly failed to meet a requirement. The commitment might be related to Kokoda Track Foundation's activities, use of resources, mission and values, staff conduct/behavior, or a legal requirement.”

### RECORDING COMPLAINTS

All complaints made, verbally or in writing, will be recorded via KTF's Complaints Handling Form and KTF's Complaints Handling Log at the time that the complaint is made, or as soon as possible afterwards. The KTF representative who takes the complainant's details will record the complaint.

When taking a complaint, the KTF representative will record the name and contact details of the complainant, as well as full details of the complaint including the date. Details of all communication with the complainant and any actions to resolve the complaint will be recorded in the same place.

Recorded complaints will also be monitored for any ongoing trends by management and efforts to resolve any ongoing issues.

Personal details given by the individual or organisation, or details of their complaint will be recorded in a safe place and will not be divulged to third parties unless KTF has the complainant's written consent. Complaints are treated in a safe and confidential manner.

### RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

KTF strives to resolve all complaints within 10 days. In regards to complaints relating to financial matters, KTF aims to respond to all complaints within 48 hours. Written complaints will be acknowledged promptly.

Individuals and organisations will be given an approximate timeframe at the time they make their complaint. Individuals and organisations will be informed of the progress of their complaint, especially if there are any delays or changes to what has been agreed.

Individuals and organizations will be informed of any actions taken as a result of their complaint.

Where appropriate, individuals and organizations who have had a complaint resolved will be contacted at a later date to see if they are happy with how their complaint was handled.

Management will resolve a complaint by implementing the Complaints Handling Procedures.

## COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURES

KTF will handle informal and formal complaints via the following steps:

### *i. Advertising the complaints mechanism*

Kokoda Track Foundation advertises on its official website ([www.ktf.ngo](http://www.ktf.ngo)) how individuals and organisations can make a complaint against the KTF and outlines the Complaints Handling Procedures.

### *ii. Receiving complaints*

There are different channels to which complaints can be made and recorded.

General complaints about any aspect of Kokoda Track Foundation and its work should be sent to the KTF's general e-mail address: [info@ktf.ngo](mailto:info@ktf.ngo)

Complaints requiring the attention of the CEO should be sent directly to the CEO.

Complaints about the CEO should be sent directly to the Chair.

Complaints may also be sent to the Kokoda Track Foundation's official postal address:

Kokoda Track Foundation  
PO Box 184  
Balmain NSW 2041

Verbal complaints can be made over the phone by contacting the office number (02) 9252 2992 during business hours from 9am to 5pm.

Complaints can also be made via a range of reporting mechanisms in-country including partner review meetings, program planning, implementation, review and monitoring meetings, community consultations, monitoring and/or evaluation activities, program updates, and general discussions with KTF staff.

Staff handling the complaint will ensure that the internal contact of all complaints is informed and that the Complaints Record Form is completed. Staff handling the complaint have received training and will handle the complaint in a safe and confidential manner.

### *iii. Clarifying complaints (informal and formal)*

All staff who receive complaints need to be able to clarify two important things: clarify what the complaint is and determine whether it is one to which Kokoda Track Foundation is able to respond to.

Staff receiving and clarifying complaints need to be capable of analysis, patience, and diplomacy. If a complaint does not fit with KTF's definition of complaint, then the complainant should, politely, be turned away. If the complaint is about another organisation then this should be pointed out to the complainant; if it is possible to direct the complainant to someone else who will deal with their complaint then this should be done.

### *iv. Resolving complaints:*

#### Resolving informal complaints

The majority of complaints KTF receives will be informal complaints and can be resolved immediately with common sense and knowledge of the programs. Staff handling complaints must be encouraged and supported to do this if at all possible. If a complaint is immediately resolved, the staff recording the complaint should still record details on a Complaints Record Form. Complaints Record Forms should be kept confidential at all times.

#### Resolving formal complaints

KTF understands that formal and more complex complaints about programs and/or staff cannot be resolved immediately or easily. If the complaints are programs related, they are likely to require time, effort and analysis to resolve. Others may be more complex and may require additional support (e.g., audit etc)

Formal complaints will be investigated. The person handling the complaint will:

- i. Establish the facts and gather relevant information
- ii. If necessary and/or practicable, interview those involved

Complainants will receive a response outlining the outcome of the complaint or, if it's a complex matter, when it will be investigated further and how long it is likely to take.

KTF will let the complainant know the outcome of the investigation, which may include: corrective action being taken; timeline for implementation; and person/role addressing the issue. KTF's CEO oversees this process.

If a complaint cannot be resolved by the usual complaint process, it will be referred to the Board of Directors and the complainant will be informed and given an amended timeframe for resolution.

If KTF cannot resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, we will inform them about where they can take further action (including the Australian Council for International Development and the Equal Opportunity Commission).

### *v. Learning from complaints and amending our practice appropriately*

KTF understands that the outcome of the complaints process will assist KTF to identify any issues that need to be addressed in our program delivery, staff and board of directors, policies and procedures, and/or ways of working so that similar complaints do not arise in the future. KTF will undertake all necessary steps to ensure that similar complaints do not recur.

## INDUCTION AND TRAINING STAFF

KTF will ensure that sufficient training will be provided to members of staff and board directors who are handling complaints. The training will include elements around:

- Receiving complaints: listening and empathy skills;
- Responding to complaints: using tact, understanding the complainant point of view and responding using constructive language;
- Responding to complaints and complainants in a safe and confidential manner, especially those being made by disadvantaged or vulnerable stakeholders;
- Investigating the complaint: gathering factual information, interviewing skills;
- Handling difficult complainants: how to respond under pressure.

This policy is available for all staff and board directors on a shared drive. Information about the policy is part of the induction process for all new board and staff members.

## REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

KTF is committed to ongoing improvement and the KTF's board of directors and committees will review this policy regularly.

END