

# Church of Christ

Loving God, living life, reaching out for Jesus

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## FORSTER TUNCURRY CHURCH OF CHRIST (FTCOC) COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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### 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to detail how FTCOC approaches complaints or negative feedback from stakeholders, staff and the general public.

This policy applies to all FTCOC Elders, staff, contractors, and volunteers.

### 2. PRINCIPLES

FTCOC is committed to and will uphold the following principles in applying this policy:

Culture: Our aim is to serve our stakeholders to the best of our ability. We accept that we are not perfect. We value complaints and feedback as a means of identifying and understanding how we can do things better.

Principles: Our complaints and feedback system is modelled on biblical principles, including humility, fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and integration.

People: Our complaint handling staff will be skilled and professional.

Process: Our complaints handling process involves seven stages--acknowledgment, assessment, planning, investigation, response, review, and consideration of systemic issues.

Analysis: We review information about complaints as part of a continuous process of review and improvement.

## 3. OUTCOMES

FTCOC seeks to ensure that all parties are aware of their obligations in regard to complaints handling, and to comply with this policy to ensure that complaints are handled in a professional and God-honouring way.

## 4. FUNCTIONS AND DELEGATIONS

### Accountability and responsibility

|   |  |
|---|--|
| FTCOC Elders                              | Approval of and compliance with Complaints Policy. |
| Elders, Staff, Contractors and Volunteers | Compliance with Complaints Policy.                 |

## 5. POLICY DETAIL

### The culture we seek to emulate

We are committed to achieving our Mission and Values, and to forwarding the message of Jesus through communities of hope and compassion. We are equally committed to doing so in the best way possible, and without concern or hurt for any of the people we deal with. We know that despite our best efforts, we are not perfect and that sometimes we could do better.

Accordingly, we value complaints, constructive criticism and feedback and recognise that effective complaint handling will benefit our stakeholders, our reputation and those we seek to serve. We affirm that complaints can highlight weaknesses in our programs, policies and activities, and stimulate us to improve what we do. We also affirm that good complaint handling will reassure stakeholders that we are committed to resolving problems, improving relations and building loyalty, and to improving our accountability and transparency.

### Our approach

Our complaint and feedback handling system is modelled on principles of fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency, genuineness, and fairness.

All complaints will be investigated by a staff member or Elder who is not personally involved in the issues, or by an external consultant or adviser. Each complaint will be assessed on its own merits.

As far as possible confidentiality and privacy will be maintained and we will be transparent in reporting back results to you as quickly as reasonably possible. Any anonymous complainants will have their anonymity respected. It is our aim to resolve all complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible. For example, if they can be resolved over the phone at the time they are made, we will do so.

We will not victimise or treat any person negatively because they have made a complaint.

There is no financial charge for making a complaint. If you have special needs (e.g. non-English

speaking background or a physical impairment), please let us know and we will do our best to assist you.

You may initiate a complaint or feedback by email, letter or telephone call - see the contact details below. If you wish to make your complaint or provide feedback anonymously, it will still receive our genuine attention, although of course we will be unable to report back or seek further information which may be able to assist us in dealing with any issue. We are happy to deal directly with you, or through a parent, guardian, friend or adviser.

## 6. OUR PEOPLE

We take complaints and feedback seriously. All complaints will be triaged by the Elders and investigated and handled by the Senior Pastor unless it is inappropriate for him or her to do so, e.g. due to absence or a lack of independence, in which case another senior member of staff or an Elder will handle it. In matters of great significance, we may outsource the handling of a complaint to an external adviser or consultant, to whom we will give complete cooperation as much as we legally can.

## 7. PROCEDURE

### **The process we undertake**

Our standard complaint handling procedures are as follows (although we reserve the right to approach a complaint more flexibly if we think it will achieve a more just and efficient outcome):

- 7.1 We will acknowledge each complaint promptly and give you the contact details of the person handling the complaint, ideally within 7 business days. If we have not finalised your complaint within 21 days after that, we will contact you to report our progress.
- 7.2 We will assess the complaint and assign it priority.
- 7.3 If investigation is required, we will plan how the investigation is to be carried out.
- 7.4 We will investigate all relevant factual issues and then review the complaint in light of those facts. We will then consider options for complaint resolution.
- 7.5 We will contact you to discuss the complaint. In doing so we will inform you of the relevant facts we have identified and ask you to comment and/or give us any other relevant information you may have. We will then discuss with you how we propose to resolve the complaint. If we were wrong or have acted inappropriately, we will apologise.
- 7.6 If you are not satisfied with the proposed resolution, our Board Chair will review the position, and we will contact you appropriately. If you are still not satisfied, and we believe that there are genuine issues involved, we may suggest an externally facilitated mediation. Alternatively, you may pursue any other action which you believe is appropriate.
- 7.7 We will act on any systemic issues that are identified as a result of the complaint or feedback.

(Note – if we reasonably believe that a complaint is vexatious, trivial or not genuine we will inform you accordingly as soon as we form that view. If you wish to take matters further, you may pursue any other action which you believe is appropriate.)

## We will work to make the future better

We appreciate that complaints and feedback can provide an insight into our programmes and services and may show that they are not working as well as they might. We will use information brought to light by any complaints and feedback to improve our service to our stakeholders by:

- highlighting service failings that need to be remedied; and
- revealing problems and trends that can be acted on by management.

## 8. APPROVAL AND REVIEW

| Approval and Review                 | Details  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Ownership and Accountability</b> | Forster Tuncurry Church of Christ  |
| <b>Approval Responsibilities</b>    | Rhonda Gibson, Chris Goodridge, Breff Gorman, Jenny Medland, Peter Smith (Elders 2025)<br>Bret Clark (Pastor 2025) |
| <b>Next Review Date</b>             | June 2030  |

| Approval and Review      | Details       |
|--------------------------|---------------|
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