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## Fairtrade ANZ Complaints Handling and Whistleblowing Policy

### 1. Introduction

### 2. Objective and purpose of the Complaints Handling and Whistleblowing Policy

Fairtrade Australia & New Zealand (Fairtrade ANZ) recognises the importance of and value of listening and responding to concerns and complaints. We are committed to achieving the highest standard we can in every area of our work and to continuous improvement. Fairtrade ANZ is committed to working according to, or above, the standard required by the Code of Conduct of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the NZ Council for International Development (CID). Fairtrade ANZ is also committed to maintaining its responsiveness to the needs and concerns of its licensees, the public and the producers it supports.

This Policy is designed to provide guidance on the manner in which Fairtrade ANZ receives and handles complaints made against the organization and its employees. The objective of the Policy is to assist the organization and employees in resolving complaints in an efficient, effective and professional manner.

This policy applies to all our people - employees and volunteers – and they are familiarised with it. Those with particular relevant responsibilities are trained in its application. We make clear the value we place on receiving concerns and complaints in all relevant communications. We advise how a copy of this policy may be obtained and we provide clear information on how complaints may be made

### 3. What is a complaint?

The Policy is intended to address complaints made to Fairtrade ANZ. A **complaint** under this Policy is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction made to the organization, related to its services, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Any person or organization (the **complainant**) who is dissatisfied with a service provided by the organization may contact Fairtrade ANZ to complain. At times, complaints can be by way of negative feedback, which may not require a resolution or formal follow-up. While this type of feedback is valuable to the organization, the Policy does not apply to feedback of this nature.

### 4. What is Whistleblowing?

The policy is intended to provide a route for the uncovering of illegal or unethical behaviour within the organisation, such as by members of staff or the Board. Under this policy whistleblowing is defined as the act of informing on illegal or unethical behaviour within an organisation. The purpose is to address illegal or unethical behaviour if it occurs in order to maintain the integrity and transparency of the organisation.

Any person (the whistleblower) who has uncovered illegal or unethical behaviour within the organisation may report this internally in the first instance.

Whistleblowing is a protected action under Australian and New Zealand law and there are multiple governmental channels which can be followed if the matter is unable to be resolved internally, or if the behaviour relates to members of the leadership and the whistleblower is unsatisfied that it can be resolved internally. However whistleblowers may wish to seek legal advice, as not all disclosures are covered under legislation, such as disclosures to media.

## 5. Scope of our Policy

This Policy is intended to apply to any complaint, or whistleblowing allegations, regardless of who makes it.

We will accept complaints, or allegations, relating to our paid staff, volunteers, partners, contracted service providers or anyone else acting on our behalf.

Any person may make a complaint, or allege illegal or unethical behaviour. Complaints and whistleblowing may be made anonymously, however our ability to investigate anonymous complaints may be limited due to the nature of the reporting.

### Guiding principles of effective complaints and whistleblowing handling

Partners and employees should consider the following guiding principles of effective complaints and whistleblowing handling:

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Visibility                | Our Complaints Handling and Whistleblowing Policy is available on the Fairtrade ANZ Website and also internally.  |
| Accessibility             | Our Complaints Handling and Whistleblowing Policy is readily accessible to all partners, employees and licensees. The Policy is easy to understand and includes details on making and resolving complaints.   |
| Responsiveness            | Receipt of each complaint, or allegation, is acknowledged to the complainant or whistleblower immediately.<br>Complaints and allegations will be handled in an efficient and effective manner.<br>Complainants and whistleblowers will be treated courteously and kept informed of progress throughout the process.   |
| Objectivity               | Each complaint, and allegation, is addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner through the complaints-handling and whistleblowing process.   |
| Charges                   | There will be no charge to the complainant for making a complaint. Whistleblowers are legally protected to inform on illegal or unethical behavior in Australia and New Zealand. Fairtrade ANZ holds this value for all whistleblowers alleging illegal or unethical behavior in the organization.  |
| Confidentiality           | Personally identifiable information concerning the complainant or whistleblower is actively protected from disclosure unless the complainant or whistleblower expressly consents to disclosure.   |
| Customer focused approach | All partners and employees of Fairtrade ANZ, including the members of the Board, the Chief Executive and the senior management team, are committed to efficient and fair resolution of complaints and whistleblowing. We actively solicit feedback from our licensees and producer partners on a regular basis and acknowledge their right to complain or address illegal or unethical behaviour. |
| Accountability            | All partners and employees accept responsibility for effective complaints handling. The Chief Executive will ensure that, where appropriate, issues raised in the complaints handling process are reflected in partner and employee performance evaluation.   |
| Continual                 | Our complaints handling and whistleblowing process will be reviewed periodically, to enhance its efficient delivery of Improved effective outcomes.   |

### Handling a complaint

#### 1. How a complaint may be made

Where a complaint is about a particular engagement, service, partner or employee and the complainant is familiar with the team working on the relevant matter, the complainant should address his/her complaint to the manager of that team. The complaint should be made in writing and provided by hand, email or post. Where possible complaints should be made in writing so that the details of the complaint are clear and complete.

Verbal complaints can be made to a Fairtrade ANZ representative who is then responsible for completing a written complaint as above. Farmers may contact their representatives within their Association to make a complaint to Fairtrade ANZ on their behalf.

If the complainant is not sure who to address the complaint to, or if the complainant feels it is inappropriate to address the complaint to a particular person, the complaint can be addressed to:

**In Australia:**

Private and Confidential  
Chief Executive Officer  
Suite 312, 838 Collins Street,  
Docklands VIC 3008  
Phone: +61-3-9602 2225  
E-mail: [info@fairtrade.com.au](mailto:info@fairtrade.com.au)

**In New Zealand:**

Private and Confidential  
Chief Executive Officer  
PO Box 33 1587, Takapuna, Auckland 0740  
Phone: +64 9920 4950  
E-mail: [info@fairtrade.org.nz](mailto:info@fairtrade.org.nz)

Alternatively the complaint can be addressed to the Chair of the Board, as follows:

Private & Confidential  
Katherine Rich  
Chair of Fairtrade ANZ  
Phone: +64 4 4707725  
E-Mail: [katherine.rich@fgc.org.nz](mailto:katherine.rich@fgc.org.nz)

**2. How unethical behavior can be reported**

As with the complaints handling procedure above, a whistleblower can report on illegal or unethical behavior regarding a particular engagement, service, partner or employee, to the appropriate manager of the team, the CEO or the Chair. The information should be provided in writing, however verbal information may be provided to a Fairtrade ANZ representative who will then complete the written process. Farmers may make a verbal or written submission to their Association representative, or higher member, to represent them to Fairtrade ANZ.

If the direct manager is not appropriate given the nature of the reporting, the information can be given to a person in a higher position, up to the Chief Executive Officer or Chair, as above.

**Further contact information**

As Fairtrade ANZ does not have a permanent office in the countries where some of Fairtrade ANZ's work is carried out, complaints arising from these countries should be made to either the Australian or New Zealand contacts identified above when a local representative is not available.

Fairtrade ANZ is an active member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the New Zealand Council for International Development (CID) and adheres to both the ACFID Code of Conduct and the CID Code of Conduct. These Codes of Conduct define the minimum standards of governance, management and accountability of development for members of non-governmental organisations.

Complaints regarding breaches of the ACFID Code of Conduct can be made to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee. For information on the ACFID Code of Conduct and how to make a complaint, see the ACFID website: [www.acfid.asn.au](http://www.acfid.asn.au).

Complaints regarding breaches of the CID Code of Conduct can be made to the CID Code of Conduct Committee. For information on the CID Code of Conduct and how to make a complaint, see the CID website: [www.cid.org.nz](http://www.cid.org.nz)

Further to using ACFID and CID, whistleblowers can contact The State Services Commission in accordance with the *Protected Disclosure Act 2000* in New Zealand. Australian whistleblower protections differ by State so please refer to the local Whistleblowers Protection Act or Public Interest Disclosures Act for reporting guidance.

### **3. What information is required when making a complaint?**

When making a complaint, providing as much of the following information as possible will make it easier for us to resolve matters:

- Your name, position and contact details
- Your relationship with Fairtrade ANZ (for example: are you a licensee?)
- The nature of the complaint
- Details of the Fairtrade ANZ partner or employee/s involved (if applicable)
- Relevant dates
- Copies of any documentation supporting the complaint

### **4. What information is required when Whistleblowing?**

When whistleblowing it is important to provide as much information as possible:

- The nature of the illegal or unethical behaviour
- Details of the Fairtrade ANZ partner or employee/s involved
- Relevant dates
- Copies of any documentation supporting the complaint

### **5. Complaints and Allegations Procedure**

- We will endeavour to deal with inquires and minor complaints which are made orally by telephone or in person, during that initial phone call or meeting. If we cannot adequately deal with a complaint, the complaint will be assigned to a relevant staff member as outlined below for further investigation.
- We will acknowledge all written complaints within 2 days of receipt
- Your complaint or allegation will be assigned to a relevant staff member (or depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint, a Board member) for investigation. For example, if it relates to an issue of product certification, a member of the Licensing and Certification Team will conduct the review. If it relates to a disagreement about provisions in the Licensing Agreement, it will be reviewed by our legal officer. Any person with a conflict of interest in relation to the complaint shall be excluded from the review and decision making process.
- Each complaint or allegation (other than those determined by the relevant staff member to be frivolous or vexatious) will be investigated. The person handling the complaint will make reasonable effort to:
- Establish the facts and gather the relevant information regarding the complaint or allegation; and
  - If necessary and/or practicable, interview those involved.
  - The level of investigation will be commensurate with the seriousness and frequency of the complaint.
- Once we have investigated your complaint or allegation, we will provide you with a written response.
- If you are dissatisfied with Fairtrade ANZ's response, you have the right to ask for reconsideration of the response by the Chief Executive. Such a request should be made in writing and forwarded by post, email or fax to the address provided above.

### **6. Your rights during the complaint process**

- You have the right to enquire as to the status of your complaint, or allegation, by contacting the staff member who has been identified to you as handling your complaint.
- Your personal information will be protected from disclosure unless you expressly consent to disclosure.
- Your complaint or allegation will be addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner
- There will be no charge for making a complaint or allegation of illegal or unethical behaviour.

### **7. Assistance with making a complaint or allegation**

If you need assistance in formulating or lodging a complaint or allegation, please contact any member of Fairtrade. If this is not appropriate, please contact the Chief Executive Officer (contact details as above). In particular a member of staff can assist you to identify the information which should be provided to establish the facts of the complaint or allegation and identify the outcome you are seeking in relation to the complaint or allegation.

## 8. Further action

If you are a licensee or certified trader and the matter comes within the terms of the License Agreement or the Certification Agreement, please refer to the dispute resolution clause in the Licensing Agreement if you are dissatisfied with the response from Fairtrade.

For other matters, if you are dissatisfied with the manner in which your complaint has been handled, you have a right to refer the matter to:

- mediation/arbitration
- the Commonwealth Ombudsman
- the Privacy Commissioner
- the Administrative Appeals Tribunal
- the Courts (see the Magistrates or Supreme Court in your area).

While you are free to use these methods at any time, we strongly recommend you use Fairtrade ANZ's internal review mechanisms before seeking independent assistance.

You may also make a complaint to Fairtrade International ([www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net)). Fairtrade International is the owner of the Fairtrade Standards, and is responsible for their development. Fairtrade ANZ is responsible for the licensing and assurance activities within Australia and New Zealand, and is a member of the Fairtrade network internationally.

You may also make a complaint to ACFID ([www.acfid.asn.au](http://www.acfid.asn.au)) in Australia or CID in New Zealand if your complaint is in relation to a breach of the ACFID or CID Code of Conduct.

## 9. Timeframes

We aim to resolve complaints and allegations as quickly as possible and within 30 days unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a complaint or allegation is not able to be resolved within 30 days we will inform the complainant of progress and keep them informed of progress every two weeks.

External reviews will have their own timeframes.

## 10. Our quality controls

A register of complaints will be kept. Complaints will be analysed by the Chief Executive Officer for the identification of systemic or recurring problems. If such problems are identified, the organization will consider what actions it may need to take to address these problems.

The complaints handling and whistleblowing process will be reviewed periodically to enhance its delivery of efficient and effective outcomes. This review will be performed by the Chief Executive Officer or an appropriate appointee. The organization will consider what actions it may need to take to address any deficiencies identified in the review.

Where appropriate, issues that arise as a result of the complaints handling process may be incorporated in the process for monitoring and evaluating employee performance.

## 11. Potential outcomes following an allegation of illegal or unethical behavior

Following a robust investigation into the allegation there may be a range of potential outcomes. If the illegal or unethical behavior relates to an individual, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures up to an including dismissal from the organization.

If the alleged wrongdoing is found to involve multiple individuals and imply a procedural failing, the individuals will face disciplinary action and the Board will be alerted to the institutional failing. Further investigation will be taken as necessary to identify the points of failure and construct mechanisms to prevent a recurrence.



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## Making a Complaint

### Details to Provide:

Name, position, contact details  
Relationship with Fairtrade  
Complaint  
Details of Fairtrade ANZ partner or employee involved  
Dates  
Copies of any documents supporting complaint

### Who to give it to:

Manager of relevant team

- Write the complaint, or
- Tell the manager who will write it down

**OR**

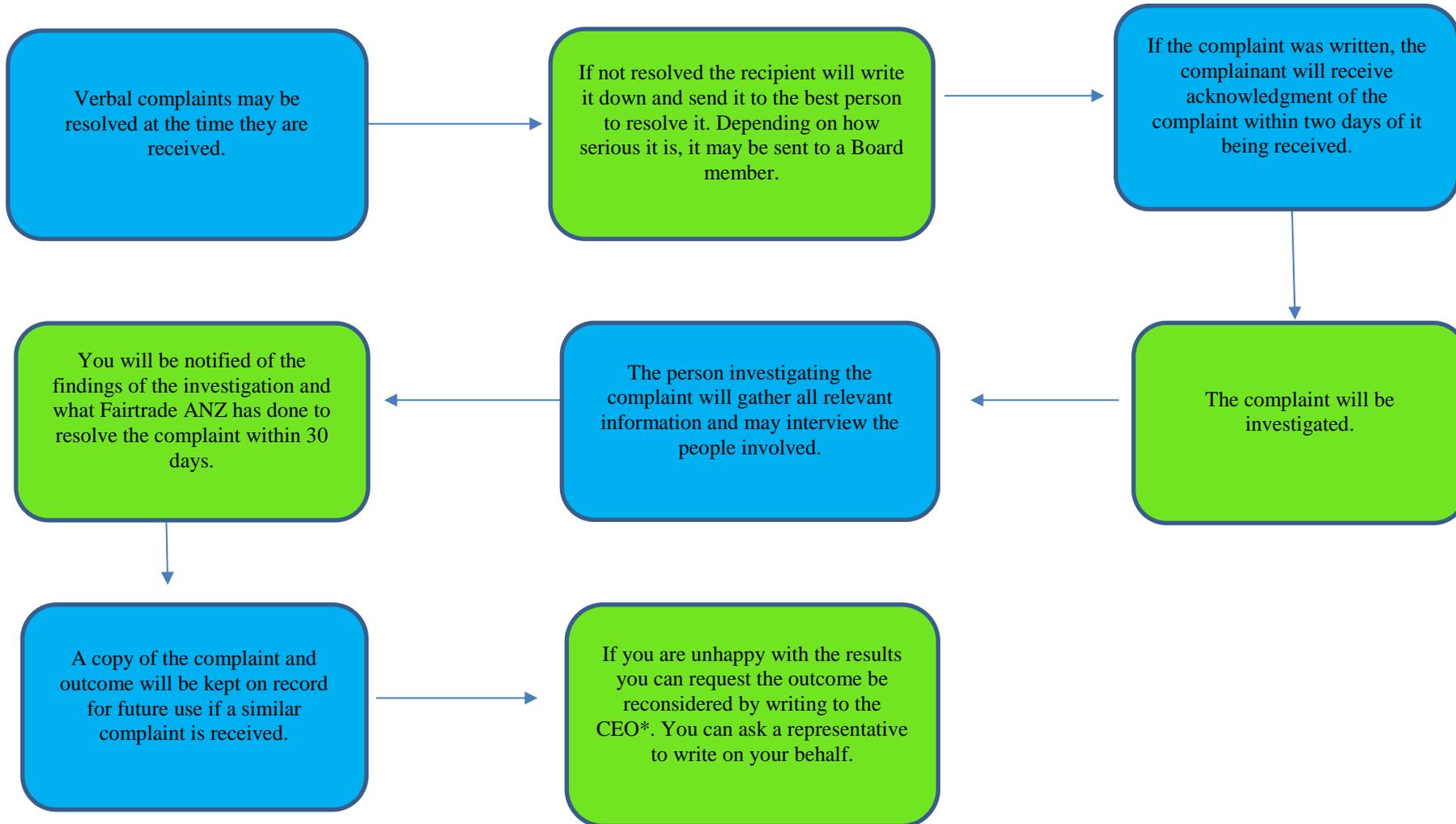
Representative at local Fairtrade producer organisation

- Write the complaint, or
- Tell the representative who will write it down

**OR**

Send complaint to:  
CEO in Australia or New Zealand  
OR  
Chair of Fairtrade ANZ Board

# What happens next?



\*How to contact the CEO

**In Australia:**

Private and Confidential

Chief Executive Officer

Suite 312, 838 Collins Street, Docklands VIC 3008

Phone: +61-3-9602 2225 email: [info@fairtrade.com.au](mailto:info@fairtrade.com.au)

**In New Zealand:**

Private and Confidential

Chief Executive Officer

PO Box 33 1587, Takapuna, Auckland 0740

Phone: +64 9920 4950 email: [info@fairtrade.org.nz](mailto:info@fairtrade.org.nz)