



OUR POLICIES

Reviewed by: Tamara Cannon / Anand Sundaraj

Date: 7 November 2014

Approved by: Lille Fro Foundation Board

Date: 11 November 2014

COMPLAINTS

1. Policy Statement

- (1) Lille Fro Foundation Limited (ACN 135 5001 521) (**Lille Fro**) is committed to ensuring the accessibility of its Complaints Policy, procedures and systems for making a complaint, across the breadth of our work.
- (2) We try to ensure that our stakeholders can hold us to account and in doing so we will improve the quality of our work.
- (3) Lille Fro strives to uphold the highest standards of excellence in all that it does but recognises that this cannot always be the case. When we make a mistake we want and need to be informed. We will use the information to endeavour to put things right and to help us to become more effective.
- (4) This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies found at <http://www.lillefro.org/our-policies> including our [Child Protection Policy](#).

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy deals solely with external grievances. While the policy needs to be understood and used by all staff, Directors, volunteers and in-country volunteers / observers, this policy only covers complaints made by those external to Lille Fro including:

- a person with whom Lille Fro works to deliver its international programs including local partners, organisations and national governments;
- other NGOs;
- members of the Australian public;
- supporters, donors, trusts and foundations; and
- The Australian Government.

3. Definitions

- (1) A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by Lille Fro or its staff, volunteers or anybody directly involved in the delivery of our work. It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed.

- (2) A complaint can be made by any supporter, partner organisation, community or individual with whom we work or any member of the public whether an individual, company or other entity in Australia or anywhere else in the world. Any of these people or entities is hereafter referred to as the “**Complainant**”.
- (3) Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):
 - Concern from someone with whom we work about the quality of program delivery;
 - Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular fundraising approach or campaign; or
 - Concern about the behaviour of staff, volunteers or contractors.
- (4) A complaint has to be about an action for which Lille Fro is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.
- (5) A complaint is not:
 - a general query about Lille Fro’s work;
 - a request for information;
 - a contractual dispute;
 - a request to amend records e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation; or
 - a request to unsubscribe from a Lille Fro ‘service’ e.g. a newsletter or email.

4. Principles

- (1) **Visibility:** information about the process for making a complaint will be clear and well publicised to our stakeholders.
- (2) **Accessibility:** Complainants should be able to make a complaint as easily as possible: written correspondence, email, telephone, verbally, via a third party, etc. We are committed to making communication with us as easy as possible.
- (3) **Timeliness:** Lille Fro aims to resolve complaints within 14 days of receipt. In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved within this timeframe the complainant will be informed about the progress made to date and when they can expect to receive a response.
- (4) **Objectivity:** all complaints will be addressed in a fair and equitable, objective and unbiased manner throughout the complaints handling process. Issues of conflict of interest will be identified to ensure objectivity.
- (5) **Confidentiality:** Some complaints need to be kept confidential in order to safeguard those making or involved in the complaint. However, in some instances, we might judge that the complainant will be better served if others are involved in the resolution of a complaint. Third parties will only be included in the resolution of confidential complaints on a case-by-case basis and with the agreement of the complainant.
- (6) **Customer-focused approach:** Lille Fro has a customer-focused approach, actively welcomes feedback including complaints and has a commitment to actively resolve all complaints in a timely and respectful manner.

- (7) **Responsiveness:** all complaints and constructive feedback will be taken seriously and handled as swiftly as practicable, subject to applicable legislation and legal advice. All complainants will be updated on the progress of their complaint through the complaints handling process.
- (8) **Accountability:** Accountability for handling complaints and reporting on the actions and decisions of Lille Fro with respect to complaints handling will be clearly established. As Lille Fro is a small organisation with limited numbers of staff, all complaints will be first recorded through the Executive Director who will then allocate responsibility to the appropriate staff member to respond.
- (9) **Documented:** Some complaints may be both made and resolved verbally, e.g. by telephone or face to face. Where they are unable to be resolved verbally, complaints must be made in writing. Outside of Australia, assistance may be needed to do this, and Lille Fro will help complainants to present their complaint.
- (10) **Right to appeal:** Complainants who have launched a well-founded complaint and who are unsatisfied with Lille Fro's response to that complaint, have the right to appeal. Appropriate appeal processes are outlined in the documents published with this policy.
- (11) **After an appeal:** After the internal appeal, there is no further internal process; however, a complainant could contact the peak body Australian Council for International Development ("**ACFID**"). Outside of Australia, Lille Fro will notify you if there is an external procedure, but in any event you may contact ACFID.
- (12) **Mutual respect:** Everyone who makes a complaint to Lille Fro will be treated with courtesy and respect. In return, Lille Fro expects people who make a complaint to communicate their concerns fairly and appropriately. Where complainants harass staff, behave abusively, or unreasonably pursue complaints, Lille Fro reserves the right to withdraw or modify its complaints process.
- (13) **Part of a learning process:** We will log and monitor all serious complaints and results of such complaints and this information will be brought, regularly, to the attention of the Board in order that we learn from what we do and how we do it. This information will not necessarily be available to the public. Lille Fro's Executive Director (as owner of this policy) will convene a regular meeting with staff to decide how Lille Fro will apply lessons learned.

5. Complaints Handling Procedure

- (1) The purpose of the Lille Fro Complaints Process and Procedure is to establish a holistic approach to complaints handling. Once a complaint is received by Lille Fro, no matter the nature or relevance of the complaint, all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure the gathering of all necessary information for the ultimate resolution of the complaint.
- (2) The process Lille Fro follows for the initiation and resolution of complaints is as follows:
 - (a) **Receiving and Acknowledging Complaints**
 - People wishing to lodge a complaint with Lille Fro can do so by phone, facsimile, letter or e-mail. This policy, specifically highlighting the central point for all complaints

is also publicised on Lille Fro's website: www.lillefro.org.

- General complaints about any aspect of Lille Fro and its work should be sent to the e-mail address: contact@lillefro.org.
- Postal complaints and complaints about the Executive Director should be sent by post to the Executive Director or the Chair of the Board at Lille Fro's official address:

Lille Fro Foundation
PO Box 603
Avalon Beach, NSW 2107
AUSTRALIA

- The member of staff receiving the complaint is empowered in the first instance to deal with the complaint and enact any steps to resolve the complaint at the initial point of contact. All complaints must be logged.
- If the complaint is unable to be resolved at this first point of contact then the staff member will inform the Lille Fro Executive Director and complete the Complaint Record Form (see **Appendix 1**).
- The Executive Director and/or delegated staff member will ensure an acknowledgement of the complaint is provided to the complainant within five business days of the complaint being received. This acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint has been received and outline next steps, the contact officer and likely timeframes.
- Complaints about the Executive Director should be referred to the Chair of the Board. To obtain his/her details, a complainant should contact the Lille Fro office where an appropriate e-mail address will be provided.

(b) Registering and Analysing Complaints

- All complaints, whether verbal or written, are recorded on the Complaints Record Form at **Appendix 1**.
- Each complaint will also be recorded on the log form at **Appendix 2** which will form the basis for review at the end of each year. All complaints will be recorded and logged. These records will be used to ensure complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively and to monitor any trends. It will provide information on the number and types of complaints Lille Fro is receiving.

(c) Resolving Complaints

- Each complaint will be investigated. The person handling the complaint will establish the facts and gather the relevant information and, if necessary and/or practicable, interview those involved.

- If, as a result of the investigation, it is felt there is a case to answer by the staff member, then the appropriate disciplinary and other organisational policies and procedures will be followed (e.g. financial management policies on fraud and other irregularities, the Child Protection Policy). All relevant laws and code compliance requirements will be taken into account in determining appropriate action.
- Complainants will receive a response outlining the outcome of the complaint or, if it is a complex matter, when it will be investigated further and how long it is likely to take. Lille Fro will let the complainant know the official response to the complaint within the boundaries of applicable law.

(d) Referral Process

- If a complainant is unhappy about the response received from Lille Fro, or if they believe the corrective action has not been adequately implemented, they may refer the matter to the next level. For example:
 - If the complaint is about a matter at management level then the complainant may appeal to the Chair of the Board; and
 - If the complaint is about Lille Fro's governance, then the complainant may again appeal to the Chair of the Board or another Board Director.

6. Review of policy

Lille Fro will keep this policy under review and an annual report will be produced on its implementation for submission to the Lille Fro Board.

7. How to contact Lille Fro

Lille Fro Foundation
 PO Box 603
 Avalon Beach, NSW 2107
 AUSTRALIA

Telephone: +61 (0)3 9005 6553
Email: [contact\[at\]lillefro.org](mailto:contact@lillefro.org)
Website: www.lillefro.org

Appendix 1

Complaints Record Form

All complaints about Lille Fro or any of its people from an external individual or organisation, whether verbal or written, are to be recorded on this form. Lille Fro's Executive Director has responsibility for ensuring that all complaints are recorded as required.

Date: <i>Date complaint is received</i>	
Personal Details: <i>Name, contact details, if appropriate</i>	
Nature of Complaint: <i>Brief outline of the complaint</i>	
Detail of Complaint: <i>Detailed description of the complaint the person has made</i>	
Who dealt with it: <i>Name of person who is or has responded to the complaint</i>	
How it was dealt with: <i>Action taken to handle the complaint</i>	
Outcome: <i>Outline of what has happened as a result of the complaint</i>	
Follow up required: <i>Any action required as a result of the complaint. This may include a change to Lille Fro's procedures and policies</i>	

Appendix 2

Complaints Handling Log

The Lille Fro Executive Director will use this form to formally 'log' all external complaints (summarising those documented on Complaints Record Forms for the period). This Log will be provided to the Board in advance of their quarterly meetings. This completed log will be accompanied by any analysis that may highlight a need to review/improve/change organisational processes or practices.

Date	Nature and Detail of Complaint	Who Dealt With it	How it Was Dealt With	Outcome	Follow Up Required