



<b>Document type</b>	PUBLIC COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE		
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## 1.0 PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Procedure is to:

- outline the process for resolving public complaints about RSPCA WA activities.
- establish the standards members of the public can expect from RSPCA WA in response to a complaint.
- ensure RSPCA WA addresses public complaints with confidentiality, promptness and impartiality.

The objective of this Procedure is to enable RSPCA WA to:

- effectively resolve complaints about its activities and where appropriate, refer members of the public to further review processes.
- utilise information from complaints to identify information, policy, process and service deficiencies.

## 2.0 SCOPE

This Procedure will apply to and be made available to members of the public.

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

**Complainant** - a member of the public who has lodged or is considering lodging a Complaint.

**Complaint** - an expression of dissatisfaction with the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by RSPCA WA, its staff or volunteers, which has affected an individual or a group.

Complaints as defined in this Procedure are not reports of animal cruelty (where a separate procedure exists).

**Complaints Officer** - an employee of RSPCA WA who has been appointed as the person to manage public complaints, in accordance with this Procedure.

**Responsible Manager** - a manager within RSPCA WA who is responsible for a function of RSPCA WA which relates to the complaint (or the next level of management to whom the matter has been referred).

## 4.0 PROCEDURE

### 4.1 Lodging a complaint

RSPCA WA encourages members of the public to directly raise their concerns with a relevant staff member.

If the issues cannot be resolved through discussion with the staff member, the Complainant is able to make a formal complaint.

The *Public Complaints Form* is at *Appendix A*. This can be completed and lodged by email at: [complaints.officer@rspcawa.asn.au](mailto:complaints.officer@rspcawa.asn.au) or by post to: The Complaints Officer, c/- RSPCA WA, PO Box 3147, Malaga, WA 6945.

If the Complainant is unable to access or complete the Public Complaints Form, they can telephone on (08) 9209 9300 to request that the form is emailed or posted to them.

A Public Complaint Form must be lodged if a Complainant seeks to have their complaint formally investigated.

Following the lodgement of a Public Complaints Form, the Complaints Officer will:

- coordinate the steps contained in this Procedure; and in due course
- communicate the outcome to the Complainant.

### 4.2 Process for resolving a complaint

Complaints will be managed as follows:

- a) The complaint will be receipted by the Complaints Officer to the Complainant within five (5) working days of receiving the complaint.
- b) The Complaints Officer will log the details of the complaint in the *Complaints Register*. This register is confidential and is only accessible to the Complaints Officer and the CEO.
- c) In most cases, the Public Complaints Form is sent to the responsible manager to investigate.

Where the complaint is about the Responsible Manager or they have been involved in the matters the subject of the complaint, it will be escalated to the next level of management.

Complaints about a member of the Senior Leadership and/or Responsible Manager will be sent to the CEO.

Complaints about the CEO will be sent to the Chairperson.

- d) The Responsible Manager will complete their investigation within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the complaint, unless otherwise advised to the Complaints Officer. If the investigation is delayed, the Responsible Manager is required to provide reasonable justification for the delay to the Complaints Officer.
- e) At the conclusion of the investigation, the outcomes of the investigation are documented on the Public Complaints Form. The Form and the investigation notes are returned to the Complaints Officer.
- f) The relevant responsible manager will provide a written response to the complaint called the *closure letter*, which is sent to the complainant within twenty (20) working days. A copy is also to be provided to the CEO and the Complaints Officer at the same time. Note: at this stage, the CEO has the authority to re-open the investigation if not satisfied with the resolution by the manager. If the CEO elects, and if needed, after informing the Complainant in accordance with privacy legislation, external advice or assistance may be engaged by RSPCA WA.
- g) Alternatively, if after receiving the closure letter the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant can request the complaint to be internally escalated to the CEO. After reassessing the process, the CEO is to respond to the complainant accordingly within twenty (20) working days from date of escalation.
- h) The Complaints Officer will log all the actions taken and outcomes of each complaint and investigation on the Complaints Register. The Complaints Register is sent to and reviewed by the CEO (or an appointed delegate) on a regular basis.
- i) Complaints which are determined by the Complaints Officer to be of a serious nature relating to the conduct of RSPCA WA staff and/or volunteers, may be managed in accordance with other applicable RSPCA WA's staff and volunteer policies and procedures. Any outcomes regarding disciplinary action of employees and volunteers are confidential and will not be disclosed to members of the public, including the Complainant.

#### 4.3 Complaints about RSPCA WA Inspectors

For complaints about the enforcement activities of RSPCA WA general inspectors Complainants should refer to:

- the website for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development at "*Complaints about an inspector*"; and
- RSPCA WA's *Compliance Enforcement and Prosecution Policy* - see Policies page of the RSPCA WA website.

The Complaints Officer will deal with a complaint about the enforcement activities of an RSPCA WA Inspector in accordance with this Procedure. However:

- Where a complaint relates to matters which are being prosecuted or have been prosecuted RSPCA WA will not deal with issues which were or may be raised during the court process.

- A decision to prosecute is made in accordance with RSPCA WA's *Compliance Enforcement and Prosecution Policy*. That decision cannot be changed by the CEO, the Chairperson or the Board. However, if an investigation into a complaint leads to further relevant evidence being identified or other information relevant to the prosecution decision, the matter may be referred for a re-consideration of that decision.

#### 4.4 Complaints not resolved to the satisfaction of Complainant that are in relation to RSPCA WA general inspectors

Where a Complainant has received a closure letter in relation to a complaint about the activities of an RSPCA WA general inspector, but is not satisfied with outcome the Complainant may contact the Ombudsman WA. Information about the role of the Ombudsman is available at the website of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development "*Complaints about an inspector*" and <http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/>

#### 5. Confidentiality

Complaints are treated confidentially with personal identifiable information regarding the Complainant only being made available to the Complaints Officer and Responsible Manager and, where essential, other staff members of RSPCA WA, but only for the purpose of addressing the complaint.

#### 6. Flowchart

A flowchart of this Procedure is at *Appendix B*.

END.

### COMPLAINANT DETAILS

Title

Miss  Ms  Mrs  Mr  Other

First name

Surname

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Reference No.

Email address

Phone

### NATURE OF COMPLAINT

- |  |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptions                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pound                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer service                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising  | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail & Society Stores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog training                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspectorate | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Media        | <input type="checkbox"/> Wills & bequests        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>Please specify</i> _____ |                                       |  |

### DETAILS OF INCIDENT

Date of incident

Person/s involved

Time of incident (approximately)

Provide a detailed description of the incident and preceding events (attach a separate sheet if more space is required)

## DECLARATION

I acknowledge that I have been able to access a copy of the RSPCA WA 'Public Complaints Management Procedure'. I have read the procedure and understand that any information provided by me that is proven to be intentionally false or misleading may be reported by RSPCA WA to the relevant authorities. I declare that the information provided by me is accurate, based on my knowledge of the incident.

Name

Signature

Date

When complete please send this form to **RSPCA WA Complaints Officer** by:

**POST** PO Box 3147, Malaga WA 6945 **EMAIL** [complaints.officer@rspcawa.asn.au](mailto:complaints.officer@rspcawa.asn.au) **FAX** (08) 9248 3144

**Please refer to clause 4.2 of the *Public Complaints Management Procedure* for information on the process to resolve a complaint.**

## OFFICE USE ONLY

Date and time received by RSPCA WA

Reference No. *Please refer to complaint form*

Date received by Complaints officer

Date lodged in Complaints Register

Date receipt letter sent to Complainant

Date forwarded to Responsible Manager

## RSPCA WA RESPONSIBLE MANAGER

Description of actions taken

Recommendation for resolution

RSPCA WA Responsible Manager's approval for closure of complaint

Name and position

Date

Signature

## RSPCA WA COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Date actions lodged in Complaints Register

Date of final review

Date closure letter sent to Complainant

Where complaint cannot be closed or resolved, date elevated to CEO

RSPCA WA Complaints Officer's approval for closure of complaint

Name

Date

Signature

## Appendix B: Public Complaints Management Procedure Flowchart

