CORNERSTONE HOUSING LTD

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Complaints, Appeals and Compliments Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out Cornerstone Housing Limited's (Cornerstone) responsibility for receiving, recording, handling, and reviewing complaints, appeals, and compliments. It gives tenants, clients, contractors, and other stakeholders clear ways to provide feedback or request a review, requires timely and fair responses, supports service improvement and accountability, and ensures positive feedback is recognised.

Governing Regulations

- Residential Tenancies Act 1995
- National Disability Insurance Scheme ('NDIS') (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- NDIS Practice Standards

Definitions

'Complaint' means a statement of concern (not being a decision made by Cornerstone, court, or tribunal) made directly to Cornerstone. A complaint identifies a reasonable action or outcome that would resolve the complaint.

'Appeal' means a formal application to review a decision relating to a dispute between the appellant and Cornerstone, or a decision of Cornerstone that the appellant believes is unreasonable, oppressive, or unjust.

'Anti-social Behaviour' means a behaviour that interferes with the reasonable peace, comfort, or privacy of a tenant's neighbour. Noise or activity associated with daily life, e.g., children playing, isn't considered anti-social behaviour.

'Compliment' means a formal or informal written statement of gratitude or praise.

'SDA' means Specialist Disability Accommodation under the NDIS

'SACAT' means the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Complaints

Anyone can make a complaint to Cornerstone about our services, including on behalf of someone else. Complaints can be made in writing or verbally. Complaints can also be made anonymously, and we will investigate them as far as possible.

Cornerstone will support you to make a complaint. We can arrange an interpreter or an advocate if needed. Independent housing and disability advocacy services are also available, including:

- Rent Right SA, 1800 060 462 or https://syc.net.au/
- Advocacy for Disability Access and Inclusion Inc., 08 8340 4450 or https://advocacyfordisability.org.au

Lodging a Complaint

You can lodge a complaint in several ways:

- Through the online form on the Cornerstone website at https://csh.ltd/complaints or via the QR code on the right
- By calling (08) 8259 3500, speaking directly to any staff member
- In person during an inspection
- By visiting our office at 73 Nelson Street, Stepney 5069 Monday to Friday between 9:00am and 4:00pm (appointments preferred)
- In writing via complaints@csh.ltd, or a letter marked 'Complaints' to our office address (above).

SDA Tenancies

In addition to the above, SDA tenants can also lodge a complaint directly to the NDIS Commission by:

- Phoning 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.
- Using the National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544
- Completing the online complaint contact form at https://ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints

Managing Complaints

Cornerstone will contact the complainant within two business days of receiving a complaint to:

- acknowledge receipt
- obtain further information if required
- identify the issues for resolution
- advise of the complaints management process
- clarify the outcome the complainant is seeking

Cornerstone aims to resolve complaints within 30 business days and will provide updates throughout the process. If more time is required, an alternative timeframe will be discussed with the complainant.

Cornerstone distinguishes between two main types of complaints:

- **Tenant complaints**
  These are complaints made by tenants, or on their behalf, about Cornerstone's services or decisions. They may relate to tenancy management, staff conduct, housing conditions, or any other service delivered by Cornerstone. Tenant complaints are managed under this Complaints, Appeals, and Compliments Policy. Where they raise significant risk, governance, or reputational concerns, they may be escalated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and, if necessary, the Board.

- **Neighbour complaints**
  These are complaints made about the behaviour of a Cornerstone tenant. Examples include noise, harassment, property misuse, or other conduct affecting the reasonable peace of neighbours or the community. Neighbour complaints are managed under the **Anti-Social Behaviour Policy**.

Where a complaint involves both service-related and behaviour concerns, Cornerstone will determine the appropriate pathway and may coordinate responses across both policies to ensure fairness, transparency, and risk mitigation.

When required, Cornerstone may also refer or notify other bodies in line with Commonwealth, State, or Territory laws.

All complaints will be recorded on a **Complaints Register** and logged against the relevant tenant files.

Complaint Escalation

If a complaint cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, it will be escalated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for review. Cornerstone aims to resolve escalated complaints within 10 business days of escalation, or within another agreed timeframe.

If, after this process, the complaint remains unresolved or the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, they may refer the matter to:

- the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) at https://www.sacat.sa.gov.au
- the Office of the Housing Regulation on 08 7424 7206 or https://www.nrsch.gov.au/complaint_form

NDIS SDA Participants

Any person living in registered SDA, or receiving services from an NDIS provider, can make a complaint to the NDIS Commissioner about issues connected with the supports or services they receive. Complaints may be made orally, in writing, or by any appropriate means, including anonymously. A complaint can be withdrawn at any time.

The NDIS Commission accepts complaints about:

- NDIS services or supports that were not provided in a safe and respectful way
- NDIS services or supports that were not delivered to an appropriate standard
- how an NDIS provider has managed a complaint about services or supports provided to an NDIS participant

A complaint can be made directly to the NDIS Commission by:

- Phoning 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677.
- Using the National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544
- Completing the online complaint contact form at https://ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints

Interpreting Services can also assist with communications from a person's preferred spoken language into English. TIS National provides this service on behalf of the NDIS Commission. You can call TIS National direct on 131 450 and they will contact the NDIS Commission on 1800 035 544.

Complainants may also ask the NDIS Commissioner to keep some information in their complaint confidential.

Cornerstone is a registered provider of SDA as a landlord. Cornerstone is not an NDIS support services provider.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff must

- Comply with this policy.
- Support tenants, their families, and support networks to lodge a complaint if requested.
- Provide an overview of the complaints process to tenants, their families, and support networks.
- Assist in resolving complaints by carrying out actions directed by the CEO, Managers, or the Complaint Management Lead.

The Complaint Management Lead (CML) must:

- Receive and manage complaints in line with this policy (Level 1).
- Provide regular updates to complainants and act as their main contact point.
- Maintain the Complaints Register and analyse data to identify systemic issues.
- Report on complaints to the CEO.
- Liaise with relevant managers to facilitate resolution.
- Confirm complainant satisfaction with outcomes and issue closure correspondence.

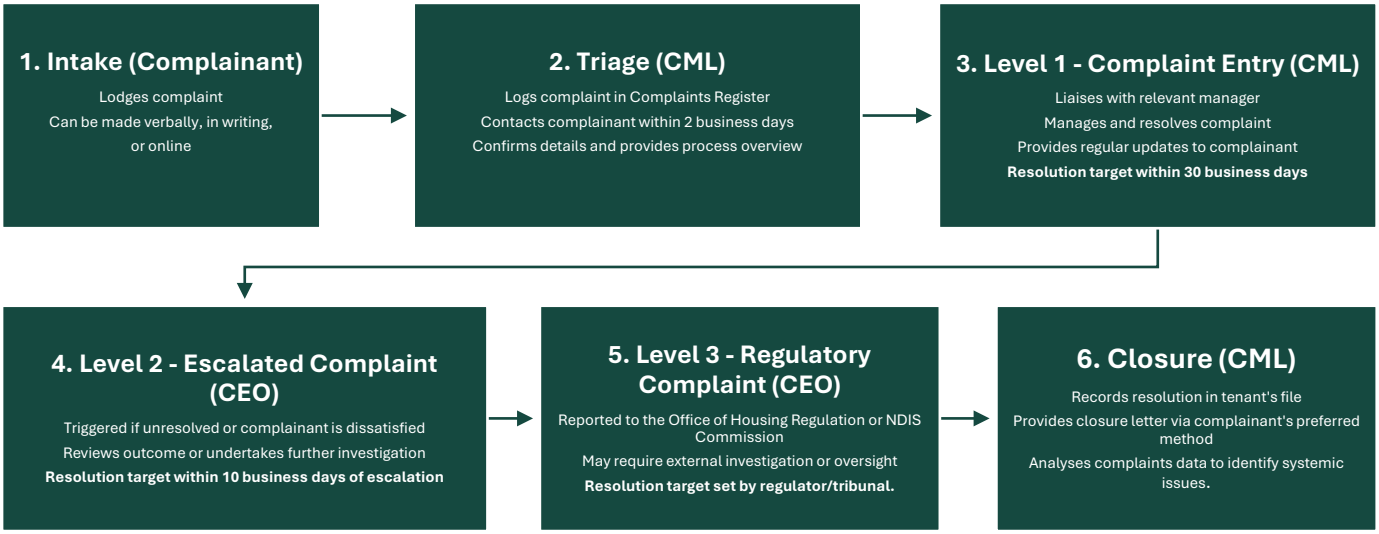
The Chief Executive Officer must:

- Oversee the management of all complaints in line with this Policy.
- Delegate and oversee, or act as the contact point for complaints received from regulatory bodies (Level 3).
- Assess the nature of complaints and determine the appropriate management pathway (internal or independent).
- Manage complaints lodged directly with the CEO and all escalated complaints (Level 2).
- Undertake or oversee investigations of Level 2 and Level 3 complaints, including third-party investigations where required.
- Sign off on resolutions and commitments made to complainants for Level 2 and Level 3 complaints.
- Review complaints performance reporting.

The Board must:

- Review complaints reporting submitted by the CEO.
- Provide direction on the risk profile of complaints management performance.
- Oversee management or third-party investigation of complaints lodged about the CEO.
- Assist in resolving complaints at the request of the CEO.

Complaints Workflow



Appeals

Cornerstone tenants have the right to appeal any decision made by Cornerstone. Appellants will not be disadvantaged by lodging an appeal. Cornerstone will act in a transparent and objective manner when receiving, investigating, and responding to an appeal.

Cornerstone may determine whether an appeal is suitable for informal review or requires formal panel consideration, depending on complexity, risk, and prior resolution attempts.

Appeals may be withdrawn at any time in writing.

All appeals will be recorded in the Appeals Register

Scope of Appeals

Appeals may relate to decisions or processes concerning:

- Whether a decision is consistent with Cornerstone policy
- Tenancy matters
- Home purchase
- Disputes between neighbours

Appeals will not be considered for:

- Evictions made under a Court or SACAT order
- Tenant debts
- Government policy
- Decisions relating to tenant rent arrears

Eligibility and Conditions

Only the person directly impacted by the original decision may lodge an appeal. An appeal should only be made after genuine attempts to resolve the issue through mediation or conciliation.

Applications must be submitted using the **Application for Appeal** form located at https://csh.ltd/appeal or via the QR code, within 30 days of the incident, decision, or action.

Preparing for an Appeal

Within 5 business days of receiving the application, the CEO or delegate will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the application to the appellant
- Record the application in the Appeals Register
- Notify any other relevant parties
- Appoint an Appeal Panel (Panel) with authority to hear the matter and decide on behalf of Cornerstone
- From the members of the Appeal Panel, Appoint an Appeal Panel Coordinator (Coordinator)

The Panel will consist of at least three voting members. To uphold natural justice, Panel members must be available for the full hearing. The staff member who made the original decision, and their manager, cannot sit on the Panel but may be called as witnesses. If a Panel member declares a conflict of interest, the Coordinator may replace them with another staff member.

The Coordinator will collect all relevant information from all parties, which must be provided in its original form. They may first assess the application for completeness and consider informal resolution options, such as:

- Reconsideration of the original decision
- Referral to mediation
- Closure with explanation

If unresolved, the matter proceeds to a formal hearing.

The Coordinator will distribute the collated information to all parties. The Panel may meet beforehand to decide if additional information is required.

A hearing must be scheduled and held within 30 business days of the application date, considering the needs of all parties. If this timeframe cannot be met, the appellant will be notified in writing before the deadline with reasons and a revised date.

Hearing of an Appeal

The hearing will be chaired by the Coordinator and will include:

- Introductions of the Panel, appellant, respondent, and any support persons or advocates
- Reading and confirmation of the application
- Statements from the appellant and supporting witnesses
- Statements from the respondent or Cornerstone and supporting witnesses
- Panel deliberation
- Delivery of the Panel's decision

Each party may have an advocate or support person present. Witnesses will only attend while giving testimony.

The hearing must be accurately recorded. The minute-taker may pause proceedings to clarify or repeat items for accuracy.

The Panel will consider all written and verbal evidence and may ask clarifying questions. It may also request additional information if needed.

Once satisfied all information has been considered, the Panel will adjourn briefly to make its decision, which will be by majority. If a decision cannot be reached at the initial hearing, the Panel may reconvene within 14 business days.

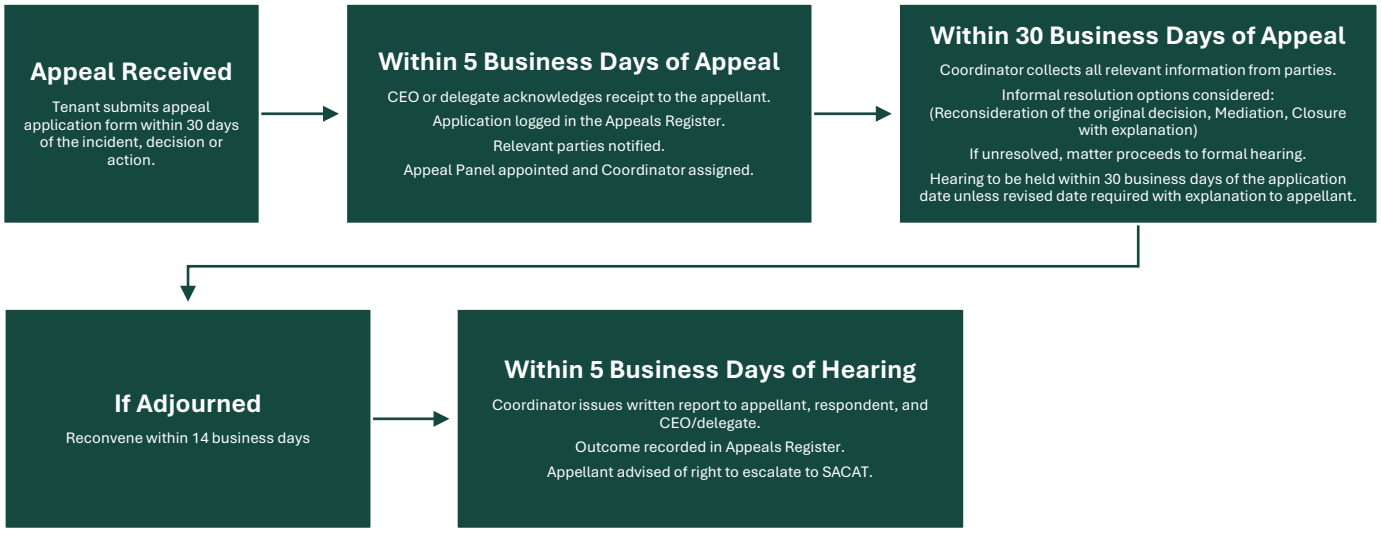
Post-Appeal

Within 5 business days of the hearing, the Coordinator will provide a written report of the findings to:

- The appellant
- The respondent
- The CEO or delegate of Cornerstone

Tenants retain the right to appeal further to SACAT.

Appeals Workflow



Compliments

All verbal compliments will be recorded against the relevant tenant files.

All written compliments will be recorded on the **Compliments Register**, and the relevant tenant files.

Cornerstone will inform all other relevant departments of the compliment.

Compliments that highlight exceptional staff performance will be shared with relevant management and may be used to inform internal recognition programs and contribute to staff development planning.

Related Documents

- Anti-social Behaviour Policy

Acceptance

I

have read and understood this policy and its associated documents.

Information

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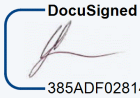
Signed	DocuSigned by:  385ADF028145424...
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