



Complaints Resolution Policy

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy is intended to ensure that the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (Diocese) handles complaints fairly, efficiently, and effectively by the implementation of



3.3 The Diocese expects each agency to establish and maintain a fair, effective, and efficient complaint management process.

3.4 The Diocese expects its workers to:

- a. treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.
- b. assist people to provide feedback and make a complaint, if needed.
- c. be aware of and comply with the Complaints Resolution Policy.
- d. provide feedback to operational leadership on issues arising from complaints.
- e. provide suggestions to operational leadership on ways to improve the complaints management process.
- f. implement changes arising from individual complaints or from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data.

4. Terms, definitions, and acronyms

TERM	DEFINITION
Administrative Inquiry	<p>An administrative inquiry is a structured process undertaken to investigate whether there is sufficient evidence to sustain a complaint. Administrative inquiries apply the civil standard () and do not address questions of innocence or guilt; nor can administrative inquiries unilaterally achieve in canonical jurisdictions.</p> <p>See Safeguarding Framework Policy 2022.</p>
Administrative Review Officer	<p>A member of the Complaint Management Service at diocesan Governance who may be allocated to finalise a complaint by Administrative Inquiry.</p>
Complaint	<p>A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the Diocese, the services the Diocese offers, a diocesan worker or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.</p> <p>A complaint is not a request for service, an expression of concern, opinion, or feedback where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected.</p> <p>A matter that may not be considered a complaint as defined by the policy may be recorded and referred to the appropriate operational leadership for management.</p>
Complainant	<p>The complainant is the person who makes the complaint. The complainant may be the person who suffered the alleged</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
	inappropriate conduct or poor service or a person acting on another person's behalf for example, the responsible adult for a child.

- f. Option of a representative - if a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, the Diocese will communicate with them through their representative. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent for example, advocate, family member, legal or community representative.
- g. No charge – complaints made will be managed by the Diocese for free.

5.2 Respond to complaints:

5.2.1 Early resolution – where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with the relevant diocesan agency.

5.2.2 Responsiveness – the Diocese will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints:

- a. The Diocese 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.
- b. The Diocese is committed to managing people’s expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:
 - i. the complaints resolution process,
 - ii. the expected timeframes for actions,
 - iii. the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay,
 - iv. their likely involvement in the process, and
 - v. the possible or likely outcomes of their complaint.

c. The Diocese will advise a person as soon as possible if the Diocese is unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be raised (e.g. Civil or Family Court, Ombudsman, etc.).

- b. Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, administrative Inquiries about how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

5.2.4 Responding flexibly – diocesan workers are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible.

- a. Diocesan agencies will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and

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Diocese will receive complaints about the services and staff of the diocesan agency and that of the contracted service providers.

5.3.2 Empowerment of diocesan workers – all diocesan workers managing complaints are empowered to implement the diocesan complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

5.3.3 Diocesan workers are encouraged to provide feedback to operational management about the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of the diocesan complaint management system.

5.4 Manage unreasonable conduct by people making complaints

5.4.1 The Diocese is committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach it with feedback or complaints. The successful resolution of complaints by the Diocese depends on the:

- a. ability of diocesan workers to do their work and perform their functions in the most effective and efficient way possible,
- b. health, safety, and security of diocesan workers, and
- c. ability to allocate diocesan resources fairly across all complaints received.

5.4.2 When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with the Diocese, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of the diocese:
the Diocese:

