

POLICY STATEMENT

Making a complaint, giving a compliment or providing feedback about supports provided, services received or experiences had, can lead to better services and support for all. Melba has a strong commitment to ensuring that we have a robust, transparent and accessible complaints process in place. We see feedback as an opportunity for us to improve the way we operate our services.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Melba stakeholders, including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractors, students and persons working in a voluntary capacity (for the purpose of this policy referred to as staff), and to all people supported.

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
A complaint	is any expression of dissatisfaction about any service or support provided. This may include how a previous complaint was handled, for which a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. A complaint means any expression of dissatisfaction with a service offered or provided by Melba. A complaint can be made orally or in writing.
A compliment	is an expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude about a service that is funded, regulated or provided. It may be about an individual staff member, a team or a service.
Dispute	means a pursued unsatisfied complaint. In other words, it is a matter that has been dealt with as a complaint under this Policy, but where the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome.
Feedback	can be observations, comments or statements about services or supports that are not considered a compliment or complaint. It is information or reactions Melba’s services and supports, or a person's performance of a task/duty, which is used as a basis for organisational improvement.
NDIS Commission	means the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission.
Rules	National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018.
System	Melba’s Complaints, Compliments & Feedback is referred to as ‘the system’.

<i>Title: Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy</i>	<i>Date Last Reviewed: 23 March 2021</i>
<i>Position Responsible: General Manager Practice, Quality & Safeguards</i>	<i>Next Review Date: 23 March 2024</i>

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Melba manage complaints, compliments & feedback and resolve disputes from people we support, their networks and other stakeholders.

Melba has a responsibility to ensure that we are delivering safe and quality supports and services to people with disability. Melba is committed to dealing with complaints and resolving disputes efficiently and fairly. The Melba Board expressly endorse this commitment.

Handling complaints, compliments & feedback well, gives Melba an opportunity to better understand the people we support, families, carers and stakeholders and improve service and minimise disputes.

Melba will endeavour to resolve complaints, compliments & feedback promptly, fairly, respectfully and confidentially. We will listen to and consider all feedback.

Melba welcomes complaints, compliments and feedback and will actively encourage and support people to exercise their rights.

Melba will ensure that anyone who makes complaints, compliments & feedback is provided with an accessible process and:

- will be supported without fear of retribution
- will receive support when making a complaint
- is listened to, treated with respect and has their complaint addressed within agreed time frames
- is appropriately involved in the resolution of the complaint
- is kept informed of the progress of the complaint and
- is made aware of the appropriate external avenues and their rights to access them e.g. NDIS complaints commission and/or Victorian Ombudsmen and/or the Department of Health & Human Services.

Melba will make information available to people who use our services (and their advocates, families and carers) about relevant independent services that deal with complaints.

REQUIREMENTS

The procedures will appropriately document the internal complaints, compliments & feedback in a transparent and accessible way. This includes setting out in writing the procedures and policies for:

- receiving complaints
- investigating complaints
- responding to complaints within appropriate time limits
- resolving complaints

<i>Title: Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy</i>	<i>Date Last Reviewed: 23 March 2021</i>
<i>Position Responsible: General Manager Practice, Quality & Safeguards</i>	<i>Next Review Date: 23 March 2024</i>

- ensuring that information provided in individual complaints are kept confidential
- ensuring both the person involved in the complaint and any affected person with disability are appropriately involved in the resolution of the complaint and kept informed of progress (i.e., actions, reasons for decisions, and options for decision review)
- supporting an easy and accessible process
- ensuring the involvement of the complainant, and any person with disability affected by issues raised in a complaint, are communicated throughout the process in a way that best meets their needs
- ensuring appropriate support and assistance is provided to any person who wishes to make, or has made a complaint
- recognising and including decision makers, advocates and/or substituted or informal decision makers
- ensuring that any person who makes a complaint, and any affected person with disability, is advised how to make a complaint to the NDIS Commission
- ensuring any person making a complaint, and any affected person with disability are provided appropriate support and assistance in contacting the NDIS Commission in relation to a complaint
- the role of designated complaints staff to coordinate the handling of complaints and ensure complaints are effectively managed
- ensuring the roles and responsibilities of all staff are set out in the complaints management and resolution system
- ensuring that staff understand and follow the system, and are trained in how to receive, manage and resolve complaints
- referring unresolved complaints to the Department of Health and Human Services, Disability Services Commissioner (Victoria) and/or the NDIS Commission
- recording accurate information about complaints including any action taken to remediate or resolve complaints, and the outcome of any action taken
- ensuring records are kept for a minimum of 7 years from the date that the record was made
- supplying statistical (and other) information about complaints to the NDIS Commissioner or quality auditor when required and on request
- ensuring no person is adversely affected because of making a complaint or assisting the NDIS Commission in relation to a complaint
- finding, recording, reviewing and addressing systemic issues and actions

<i>Title: Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy</i>	<i>Date Last Reviewed: 23 March 2021</i>
<i>Position Responsible: General Manager Practice, Quality & Safeguards</i>	<i>Next Review Date: 23 March 2024</i>

- the periodic review (at least annually) of the system to ensure effectiveness via identification and resolution of systemic issues raised through the complaints management and resolution process
- management of complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) including direct correspondence with the board and/or appointment of an external body to handle these specific complaints
- the types of remedies available for resolving complaints, and
- internal structures and reporting requirements for complaints handling.

Accessible Information

Melba ensure that information about the procedures are available in a variety of forms of communications, formats and languages appropriate to people's needs. The system has information that is available and accessible to the public about how a complaint can be made, and to the NDIS Commissioner about Melba.

Upon entry to Melba's service, upon request or when wanting to make a complaint, a simple and easy-to-use guide to the procedures are made available and provided to:

- People supported
- Families, carers and advocates of the people supported

Notifying external bodies

If a complaint has been through the internal process at Melba but remains unresolved, or is not resolved within the appropriate time limits, the designated complaints staff within Melba:

- must inform the complainant that they have a right to pursue their complaint with an external dispute resolution scheme and
- provide details of and how to access the relevant external dispute resolution scheme.

Melba will ensure, where required, that complaints are referred to the appropriate bodies. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Possible commitment of a criminal offence referred to appropriate law enforcement.
- Relevant mandatory reporting.
- Any obligation under the law.

<i>Title: Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy</i>	<i>Date Last Reviewed: 23 March 2021</i>
<i>Position Responsible: General Manager Practice, Quality & Safeguards</i>	<i>Next Review Date: 23 March 2024</i>

Key Principles for complaints, compliments & feedback

The Key Principles which are embraced and underpin Melba's Complaints, Compliments & Feedback system include:

- Melba is committed to acknowledging, assessing and resolving complaints in a fair, efficient and timely manner.
- Melba is committed to the efficient and fair resolution of complaints (noting that in this context, "fairness" means fairness to both the complainant, and the person complained about).
- Melba is committed to giving people procedural fairness.
- Melba takes appropriate action in relation to issues raised in complaints.
- Melba has allocated adequate resources for handling complaints.
- Melba informs people supported, families and staff about its Melba's Complaints, Compliments & Feedback system.
- Melba makes the Complaints, Compliments & Feedback system available to all of the people we support at service entry.
- If appropriate and a complainant requests, Melba will provide assistance to the complainant in the completing and lodging a complaint to the appropriate body.
- Melba acknowledges that complaints may be raised at any level of the organisation.
- Melba will deal with complaints directly and quickly at the point of service, unless the complaint requires further investigation or escalation.
- Melba staff will respectfully acknowledge the person's concerns and if necessary, refer the matter to an appropriate person to manage.
- In responding to a complaint, Melba embrace the Four A's of successful resolution developed by the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner. The approach recognises that people who make a complaint are seeking one or more of these four outcomes:
 - *Acknowledgment*
 - *Answers*
 - *Action*
 - *Apology*
- Complaints handling under Melba's Complaints, Compliments & Feedback system is at no charge to the complainant at any time.
- Data is collected and recorded about complaints and their outcomes, which are classified and analysed so that issues can be identified/rectified for continual improvement and best practice purposes.

<i>Title: Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy</i>	<i>Date Last Reviewed: 23 March 2021</i>
<i>Position Responsible: General Manager Practice, Quality & Safeguards</i>	<i>Next Review Date: 23 March 2024</i>

- There is appropriate reporting on the operation of Melba’s Complaints, Compliments & Feedback system against documented performance standards.
- Melba’s Complaints, Compliments & Feedback system is reviewed at least annually to ensure that it is delivering effective outcomes.

REFERENCES

- Australian Consumer Law
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Code of Conduct
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards and Quality Indicators January 2020
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguard Framework December 2016

 Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Policy • Advocacy Policy • Code of Conduct Policy • Privacy, Data Breach and Confidentiality Policy
 Related Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints, Compliments & Feedback Procedure
 Related Supporting Documents or Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints, Compliments & Feedback Process • Complaint, Compliment and Feedback Form • Have your say (website) Form • Complaints Process -Easy Read – NDIS • Complaints Process – Plain Language - NDIS • NDIS Commission (website) • NDIS National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018
 Relevant Legislation/Standard(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators January 2020