**Feedback invited: Mandatory Policies 3.8 Communications, Preferred Formats and Service of Documents and 3.12 Complaints, Grievances and their determination.**

**Message from the RNZFB Board**

Hello Everyone

As you may be aware, the RNZFB’s Constitution requires the Board to have mandatory policies in respect of several key areas. The Board has prepared a draft of two mandatory policies which are set out below but before the Board formally adopts each of these policies, we are committed to hearing your views on the proposed wording. There are several ways you can let us have your feedback. They are:

* To email your views to BoardFeedback@BlindFoundation.org.nz.
* Record your submission on the Telephone Information Service, menu option **3 1 5 3***.*
* Post your submission in your preferred format to Jane Moore, Board Secretary, Blind Foundation, Private Bag 99941, Newmarket, Auckland 1149.

Please let us have any comments no later than **4:00pm on** **22 August 2018.** The Board thanks you for taking the time to participate in this process.

This is what the Board is proposing:

**POLICY 3.8: COMMUNICATIONS, PREFERRED FORMATS AND SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS**

The Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind Board will maintain forms of communication that are accessible to all stakeholders and that enable a two-way flow of information around Foundation affairs, services and activities.

For general communications, the Foundation will communicate with stakeholders through the normal channels of communication employed by the Board.  These channels include, but are not limited to, general Foundation email lists, the Telephone Information Service, the Blind Foundation website, Blind Foundation e-news and the Blind Sector Forum Aotearoa New Zealand email group.

The Board may from time to time approve any method of producing, reproducing, adapting or communicating the text of documents in addition to the Listed Preferred Formats contained in the Constitution. These are: standard print, large print, braille, electronic and audio. The Board may also delegate this power to the Chief Executive.

Members and clients may nominate a “Preferred Format” from the listed available formats. They may, at the discretion of the Chief Executive, nominate different Preferred Formats for different kinds of General Document. If a member or client fails to nominate a Preferred Format or withdraws nomination without substituting another, the Foundation may forward documents and other notices to that member or client in the format it considers most appropriate.

Provided members or clients have requested in writing that documents and notices be sent to them in a Preferred Format, the documents and notices will be sent to those members or clients within the time specified in the Constitution or as soon as practicable if a time limit is not specified.

A reasonable administration fee and a reasonable copying or transcription fee may be charged for the provision of personally requested documents.

The following records must be kept available in Preferred Formats for inspection by members and clients or by a person authorised in writing by a Member or client:

* the RNZFB Constitution;
* the full names and contact details of the Directors;
* minutes of all Annual General Meetings and special meetings of Members (other than proceedings held in committee);
* copies of the Financial Statements produced over the past three years;
* the register of Directors' Interests;
* the Board's policy framework;
* all regulations made by the Board under the Constitution and currently in force;
* minutes of all meetings of the Board (other than proceedings held in committee);
* the strategic plan;
* the annual plan;
* the report on the annual plan; and
* a schedule stating first the number of Foundation employees, current or former, who, during the Financial Year received remuneration and any other benefits in their capacity as employees, the value of which was or exceeded $100,000 per annum and, secondly, the number of such employees or former employees in each range of $10,000.

Members and clients may send notices, requests or documents (other than a completed voting form) to the Foundation in any of the Listed Formats. The Foundation will be deemed to have received such request, notice or document on the fifth working day after posting or, in the case of the notice, request or document having been sent by fax, email or other electronic means, on the working day following the date on which it is sent.

The Board values correspondence from stakeholders as informative feedback on the overall performance of the Foundation. Upon receipt of any correspondence addressed to the Board, the Chair shall determine whether the matter should be:

* Placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting
* Referred to a relevant Board committee
* Referred to the Chief Executive

The Chair shall advise the sender of the action taken within five working days.

**POLICY 3.12: COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES AND THEIR DETERMINATION**

Rule 13 of the Constitution of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind protects a member's right to be heard in relation to a complaint or grievance that is to be considered by the Board.

In this policy:

“**complaint**” means a complaint or disciplinary procedure regarding alleged misconduct of a Member,

“**grievance**” means a grievance alleging damage to a Member's rights or interests as a Member or to Members' rights or interests generally, and

“**member**” includes client where appropriate.

The Board's primary role is to guard the Members’ welfare and best interests, including the safeguarding of the right of Members to bring forward a complaint or grievance without fear of personal negative effect.

The Board upholds that:

* A member may bring a complaint or grievance in any form appropriate to that member
* A member has the right to be represented by an advocate of the member’s choice and at the member’s cost. At the request of the member, the Board may consider meeting all or some of this cost if, having regard to all the circumstances, the Board determines that an advocate is needed to ensure the member’s right to be heard is upheld
* a member bringing a complaint or grievance has the right to be heard
* a Complaint or Grievance will be investigated and determined
* there may be grounds for deciding not to progress a Complaint or Grievance with the reasons to be advised to the complainant
* the Board may refer a Complaint or Grievance to a sub-committee or other investigator
* a Decision Maker must be impartial.
* Complaints and Grievances must be dealt with by the Board in a fair, efficient and effective manner.
* All pertinent documentation will be provided to the member at the conclusion of the complaint.

The Board wishes to receive information to help determine the value of its services and complaints and grievances are one such indicator. To this end, the Board frequently monitors complaints and grievances which are not brought before it.

Members also have the right to appeal to those who govern on their behalf.  Accordingly, there is a process that Directors should adhere to when receiving advice of a complaint or grievance.

Upon receipt of a complaint or grievance, should the person bringing the complaint or grievance (“the complainant”) wish the Board to be apprised of the complaint or grievance, a Director shall immediately notify the Board Chair of the complaint or grievance. The Chair will adopt one of the following courses of action:

1. If the complaint or grievance relates to an operational matter and the complainant has not already sought resolution through the Chief Executive, the Chair will refer the matter to the Chief Executive who will attempt to resolve the matter in a timely manner and keep the member advised as to progress.
2. If the grievance relates to the Chief Executive, the Chair will place the matter before the Board for consideration as soon as practicable.
3. If the complaint or grievance relates to an operational matter and the complainant has already sought resolution through the Chief Executive but is still dissatisfied, the Chair will place the matter before the Board for consideration as soon as practicable.
4. If the grievance relates to governance of the Foundation, the Chair, in consultation with the Chair of the Governance Committee, will decide on the appropriate course of action in accordance with Rule 13 of the Constitution “Complaints and Grievances Procedures”.

In any of the above cases, the Board’s response shall be communicated to the complainant in writing as soon as practicable.

*Note: This policy does not apply to any issues affecting contracts of employment or conditions of service for staff members which are handled in accordance with employment and human rights procedures.*