



Althea
PROJECTS

Complaints Policy Statement

Althea's Commitment:

Althea Projects Incorporated (Althea Projects) is committed to facilitating a clients' right to make a complaint about any services provided by the organisation, to appeal a decision made that directly concerns them, and to ensuring that their complaint or appeal is fairly assessed and responded to promptly.

Althea Projects wants all clients to feel able to voice their dissatisfaction with any aspect of services provided, and to be confident that the organisation will manage their complaints quickly and appropriately.

The right to make a complaint:

All clients will be informed of their rights and responsibilities, including this policy, at the earliest possible stage of their involvement with Althea Projects services and on any occasion may express a complaint. Clients are informed of this policy through some of the following methods:

- General Information sheets and/or client newsletters
- Service client documents such as client handbooks or induction manuals which are provided within intake processes and periodically thereafter if required.
- **Client Service Charter** which is:
 - Publicly on Althea's webpage
 - Displayed in each program reception or client intake area.
- Althea Projects public Complaints Policy Statement on Althea's webpage.

Complaining Without Retribution

Althea Projects ensures that there is no retribution for clients when they complain by:

- Not recording complaints made in any client files. Instead, complaints are recorded and held in a complaint register held by Althea Projects Corporate Office.
- Only involving / discussing the complaint with the relevant individuals.

How to make a complaint:

Clients can make a complaint by:

- Raising it directly with their worker or the workers line manager
- Telling any other staff member whom they feel comfortable with or any member of staff at Althea Projects
- Putting the complaint in writing and providing it to the service via post or email
- Via an advocate on their behalf
- Through completing an electronic **Feedback Form** that is available on our website at www.altheaproject.org.

All clients have the option to remain anonymous but by doing so will not be able to be notified of the outcome of their complaint.

The complaints process:

- Complaints are considered and dealt with by workers, a manager, the CEO and/or the Management Committee. Who deals with it will depend on the severity and nature of complaint or appeal
- All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 14 days from a member of the leadership team or the management committee (as appropriate).

The cause and seriousness of a complaint will determine the best way of resolving it. The following options will be considered:

- Internal resolution between meeting of parties
- Mediation by a neutral outside party
- Arbitration by a designated external body for allegations of serious breaches of client's rights. The client has the right to take a complaint on the allegations outside of the organisation at any stage of the internal process. In the case a breach of law has occurred, police should also be informed.

Clients have the right to take a complaint of allegations outside of our organisation (for example to our program funding bodies or an ombudsman) at any stage in the internal process. Refer below to **Option of Appeal**.

Complaint outcome:

Once the complaint has been resolved the following will occur:

- Clients will be informed of the outcome to their complaint in writing within 60 days from the appropriately authorised person, depending on the severity or escalation process required to resolve the complaint.
- Clients have an opportunity to discuss the outcome of the complaint with either their worker, Program Manager, CEO or Management Committee
- If the client remains unsatisfied with the outcome of their complaint after it has been discussed with the CEO or Management Committee, the client is to be directed to the relevant officer within the relevant funding body to pursue their complaint outside of our organisation. See funding bodies list in **Option of Appeal** below.

Human Rights Complaints

The Human Rights Act 2019 requires Althea Projects to consider human rights when making decisions. It is unlawful for Althea Projects to act in a way that is incompatible with human rights or failing to give proper consideration to human rights. At times the rights of one person may need to be balanced against the rights of others or the broader community. However, where Althea Projects makes a decision to restrict a person's rights that restriction can be no greater than is needed to achieve a goal.

Where a client believes a decision made by Althea Projects is not compatible with their human rights, they may make a human rights complaint. Where a human rights complaint is made this must first be made to Althea Projects. Althea Projects has 45 days in which to provide an outcome to this complaint. If the complaint is not dealt

with or resolved to a client's satisfaction within that 45 days, then a complaint can be made to the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC).

The following link can be accessed in which find out more information about the 23 human rights and to make an online complaint to the QHRC. The QHRC can be contacted on 1300 130 670 (Toll Free) or (07) 4421 4000
<https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/your-rights/human-rights-law>.

Option of Appeal:

Clients can appeal a decision / outcome of their complaint by:

- Arranging a discussion about the complaint with the Althea Projects CEO
- Discussing the complaint with the Althea Projects Management Committee
- Perusing the complaint with the relevant program funding body

If a client is still not satisfied, they can contact one of the following relevant external organisations:

- Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal (QCAT)
- Queensland Family & Child Commission
- Office of the Public Guardian
- Queensland Ombudsman
- Crime and Corruption Commission
- Department of Children, Youth Justice, and Multicultural Affairs
- Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy
- Department of Social Services
- Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland,
- Queensland Human Rights Commission or
- Seek independent legal advice.

Advocate

Althea Projects clients are welcome to use an advocate as they feel necessary when making a complaint. In these instances, the following is requested:

- Letting Althea Projects know of the advocate and of their participation in the process
- Signing a consent form for Althea Projects to liaise and share information pertaining to the complaint with the advocate.

Using Complaints and Appeals for Service Improvement

Althea Projects compiles and reviews information about the types of complaints and appeals received including the outcomes and use this information to identify issues for ongoing service improvement.

If you have any enquiries in relation to making a complaint, please contact:

Althea Projects
PO Box 905
Aitkenvale QLD 4814
admin@altheaprojects.org.au
Phone: 07 4779 3332