

# Complaint and Comment Procedure

Custodian: Certification Manager

Authorised by: General Manager

"This is a controlled document and forms part of RFF's Integrated Management System. The identified custodian may only amend it."

## Introduction

Reliance Forest Fibre (RFF) is committed to providing an environment without risk to the health, safety, and wellbeing of all workers, contractors, visitors, and persons conducting business with or on behalf of RFF. This procedure demonstrates how RFF is committed to the ongoing excellence in the safety, environmental and financial management of its people and plantation estate, from seedlings to the marketplace and is in line with RFF's corporate values

- *Safety* - Safety as a priority in everything we do **Think Safe> Work Safe> Home Safe.**
- *Respect* - Be respected, be trusted, and maintain our integrity.
- *People* - Supporting our employees and contractors in every aspect of our business.
- *Reliability* - Reliable supply of products and services to our customers.
- *Sustainability* - Provide social, environmental, and economic value to all of our stakeholders.

RFF is committed to maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders, but we understand the occasional misunderstanding or disagreements may happen. If a complaint is raised relating to groups, individuals, processes, practices and principles, arise during the course of operations, RFF will acknowledge the complaint and aim to resolve it quickly and fairly.

This procedure is made available to ensure the process for making a complaint is clear and stakeholders will know what steps to take, what action will be taken and the timeframe. The process seeks to find a fair resolution between RFF and a complainant. This can include, but is not restricted to complaints, disputes or grievances related to:

- Statutory or customary law
- Impacts of management activities
- Legal and agreed rights of local communities related to management activities
- Legal rights and cultural responsibilities of indigenous peoples connected to the management unit related to management activities

All complaints and grievances will be dealt with according to this Procedure. The **RFF** Stakeholder Management Report will be used to fully record each stage of the process.

## Document Control

This procedure will be periodically reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The custodian will be responsible for managing the document review process, ensuring all relevant parties have had an opportunity be consulted and to provide feedback. Any necessary updates or modifications will be communicated to all employees in a timely manner. This controlled document forms part of RFF's Integrated Management System, (IMS).

## Scope

This procedure will be followed for external stakeholder complaints with RFF, our operations, staff or contractors including, but not limited to, neighbours, local businesses, community groups, environmental and heritage groups, Traditional Owners, local government, recreational users, road users, others impacted by our operations, corporate holdings and haulage routes.

This standard does not apply to complaints or disputes arising from:

- Unlawful and/or unauthorised activity committed by a complainant.
- Employees, contractors, suppliers and customers who have specific channels for dispute resolution outlined in their contracts.

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## Procedure

### Complaint handling principles

Feedback, both positive and negative, is important to us as it helps us understand and improve our relationships with stakeholders. When complaints are made, we use the following principles to develop a good outcome.

- **Confidential** – all complaints dealt with under this procedure will be treated as confidential and managed in accordance with relevant privacy legislation.
- **Accessible** – complaints can be made on RFF website, emailed, posted, or verbally by phone or in person.
- **Fair** – each complaint is treated seriously and all interactions are based on respect. This allows both parties to understand issues of the other and create a basis for resolving the complaint.
- **Responsive** – complaints are acknowledged when they are received and investigated in a timely manner with a view to resolution. Where complaints cannot be resolved immediately, complainants will be kept informed of progress.
- **Integrated** – issues raised through this process may be integrated into opportunities for stakeholder engagement and included in future planning and review of processes.

## Making a complaint

When making a complaint we recommend including the following information:

- Your name, address, telephone number and email address
- Nature and details of the complaint, including dates, times, places and people involved
- Other supporting documentation such as relevant photos, videos, statements or documents
- What your ideal resolution of the complaint would be.

Complaints can be sent via:

- **Online Submission:**

Visit our website [[relianceforestfibre.com.au/contact-us](https://relianceforestfibre.com.au/contact-us)] and complete the **Email Us form**.

- **Email:**

Send your complaint to our dedicated email address: [notification@relianceff.com.au](mailto:notification@relianceff.com.au).

- **Phone:**

Call our Office at (03) 63312659 between 9am and 4pm work days.

- **Mail:**

Write to us at:

Reliance Forest Fibre

Attention: Complaints Manager

P.O. Box 339, Launceston TAS 7250

- **In Person:**

You can visit our office (62-66 Paterson St, Launceston TAS 7250) during business hours to speak with a representative.

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## Process for Resolution

The complaint procedure for RFF has 5 steps.

1. Receipt and acknowledgement
2. Assessment and investigation
3. Response and discussion
4. Negotiation and Mediation (if required)
5. Review

### 1. Receipt and acknowledgement

Once a complaint is received it will be reviewed and an acknowledgement sent back to the complainant with a summary of the complaint to confirm the scope and nature of the complaint and to advise of the next steps of the process.

This response will occur within 10 working days of the complaint being received.

### 2. Assessment and investigation

The complaint will be assessed by an RFF employee who is not involved in the issue. Once the complaint is assessed an investigation of the relevant facts will be undertaken.

If a complaint is determined to **not** involve RFF, the complainant will be advised, and the complaint will be considered 'resolved' for the purpose of this process.

If the complaint or grievance relates to a forest operation and is deemed of substantial magnitude, substantial duration, or involving a significant number of interests, the operation will cease until the issue has been resolved.

If a complaint can be easily resolved, RFF will liaise with the party making the complaint and the complaint will be considered resolved once the complainant confirms they are satisfied with the outcome.

The Assessment and investigation will be completed within 45 days of the complaint being received.

### 3. Response and discussion with complainant

For complaints which were not resolved in step 2, the investigation will deliver a report on the issues surrounding the complaint. It will summarise the issues raised by the complainant and examine any supporting evidence. It will also cover available information from RFF staff and operations activities.

The complainant will be advised of the completion of the report and provided with a copy. If the complainant advises they are satisfied with the outcome the complaint will be considered as resolved. A meeting will be organised between the parties if the complainant requests further discussion.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied the issue moves to phase 4 of the process.

### 4. Negotiation and Mediation

RFF will always use negotiation (discussion between RFF and the other party) as the first option in resolving a dispute. However, if required a neutral party may be brought into the discussion to mediate a resolution to the dispute. All efforts to use culturally appropriate consultation will be taken. The process will allow all parties to be clearly heard and understand the position and desires of the other party. The aim is to resolve any issue amicably and fairly.

There may be occasions when negotiation or mediation does not lead to a mutually agreed outcome.

### 5. Review

Once a resolution has been reached or it is agreed to leave the dispute 'unresolved', RFF will review the outcome and identify where processes and procedures could be improved to prevent similar disputes in future. This review process will be managed by the Certification Manager.

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## Complaints about our Certification

If any complaints are lodged which reflect that there may be serious issues with compliance to the standards of our certifications, immediate action will be taken.

- 1 Any operation where issues are identified impacting certification standards will be immediately shut down until an investigation is complete. All timber from the operation will be quarantined and put aside from the chain of supply.
- 2 The relevant certification body and standards organisations will be notified of the complaint and kept updated on the progress of the investigation. Final outcomes and any corrective actions will be advised to these organisations.

## Record Management

All records related to complaints, disputes and grievances will be kept for a minimum of five (5) years. Records include:

- The complaint
- Steps taken
- Outcomes
- If unresolved, why it was unresolved
- How unresolved issues will be managed
- Corrective actions to be taken by stakeholders

## Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated confidentially. Personal information provided during the complaint process will be used only for the purposes of addressing the complaint and will not be shared without consent unless required by law.

## Review

This Complaint and Comment Procedure will be reviewed every five years and from time to time as and when required.

## Conclusion

At RFF, we are committed to sustainable and responsible forest management and ensuring that our operations align with the interests of the communities where we work. We value your feedback and encourage you to use this complaints procedure to voice any concerns you may have.