External Complaints Policy

**Last reviewed: December 2023**

1. Policy
   1. This policy outlines the process for making a formal complaint to the NZFC. It applies to all NZFC stakeholders, NZFC staff, the NZFC Board and External Contractors.
   2. The NZFC values feedback from our stakeholders and we consider complaints as an opportunity to improve the service we provide to our industry.
   3. Professionalism and fairness guide our expectations of both internal and external parties in their day-to-day activities. When we treat each other well, all parties benefit. When we do not, the impact can be damaging to individuals, organisations and our industry. Both internal and external stakeholders may follow this policy if they feel that they have not been treated in line with this value. Making a complaint under this procedure is a serious matter and will be responded to as such.
   4. Where a complaint is made, the NZFC will undertake all reasonable steps to understand and resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all parties involved.
   5. Making a complaint will not affect the level of service provided or have any impact on funding decisions. However, unreasonable complaints may in themselves be a form of harassment.
2. Principles
   1. The complaints process is efficient, visible and accessible.
   2. Complaints are responded to promptly and handled objectively, fairly and in confidence.
   3. Remedies are provided where appropriate.
   4. There are clear accountabilities for complaint handling and complaints are used to stimulate improvements.
3. Raising a Complaint(s) with the NZFC
   1. NZFC has a nominated Complaints Officer, currently the Chief Executive Officer who will investigate and respond to any complaints.
   2. All complaints must be made within three months of the matter arising.
   3. The Ombudsman provides the following guidance when making a complaint to an agency:
      1. Avoid becoming abusive or aggressive or blaming people for the problem. Instead, explain that you are giving the agency a chance to fix a mistake or omission.
      2. Make sure your demands are reasonable. If they are realistic, you are more likely to get what you ask for.
   4. As a first step, it is recommended that issues are raised with the individual concerned. Alternatively, matters can be raised with the manager of the individual or team concerned. If the outcome is unsatisfactory, you have the following options:
   5. **Formal Complaint**
      1. Complaints may be made in English or Te Reo Māori and may be in written (email or letter) or oral format (i.e. submitted on a USB stick or audio recording).
      2. Complaints should include the following details:
         1. Name and where relevant, organisation name (please see Section 5 of this policy if you would like to submit an anonymous complaint)
         2. Contact details
         3. A brief summary of the complaint
         4. Details of when the incident happened and who was involved
         5. What action is requested to resolve your complaint.
      3. Complaints may be submitted as follows:

Email: complaintsofficer@nzfilm.co.nz

Post: The Complaints Officer, NZ Film Commission, PO Box 11 546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

* + 1. When we receive a complaint, we will:
       1. acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days;
       2. respond in writing to the complaint within 10 working days; and
       3. be in contact to provide a new timeline if the complaint requires a longer investigation and we are unable to meet this timeline.
    2. Once a review of a complaint is completed, we will advise you of the outcome of the complaint, the reason for any decisions being made, any remedy that is offered and any information about another remedy or remedies that might be available.
  1. **Referral to Ombudsman** 
     1. If the complainant is not satisfied with our response, the Ombudsman may be able to assist. The Ombudsman can consider complaints about the administrative acts and decisions of state sector agencies.
     2. The Ombudsman’s contact details are:

Email: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Fax: +64 04 471 2254

Post: The Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

Phone: 0800 802 602

* + 1. The Ombudsman normally prefers that complaints are first raised with the state sector agency directly.

1. Complaints about the CEO and/or Board
   1. Where a complaint relates to the conduct of the CEO, this must be referred directly to the Chairperson of the Board.
   2. If the complaint relates to the conduct of the Board itself, this may be referred to the Ministry for Culture & Heritage, via the NZFC Complaints Officer.
2. Anonymous Complaints
   1. Anonymous complaints will be investigated, as far as is possible to do so. It should be noted that, without being able to provide full details of the matter to the relevant staff member, a full response will be more difficult to provide. In particular, it will not normally be possible to take any disciplinary action, if required, with a staff member, on the basis of anonymous complaints.
3. Complaints about Funding Decisions / Policy
   1. NZFC does not investigate complaints or reconsider decisions where we have followed our funding decision-making process(es) correctly.
   2. Complaints about a funding policy or process, rather than individual decisions, may be submitted through this process.
4. Monitoring
   1. The Complaints Officer will review all complaints on a quarterly basis, to analyse trends and look at any organisational / industry root causes. The Officer will make any relevant recommendations to the organisation and will provide reporting to the Board.
5. Stakeholder Survey
   1. NZFC undertakes a bi-annual stakeholder survey, using an external provider to ensure confidentiality is maintained. This provides aggregated data that allows the organisation to identify trends and patterns and take any appropriate corrective action needed. Stakeholders are encouraged to make use of this mechanism for providing regular feedback.

Review Log

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date Reviewed** | **Notes** | **Approved by** |
| December 2023 | Policy reviewed to ensure it aligns with the Ombudsman’s guidance on complaint making | Finance, Audit and Risk Committee |
| August 2019 | Policy updated | NZFC Board |