

## CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### Introduction

Reledev Australia Limited has a Concerns and Complaints Procedure to ensure that there is a fair process for handling concerns and complaints that may arise from the work of Reledev. This procedure also covers concerns and complaints made about employees or partner organisations. It aims to provide an efficient, clear, non-threatening, fair and accessible mechanism for dealing with any allegation of conduct in breach of the Australian Council For International Developments Code of Conduct. Any person who has dealings with Reledev can make a complaint through the Clients Concerns and Complaint Procedure (below). This includes: members, committee members, reference group members, advocates, consumer representatives, service providers, agencies and any other people who rely on Reledev for services or advice.

### Limits to procedure

The Client Complaints Procedure **does not apply to concerns which members have in regard to decisions made by the Board**. The appropriate mechanism for dealing with these concerns is that they be raised at a subsequent Board meeting.

### Complaints made about employees and/or partners

Reledev does not tolerate any form of wrongdoing. Should there be a complaint against an employee or partner organisation either internally within Reledev or from an external source, immediate action will be taken which includes instant suspension/freezing of funds pending an investigation. If the employee/partner is found to have breached any of Reledev's policies or procedures and/or are found to be in breach of the ACFID code of conduct (refer to final paragraph of procedure) they will be promptly dismissed/partnership terminated. If an investigation finds the employee/partner innocent of any wrongdoing then the employee/partner will be re-instated and issued a formal apology.

## Procedure in resolving a complaint

### *1. Complaint is made*

The complaint shall be made in writing, marked confidential, and addressed to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO shall acknowledge the complaint in writing within five (5) business days of receiving the complaint.

### *2. Preliminary advice to the complainant*

The CEO shall assist the person by sensitively and carefully understanding the complaint, explaining the options available and helping the person decide if they want to proceed to an informal conciliatory or formal internal investigation process as outlined in Option 1 and Option 2 below.

**Option 1 - Resolution between the parties through conciliation.** If the person chooses to seek resolution through an internal conciliation process then the following steps are appropriate:

1. The complainant may approach the other party directly or ask the CEO to approach the other person or persons on their behalf. If a second party is to be involved in resolution, it is recommended that a trained conciliator be involved to assist the parties.
2. If the other person or persons admit to the behaviour or the acts complained about, and an agreement between the parties is reached, the complaint is resolved.
3. Even if the person does not admit to the behaviour or acts complained about, the parties may be able to agree to an outcome that is acceptable to the complainant and the other parties.
4. If an acceptable outcome is reached the CEO will be responsible for ensuring that the correct people who need to know about the outcome are appropriately informed so that the outcome is implemented and followed. As matters handled this way are usually minor, resolution would generally include an apology and agreement not to repeat the behaviour or actions complained about.

**Option 2 - Resolution through an internal investigation.** If the person chooses to seek resolution through the internal and formal investigation process the following steps will be followed:

1. The investigator will interview the complainant and the allegations will be particularised in writing. During this interview and in any consequent stages of the process an appropriate support person may accompany the complainant.
2. The investigator will put the allegations in full to the other party or parties.
3. If there are any disputes over facts, the investigator will interview any witnesses and gather evidence that will assist in making a finding, and gather any other relevant evidence that will assist in making a finding. Based on the facts of the matter the investigator will make a finding as to whether the complaint has substance.
4. A report documenting the investigation process, the evidence, the findings and a recommended outcome will be made to the CEO. The CEO will assess the report, consult with any appropriate parties (not the parties to the complaint) and implement an appropriate outcome.
5. The CEO will advise the direct parties to the complaint and any other relevant parties of their decision.

### ***3. Key Elements in Resolving a Complaint***

The following are key elements in resolving a complaint:

- All parties have the right to have any complaint addressed.
- Any complaint can be addressed by either the formal or informal options under this procedure.
- There is a guarantee of timeliness, confidentiality and objectivity when an issue is raised.
- The principles of natural justice will be given to both the person making the complaint and the person or persons who are subject of the complaint.
- The procedures for investigation and record keeping are clear:
- No person making a complaint will be victimised or disadvantaged for making a complaint.



Reledev Australia Limited is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, which is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. As a signatory Reledev is committed to the ACFID Code of Conduct and fully adheres to its principles. Reledev conducts their work with transparency, accountability and integrity.

Complaints against Reledev can be addressed to [email@reledev.org.au](mailto:email@reledev.org.au) so that prompt action can be taken. Complaints against Reledev upon breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct can be addressed to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee at [code.acfid.asn.au](http://code.acfid.asn.au)

Revised March 2015