



## **CITYCARE**

# **Complaints-Handling Policy & Procedure**

### **Introduction**

Hillsong CityCare Australia ("CityCare") recognises the importance of listening and responding to concerns and complaints and values feedback. We are open to receiving feedback and complaints and will do our best to address and resolve any issues raised.

CityCare's complaints handling policy is consistent with our organisational values of accountability and partnership. We are committed to effectiveness, a high standard of conduct, and ongoing learning. CityCare welcomes feedback and complaints from which we can learn, review our complaints-handling process, maintain and develop relationships with stakeholders, and deal with problems before they worsen.

### **Purpose**

This policy is to ensure that complaints are handled fairly and effectively.

This policy provides guidance for anyone wishing to make a complaint, regarding the key principles, concepts, and processes of our complaint management system.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to CityCare Management, staff, volunteers, and contractors receiving or managing complaints from the public and partners or beneficiaries, made to or about us, regarding our operations, project activity, or personnel.

### **Organisational Commitment**

All staff will understand and comply with the Complaints Handling Policy, by:

- Being aware of the Complaints Handling Policy and procedures;
- Treating all people with respect, including those who make complaints;
- Assisting people who wish to make complaints to access our complaints process; and
- Being alert to complaints and assisting staff handling complaints to resolve matters promptly.

Staff who hold responsibility for managing complaints will demonstrate quality complaint handling practices, by:

- Ensuring the Complaints Handling Policy and procedures are accessible to all relevant stakeholders;
- Treating all people with respect, including those who make complaints;
- Assisting people to make complaints, as required;

- Complying with the procedures outlined in this policy to effectively respond to complaints;
- Respecting confidentiality and privacy and behaving in a respectful and cooperative manner; and
- Providing feedback to management on recommended improvements to the complaints management system and implementing changes arising from complaints or review.

CityCare Management will promote a culture that values feedback and the effective resolution of complaints, by:

- Reviewing complaints and reporting to CityCare Management on complaint handling;
- Supporting and providing direction to key staff handling complaints; and
- Inviting and supporting recommendations for improving the complaints handling system.

## **Strategies**

### **1. ACCESSIBILITY**

We are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, operations, projects, and complaint handling.

We will ensure that information about our complaint handling process is readily accessible including through our website, is communicated in a relevant way, and that our complaint management systems are easy to understand.

We will treat complainants with respect at all times and actively involve them in the complaint handling process where appropriate. We will deal with complaints in a reasonable timeframe and provide reasons for our decisions and any options for review.

Where relevant, we will communicate with a complainant's chosen representative in making and/or resolving their complaint.

Complaints involving a child will be referred to the Safe Church Office operated by Hillsong Church Australia Limited. CityCare personnel receiving complaints from children will act according to the Hillsong Safe Church Policy and Procedures.

Complaints involving health and safety, including food, will be referred to the Safe Church Office operated by Hillsong Church Australia Limited.

Complaints involving a breach in code of conduct by a staff member will be referred to HR, centrally operated by Hillsong International Limited.

We will accept anonymous complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will investigate where there is enough information.

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that complainants are not adversely affected because of a complaint made by them or on their behalf.

### **2. RESPONSIVENESS**

Complaints will be resolved at first contact with us, where possible. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology to the complainant. We will take flexible approaches to resolving complaints with reduced formality where possible.

We will promptly acknowledge complaints and assess and prioritise complaints based on the urgency and seriousness of the issues raised. A matter will be escalated if an immediate risk to safety or security is perceived.

We will inform complainants as soon as possible of our complaints procedure including their likely involvement, expected timeframes, progress, delays and reasons for delays, and the possible or likely outcome.

If we are unable to deal with an element of a complaint we will advise the complainant about where such a complaint may be directed if known and appropriate.

Each complaint will be addressed with integrity, objectivity and equity. We will protect the confidentiality, privacy and identity of complainants where practical and appropriate in line with relevant privacy legislation.

A staff member whose conduct is the subject of a complaint will not handle the complaint. Actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be managed responsibly, particularly in the instance of internal reviews of complaint management which will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

### **3. EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT**

Where a complaint involves other organisations or multiple internal stakeholders, we will cooperate with other organisations where possible and ensure that communication and information-sharing among all parties is clear and coordinated, subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations.

We expect our contracted service providers to have an appropriate complaint management system and will take complaints about any service providers seriously.

Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness of our complaint management system.

We will take proactive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects the progress, effectiveness or efficiency of our work, including impacts on the health and safety of our personnel.

We will inform complainants about any internal or external review options available to them, including any Ombudsman or oversight regulatory bodies.

There are three levels of complaints handling:

- Level 1. Frontline complaint handling and early resolution.
- Level 2. Internal review of complaints and/or complaint handling (may include further investigation and use of alternative dispute resolution options).
- Level 3. External review of complaints and/or complaint handling.

### **4. ACCOUNTABILITY**

CityCare will ensure that complaints are recorded and easily accessible for reporting and review by management. Information recorded will include:

- the number of complaints received,
- the outcome of complaints,
- issues arising from complaints,
- any systemic issues identified, and
- the number of requests for review of our complaint handling.

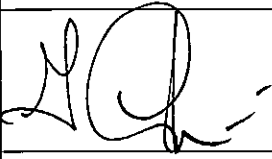
We are committed to implementing appropriate system changes arising out of the review and analysis of systems and complaints data.

Reports and their analysis will be provided to CityCare Management for review at least annually.

Our complaint management system will be monitored to ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints, and identifying and correcting deficiencies in operation.

## Policy Review

This Policy is to be reviewed every three years with lessons learned incorporated into future versions. Hillsong CityCare Australia management will oversee the review and staff will be consulted in this process.

Version	5.06.2018	Drafted by	Leonie Quayle
Authorised by	George Aghajanian General Manager Hillsong Church		
Signed		Date approved	19.06.2018
Effective date	19.06.2018	Review date	19.06.2021
Applicability	Hillsong CityCare Australia staff, representatives, and partners.		



## CITYCARE

### Complaints-Handling Procedure

#### Introduction

All CityCare personnel are to act in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures, while also considering any other relevant legislation or regulations when responding to feedback and complaints.

Complaints may be made by a Partner organisation, staff member, volunteer, a person affected by CityCare projects or services, donors, or members of the public.

The six stages of Complaints Handling:



Feedback, complaints or concerns may be provided by email, mail, phone or in person.

Email: [citycare@hillsong.com](mailto:citycare@hillsong.com) (please indicate the nature of your email in the subject)

Phone: 02 8853 5391

Mail: PO Box 1195 Castle Hill NSW 1765 Australia

A complaint may be registered in person with a CityCare staff member, CityCare Management, or the Head of Social Justice Hillsong Australia.

#### 1. RECEIVE

If a complaint has not been resolved at the outset, it will be recorded along with supporting information, and the file assigned with an identifying code.

Information recorded will include contact information for the complainant, the date the complaint was received, issues raised by the complainant and their desired outcome/s, other relevant information, and any additional support the complainant requires.

Complaints involving a child will be referred to the Safe Church Office operated by Hillsong Church Australia Limited and must be reported in line with the *Reporting a Concern or Disclosure of Harm* process outlined in the Safe Church Policy and Procedures.

Complaints involving health and safety will be referred to the Safe Church Office and must follow the Health and Safety incident reporting process.

Complaints involving a breach in code of conduct by a staff member will be referred to the HR Team and should follow their relevant processes.

## **2. ACKNOWLEDGE**

We will aim to acknowledge written complaints within 5 working days of being received, via an appropriate medium. An explanation or apology may be offered when appropriate.

Verbal complaints should be acknowledged immediately. If there is another staff member who is better placed to handle the complaint, the relevant details are to be passed on to them in a timely and comprehensive manner.

## **3. ASSESS**

Listen to the complainant and clarify any facts and underlying issues.

Consider whether the complaint is within our control.

Consider the outcome being sought by the complainant and whether there are separate issues needing to be 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 health and safety,
- How the complainant is being affected,
- The risks involved if resolution is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires other organisations to be involved.

“Simple complaints” can be investigated quickly and the correct response is readily apparent. In this instance, planning and investigation is not required.

“Detailed complaints” are more serious and require investigation. Any complaints related to child protection, financial misconduct, illegal activity, discrimination, bullying or health and safety are to be considered detailed and the full complaints handling procedure followed accordingly. All detailed complaints should be brought to the attention of the Head of Social Justice Hillsong Australia.

We will seek to determine within 14 business days the seriousness of the issue, whether additional information is needed, and if CityCare has the jurisdiction to investigate.

Complaints may be dismissed for conduct that is deemed to be unreasonable.

## **4. INVESTIGATE**

In considering how to manage the complaint, we may:

- Give the complainant information or an explanation,
- Gather information about the issue, person, or areas related to the complaint, and/or
- Investigate the claims made in the complainant.

An investigation will be planned as required. Any actions to be taken will be tailored for each case and take into account any statutory requirements. The complainant will be kept up-to-date on progress and any delays. The investigation stage may take up to 30 days and an investigation report will be prepared.

Where an investigation reveals serious or wilful misconduct, steps taken will follow other relevant policy responses to the behaviours identified, including the Hillsong Performance and Misconduct Policy and including any external obligations to report. CityCare Management and the Head of Social Justice Hillsong Australia will be advised of any misconduct investigations and their outcome.

## **5. DETERMINE OUTCOME & RESPOND**

The complainant will be contacted through an appropriate medium and advised of:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took,
- The reason/s for our decision,
- The proposed remedy or resolutions, and
- Any available options for the complainant to review.

## **6. CLOSE - DOCUMENT & ANALYSE**

Documentation will be kept regarding how we managed the complaint, the outcome, and any outstanding actions to be followed up.

Any systemic issues requiring action will be considered. We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to management.