

## Fairtrade Australia & New Zealand

# Complaints Handling Policy

## 1. Purpose

At Fairtrade Australia & New Zealand (Fairtrade ANZ), we value feedback and are committed to addressing complaints and concerns effectively. We are committed to achieving the highest standard we can in every area of our work and to continuous improvement. This policy ensures complaints are handled in a professional, transparent, and fair manner, with a focus on safety, dignity, and respect for privacy.

We prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and communities in all our operations. Fairtrade ANZ is also committed to maintaining its responsiveness to the needs and concerns of its licensees, the public and the farmers and producers we support. This policy outlines how to report and manage child safeguarding incidents and general complaints.

## 2. Related Policies

- Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy
- Whistleblowing Protection Policy

## 3. Related Legislation

### Australia:

- Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Bill 2018
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Equal Opportunities Act 2010 (Victoria)

### New Zealand:

- Human Rights Act 1993
- New Zealand Bill of Rights 1990
- NZ Public Health and Disability Act 2000
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Privacy Act 2020
- Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Fairtrade ANZ personnel, including employees, board members, contractors, and volunteers.
- Partners, stakeholders, and anyone directly or indirectly associated with Fairtrade ANZ domestically or internationally.

It covers:

- Child safeguarding incident reporting
- Child-friendly complaints handling
- Reporting and managing concerns or allegations, including sanctions for breaches
- Compliance with relevant legislation, privacy, and reporting obligations

## 5. Principles

We are guided by the following principles:

1. **Child Safety First:** Children's safety and wellbeing are our top priorities
2. **Privacy:** We respect confidentiality, sharing information only with consent or when legally required
3. **Fairness:** All complaints are addressed equitably and without bias
4. **Promptness:** We act quickly to acknowledge and investigate complaints
5. **Transparency:** Processes are clear, and all parties are kept informed
6. **Accountability:** We hold ourselves and our partners to the highest standards of integrity

## 6. Reporting Child Safeguarding Incidents

Fairtrade cares about the wellbeing of children, understanding that they are a part of the communities that we work with, however Fairtrade does not directly work with children. The only contact that Fairtrade staff may have with children are guided by our Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and this strictly monitored etc. There is also a staff code of conduct that covers appropriate behaviour with children and young people. We are committed to protecting children from exploitation, abuse, and harm. All personnel and partners must:

- Report suspicions or allegations of child exploitation or abuse immediately to the designated Child Protection Focal Point
- Follow mandatory reporting requirements under New Zealand and Australian law
- Protect all parties involved in a report, prioritising the safety and dignity of children

## 7. How to Make a Complaint

We encourage anyone to report complaints about:

- Misconduct or breaches of policies by Fairtrade ANZ personnel or partners
- Concerns about child safeguarding, ethical standards, or governance
- You can do this through written or verbal complaints
  1. **Written Complaints:** Submit via email, post, or in person. Include:
    - a. Title: Private & Confidential Complaint
    - b. Your name and contact details
    - c. Details of the complaint, including dates, parties involved, and supporting documents
  2. **Verbal Complaints:** Speak to any Fairtrade ANZ representative, who will document the complaint

## Contact Information for Reporting

- Child Protection Focal Point:
  - 7.1..1 Fairtrade Safeguarding Manager [psr@fairtrade.org.nz](mailto:psr@fairtrade.org.nz)
- CEO:
  - Australia: 160 Johnston Street, Fitzroy, VIC 3065 | [senthil@fairtrade.com.au](mailto:senthil@fairtrade.com.au)
  - New Zealand: PO Box 33 1587, Takapuna, Auckland 0740 | [senthil@fairtrade.com.au](mailto:senthil@fairtrade.com.au)
- Chairperson:
  - 7.1..1 [chair@fairtrade.com.au](mailto:chair@fairtrade.com.au)

## 8. Investigation Process

We will:

- Acknowledge receipt within 2 working days
- Assign a qualified staff member or external investigator to assess and address the complaint
- Investigate fairly, gathering all relevant information and interviewing involved parties
- Provide a written response within 30 days (or update regularly if extended)

## 9. Roles and Responsibilities

- Child Protection Focal Point: Leads child safeguarding incident response and supports affected parties
- CEO: Oversees complaint investigations and ensures compliance with this policy
- Chairperson: Reviews serious complaints and monitors policy effectiveness

## 10. Complaints Regarding Child Exploitation or Abuse

- Immediate action will be taken to ensure the child's safety
- Complaints will be managed confidentially, respecting all parties involved
- Outcomes may include disciplinary actions, up to dismissal or referral to legal authorities

## 11. Further action

If you are a Fairtrade licensee and your complaint is in regards to your License or Certification Agreement, please contact FLOCERT <https://www.flocert.net/contact-us/>

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.

## 12. Potential outcomes following an allegation of illegal or unethical behaviour

Following a robust investigation into the allegation there may be a range of potential outcomes. If the illegal or unethical behaviour relates to an individual, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures, as per the Fairtrade Code of Conduct, 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.

## 13. Document Control

This Policy is available in the shared Fairtrade ANZ drive for all employees and is available on our website.

A copy of this policy will be provided to any person or organisation on request.

## 14. Monitoring and Review

- Complaints are logged and reviewed regularly to identify systemic issues.
- This policy is reviewed every 3 years to ensure effectiveness and compliance.

## 15. For More Information

For more information or assistance, contact us at:

- Australia: [info@fairtrade.com.au](mailto:info@fairtrade.com.au)
- New Zealand: [info@fairtrade.org.nz](mailto:info@fairtrade.org.nz)

Document version	Changes	Date approved by Board	Review Date
1.2		March 2020	March 2023
2.0	Revised whole policy to simplify language and processes Included information about child protection complaints handling processes Included child protection focal point and chair's email as non-personal emails	February 2025	February 2028