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## Tenant Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Policy

### Scope

This policy spans all aspects of service delivery by Common Ground Queensland and applies to all tenants of Common Ground Queensland buildings.

### Policy

Common Ground Queensland is committed to facilitating our tenants' right to raise concerns or register their positive experiences about our service and to appeal a decision we have made that directly affects them.

Common Ground Queensland is committed to having processes for managing tenant issues that are legal, ethical, consistent and systematic. This includes:

- Informing tenants about how to make compliments, complaints and appeals known to appropriate staff;
- Addressing complaints and appeals confidentially and objectively and in a timely and culturally appropriate manner that is respectful to both the complainant and the respondent;
- Ensuring support and advocacy is available, through immediate linking with the on-site Support Provider (Micah Projects);
- Advising tenants of the outcomes of their formal complaints or appeals (in writing whenever possible) in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth) and *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld);
- Ensuring tenants are not disadvantaged by raising a complaint or questioning a decision; and
- Ensuring that the outcomes of formal complaints and appeals become inputs to Common Ground Queensland's continuous improvement mechanisms when applicable.

### Definitions

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction with a service or the way the service has been delivered by staff.

An informal complaint is a minor issue or concern that can be resolved informally without the need for investigating and substantiating claims.

A formal complaint is a registered expression of dissatisfaction with any action, decision or quality of service lodged by a complainant or their representative that requires an official resolution or response. It must relate to a specific occurrence or episode, including the non-delivery of service, which has an impact on the individual complainant.

An appeal is a request to have an official decision reviewed.

An incident is an event or circumstance, which could have, or did lead to unintended and/or unnecessary harm to a person and/or loss or damage. Incidents are identified and managed by staff (refer to *Incident Management and Reporting Procedure*).

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Feedback comprises both positive and negative opinions and/or suggestions that imply scope for improvement.

### **Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints**

A frivolous complaint is one that has no serious purpose or value (i.e. a trivial matter where investigation would be disproportionate in terms of time and cost).

A vexatious complaint is one that is initiated without sufficient grounds and serves only to harass, annoy or cause financial cost to the recipient.

Common Ground Queensland recognises that frivolous or vexatious complaints tend to indicate dissatisfaction at some level. Where complaints made are found to be frivolous or vexatious in nature, Common Ground Queensland will endeavour to assist the complainant to work through appropriate processes to resolve their actual concern. If it becomes clear that the complainant is determined to pursue the matter vexatiously, Common Ground Queensland will discontinue communication and take any necessary action to safeguard staff wellbeing and organisational reputation.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

Anonymous complaints will be accepted. However, in circumstances where an anonymous complaint is received, Common Ground Queensland may find it difficult to thoroughly assess or respond to the complaint if there is not enough detail. In this situation the complaint may not be assessed. In addition, if no contact details are provided, complainants will not receive information about the outcome of any action taken by Common Ground Queensland.

### **Policy Exclusions**

- Compliments, complaints or appeals by persons who are not tenants (refer *General Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Policy*);
- General enquiries and requests for information and/or services;
- Neighbourhood disputes – complaints or issues raised by tenants about their neighbours or neighbourhoods (such as noise, vandalism or anti-social behaviour) where Common Ground Queensland does not have the authority to intervene under the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (refer *Tenancy Management (Residential) Procedure*);
- Feedback – opinions or suggestions, positive or negative, given to Common Ground Queensland about its services (refer *Tenant Feedback Policy*); and
- An incident unless it has led to a complaint (refer *Incident Management and Reporting Procedure*).

### **Procedures that Implement**

This policy will be actively implemented by adherence to the following procedures:

- Communication with Tenants Procedure
- Incident Management and Reporting Procedure
- Privacy and Confidentiality Procedure
- Starting a Tenancy Procedure
- Tenancy Management (Residential) Procedure
- Tenant Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Tenant Feedback Procedure