

Nambour Community centre Inc: Feedback, complaints & appeals

1. Purpose:

The handling of feedback, complaints and appeals helps us to maintain and improve our service quality and ensure clients have their issues resolved. Feedback, complaints and appeals processes give clients a way of expressing any dissatisfaction with our service and of having their concern dealt with quickly and effectively. It also provides us with the opportunity to improve our service delivery. The procedures guide us in responding appropriately and fairly to complaints and to appeals.

Seeking feedback from clients/participants and community members is the most positive and appropriate way to ensure that our services are meeting the needs of the target group. It also ensures that the service delivery is continually improving.

Nambour Community Centre aims to operate within a framework of practice that is evidence-based. This means that workers endeavour to obtain feedback from people who access services/programs, about their experience of the service/programs provided by Nambour Community Centre. The feedback is used, as part of an action-reflection process, to further plan for and develop service delivery approaches.

Opportunities for feedback are provided to clients/participants in a range of ways in all program areas. Action-reflection processes are those which are rigorous and systematic. Therefore Nambour Community Centre routinely engages in feedback processes that:

- Seek opinions from either all participants of a program, or, from an appropriately numbered random sample; and
- Seek feedback at regular, specified times in the calendar year; and
- Use this feedback in planning and review processes to further develop programs and services.

1. Scope

Scope:

This policy will apply to Management Committee; Manager; Program Coordinators; Staff and Volunteers

Responsibility:

Manager

Principles:

Evidence-based practice; social justice, fairness, access & equity, self-determination, informed consent, confidentiality/privacy, respect, accountability

Definition:

Nambour Community Centre defines a client, participant, service user or community member as anyone accessing the centre including: tenants, people engaged in service delivery and community development activities and groups, parents of children, constituents, and people who are general users of the centre and its facilities.

1. Policy statement:

Nambour Community Centre is committed to facilitating our clients' right to make a complaint about our service, to appeal a decision we have made that directly concerns them, and to ensuring that their complaint or appeal is fairly assessed and responded to promptly.

Specifically:

- Nambour Community Centre aims to develop a culture of service delivery that encourages open and honest communication with service users and workers
- Nambour Community Centre acknowledges no one particular process will be adequate for the range of feedback required to gauge appropriate responses for all program areas
- Processes to obtain feedback should ensure confidentiality and anonymity for those providing feedback and complaints
- Records of feedback and complaints will be maintained and used in planning and review processes
- Feedback and complaints

1. Procedure:

1. Information about our feedback, complaints and appeals procedure

We want our clients to feel able to voice their feedback or complaint with any aspect of our service, and to be confident that our organisation will manage their complaints well and respond quickly and appropriately. All clients are informed of their rights and responsibilities and our complaints by clients policy at the earliest possible stage of their involvement with our service.

Clients are provided with information about their right to make a complaint or to appeal a decision, and the procedures that will be followed if they do. We provide this information in these ways:

- Publically listed on our website - www.nambourcc.org
- Publically listed on our Facebook page - [nambourcommunitycentre](https://www.facebook.com/nambourcommunitycentre)
- Available through workers and volunteers in all programs
- Feedback form and dropbox in open area of centre

1. How clients can provide feedback, make a complaint or appeal a decision

Methods:

- Verbal - face to face or by phone
- Written - formal letter, survey, email, through social media or website
- Third party - such as a government department

- Assisted methods for clients requiring an interpreter or other forms of assistance

Anonymous methods:

Some people may wish to remain anonymous in make their feedback or complaint. This will be respected and not affect the seriousness of investigating the feedback or complaint. However in order for the matter to be fully responded to it will be necessary at some point for conversations to happen between the complainant and either a member of the Nambour Community Centre or a third party intermediary.

Assistance:

Where necessary, assistance may be provided by a worker, on the processes of making a complaint. If a complainant requires interpreter services, or has special needs, the worker dealing with the initial complaint must follow policies and procedures for arranging assistance (Refer to Access and Equity Policy).

Process:

1. Talk it over with the worker or volunteer with whom you have direct contact with; this may be in a particular program or generally within the centre
2. If you are unsatisfied with the situation, or feel you cannot take the matter up with the worker concerned then talk it over with the Manager.

Manager

Phone 5441 4724 or Email manager@nambourcc.org

3. If the matter still remains unresolved, then address your feedback or complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Nambour Community Centre Management Committee.

Chairperson:

Nambour Community Centre, PO Box 1042, Nambour Q 4560

4. Should the Management Committee not address the feedback/complaint satisfactorily, then independent, non legal mediation can occur through the Dispute Resolution Branch of Department of Justice and Attorney General or Department of Communities, Disabilities & Seniors provided willingness exists to resolve the matter from both parties.

**Dispute Resolution Branch of Department of Justice and Attorney General
Phone 1800 017 288 or Mail GPO Box 149, Brisbane Q 4001**

**Contract Management Department of Communities, Disabilities & Seniors
Phone 5431 2250 or Mail PO Box 1126, Caboolture Q 4510**

Responding to feedback/complaints made through a third party:

As outlined above, all complaints will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to resolve them in a timely fashion. Third party complaints may have additional complexity as the third party agency may determine the process through which the complaint will be responded to. On receipt of a third party complaint, Nambour Community Centre will nominate a staff member to act at the point of contact for the management of the complaint.

Withdrawing a complaint:

The complainant may withdraw the complaint at any time through written notification. If during any stage of the process it appears that there is evidence of a criminal or legal offence, the matter will be referred to the Queensland Police.

Complainant rights:

A complainant is entitled to:

- (a) an acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint (unless made anonymously);
- (b) a prompt response to the complaint;
- (c) be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the complaint;
- (d) confidentiality of personal details (insofar as this is possible within the law);
- (e) a thorough and objective investigation or review of a complaint.
- (f) have an understanding that their feedback will not affect other dealings they have with the organisation and its programs and no recriminatory action will be taken as a result of their feedback

Complainant obligations:

To assist in managing this Process we ask that a complainant provide:

- (a) Full details of their name, address and telephone contact number before a complaint will be registered. (unless an Anonymous complaint)
- (b) Sufficient details regarding the complaint issues and outcome sought.

1. How staff and management will respond to feedback, complaints or appeals

Responding to complaints:

All complaints will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to resolve them in a timely fashion (ie acknowledging receipt of the complaint within 48 hours of receiving it) and notifying the complainant of the course of action to be taken.

Timelines for complaints:

Complaints will be responded to as quickly as possible and will depend on an assessment of the following factors:

- (a) The urgency of the situation in terms of loss or damage likely to be suffered if the complaint is not quickly resolved;
- (b) The likelihood that the complaint can be quickly resolved;
- (c) The complexity of the complaint issue/s; and
- (d) Whether the complaint requires internal or external review.

There is an expectation a complainant will be appropriately kept up to date on the progress of the matter where it will take more than 10 business days to respond to the complaint.

Attempt to resolve complaint/ remedies

The Manager should attempt to resolve the complaint either during or at the conclusion of their investigation. Types of remedies (more than one may be applied) may include:

- (a) Admission of fault.
- (b) Explanation.
- (c) Apology.
- (d) Change of decision.
- (e) Change to policy or procedure.
- (f) Repair / rework / replacement.
- (g) Technical assistance.
- (h) Critical reflection.

Decision:

At the completion of the investigation, the Manager should make a decision as to:

- (a) Whether the complaint is upheld.
- (b) What remedy or remedies, if any, will be applied.

Record keeping

In considering and reviewing a complaint matter the Manager needs to keep detailed and accurate records. Records may include:

- (a) Discussions regarding the complaint;
- (b) Investigation and resolution activities regarding the complaint;
- (c) Decisions, actions and outcomes regarding the complaint;
- (d) Any correspondence regarding the complaint;
- (e) Any documents relating to a review, including recommendations and associated decisions or actions relating to the review.

These records are securely stored in the administration filing cabinet.

Responding to feedback:

All feedback is highly valued and will be passed on to the program co-ordinator and/or manager. If appropriate feedback will be presented at staff meetings where a critical reflection process will be undertaken in order to reflect on practice and continually improve services.

1. Other related policies and procedures

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	Client service charter policy Continuous improvement policy Privacy & confidentiality policy Participation policy Employee Policies Access and Equity Policy
Forms or other organisational documents	Feedback/complaints register Feedback/complaints form NCC Model Rules NCC Survey with visitors to centre Incident/Accident form

Documentation and communication: Any decisions requiring policy changes will be recorded in the Minutes of Nambour Community Centre Management Committee meetings and forwarded to the Manager for action and updating of the policy documents. Policy changes relevant to staff and volunteers will be either emailed out and/or discussed at staff meetings.