

Complaints Resolution Policy

Purpose

To outline our approach in supporting customers to voice and resolve complaints and disputes fairly and promptly.

Objectives

At Greater Western Water (Greater Western Water) we are dedicated to addressing complaints fairly, promptly, and professionally and ensuring customers are treated respectfully.

This policy ensures:

- accessible, comprehensive, and clear complaints procedures are in place
- complaints are managed in a confidential, clear, and transparent way
- natural justice and procedural fairness are always followed
- specific complaints are resolved in accordance with legislative requirements
- employees are empowered to resolve complaints at the local level
- data collection and analysis occur to allow for continuous improvement in customer service

Policy Statement

Greater Western Water exists to provide exceptional water supply and wastewater services, all day, every day for our customers in their homes and businesses, and for our community's valued places and spaces – now and for the future.

As an essential service, our customers naturally compare Greater Western Water services and experiences with other energy, utility and service providers. Our customers don't get to choose their water provider, but we can choose how we deliver our services. Our commitment to being exceptional service provider is to deliver reliable, affordable, safe, accessible, and easy to deal with services to our customers. Feedback from our customers, positive or negative, is vital to understanding how we are progressing and continuously improving our products and services.

To manage customer feedback and to ensure complaints are dealt with in the most effective and efficient manner, Greater Western Water has developed a framework and set of processes for dealing with customer complaints, which is consistent with our policy and customer first strategy. Greater Western Water is committed to effectively, and promptly, resolving complaints. The organisation recognises customers and the community have a right to complain and understands the core business of serving the community and improving service delivery.

Policy Scope

This policy sets out a commitment of complaint resolution regarding Greater Western Water’s obligations related to customer complaints. It does not detail procedures, which are available separately.

This policy applies to all Greater Western Water employees, contractors, or volunteers. It covers all employees, regardless of their employment status, role, or position.

The Policy applies to its various complaints processes but does not apply to complaints already covered by other statutory review mechanisms or under corrupt conduct investigations that should be directed to the Independent broad-based anti-corruption commission (IBAC).

This policy does not cover internal complaints from staff regarding their employment and environment.

Framework

Greater Western Water acknowledges the right of customers to provide feedback, both positive and negative, about our operations and services. Feedback is vital to improving our service delivery and ensuring the voice of customers is paramount to how we do business.

<p>Enabling complaints customer first focus</p>	<p>Greater Western Water recognise and respect everybody’s right to lodge a complaint Greater Western Water are committed to addressing complaints in an efficient, fair, and timely manner Greater Western Water will include the complainant in the process as far as is practicable and appropriate</p>
<p>Visibility and access</p>	<p>Ensure clear information is available on our website about how and where to make a complaint and how complaints are managed Ensure Greater Western Water Employees and Contractors understand and know the complaint process</p>
<p>Managing complaints responsiveness</p>	<p>Acknowledge, record, track, and process complaints manage the expectations of customers including progress assess the nature of complaints, how they should be dealt with and by whom. Seek external agency support such as Energy & Water Ombudsman Victoria</p>
<p>Objectivity and fairness</p>	<p>Manage complaints objectively and deal with them fairly, respectfully, consistently. Manage unreasonable complainant behaviour and consider the merits of each complaint</p>

Feedback and decision	Provide adequate and timely feedback on complaints to all parties provide a clear explanation of the final decision and any recommendations notify customers of their internal and external review options
Monitoring and reporting	Monitor the customers journey to ensure timely outcome. monitor and analyse complaints feedback and trends to improve our complaints management system Analysis of complaints to understand the root cause and to allow for continuous improvement
Staff awareness training	Empower staff to effectively manage customer complaints by ensuring that they skilled in our processes and procedures. Continually look for improvements and development opportunity's
Support	Attempt informal resolution and compromise wherever possible offer support that are fair to all parties, minimising the possibility of ongoing dispute

What is a Complaint

It is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about our organisation, related to our products, services, staff, or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

- Customer Service - Failure by Greater Western Water Employees, Contractors (this includes Greater Western Water Delivery Partners) and or Greater Western Water Representatives to meet our Customer First Promise and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner
- Infrastructure Services - Failure by Greater Western Water, Contractors (this includes Greater Western Water Delivery Partners) and or Greater Western Water Representatives to abide by its published policies, practices, or procedures.
- Product & Procedure – Failure by Greater Western Water, Contractors (this includes Greater Western Water Delivery Partners) and or Greater Western Water Representatives to observe its published policies, practices, or procedures.
- Business Services - Failure by Greater Western Water, Contractors (this includes Greater Western Water Delivery Partners) and or Greater Western Water Representatives to observe its published policies, practices, or procedures.

What is not a Complaint

- A request for service
- information or explanation requests related to policies or procedures
- report of damaged or faulty infrastructure
- the lodging of appeals or requests to review a decision.

Accessibility

Anyone can make a complaint. The issue does not have to be our fault or within our control, the customer does not have to be explicit about their dissatisfaction or request a response.

In making a complaint, customers:

- Can be supported by a friend, an advocate, an interpreter, or a community elder
- Can refer their complaint to external agencies such as Energy & Water Ombudsman Victoria as first point of contact
- Will be provided information about where and how to lodge a complaint, how complaints will be managed, including referring complaints to external agencies, where further support can be offered
- Can make a complaint anonymously
- Can request other reasonable assistance such as translation services or text telephone services
- Can ask an external agency such as Energy & Water Ombudsman Victoria to review the handling of their complaint if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.

Complaints can be made by:

- Telephone – this will be logged on the call with reference number provided
- Email – this will be logged within 24hrs of receiving and reference number provided
- Social Media – this will be logged same business or next business day and contact made with reference number
- Letter – this will be logged within 24hrs of Greater Western Water receiving and contact made with reference number
- Greater Western Water Website - this will be logged same business or next business day and contact made with reference number

Complaints by third parties

Greater Western Water will accept complaints by a person (an agent) on another person's behalf, if:

- the person wishing to complain has authorised the action on their behalf.

- Greater Western Water will respond directly to the person wishing to complain and not to the agent, unless a letter of authority directing a response to the agent is provided to Greater Western Water.
- If a complaint is lodged on another person's behalf by a professional advisor, e.g. a solicitor or accountant, Greater Western Water will respond directly to that advisor.

How we handle complaints

First Call Resolution – we will try to manage and resolve customer complaints quickly at the frontline or the point where the complaint is received so we can fix the issues locally.

- *This will be logged, and a reference number provide for the customer records*

Customer Resolutions – if the customer is dissatisfied with the front-line outcome, they can request to have the complaint formally managed by our Customer Consultants.

- *Some complaints depending on the complexity may come directly to the Customer Consultant Teams*
- *Complaints will be logged, and reference number provided*
- *A Customer Consultant will contact the customer and introduce themselves and walk through the process through and preferred contact channel*

Internal Review – If the customer is dissatisfied with the final resolution the Customer Consultant can escalate to Senior Level Representative for an internal review.

- *The complaint outcome will be reviewed through its entirety and an outcome, resolution or solution will be provided*
- *If the resolution stays as what was provide in the first instance the customer will be advised*

External Review - Customers can ask an external agency such has Energy & Water Ombudsman Victoria to review the handling of their complaint if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.

Complaint Types and response Times

Complaint types vary based on the nature of the complaint; this may be amended once root cause has be determined.

Every attempt will be made to ensure complaints are handled quickly, fairly and within established timelines. Customers will be advised by an agent of timelines

should they require longer than the below guidelines.

All reasonable contact with the customer will be made during the cycle of a complaint to provide updates and insights:

- We will endeavor to acknowledge and respond to all complaints within the next business day
- Standard complaints may take up to 10 days to investigate and resolve to the customer's satisfaction
- Complaints requiring some investigation may take up to 20 days
- Complaints requiring significant investigation 30 days or greater depending on the requirement.

Complainant Responsibilities

Customers making a complaint are responsible for:

- Cooperating respectfully and understanding that unreasonable conduct will not be tolerated, including abusive, aggressive, or disrespectful behaviour
- Providing a clear idea of the problem and the desired solution
- Providing all relevant information when the complaint is made understanding that some decisions cannot be overturned or changed under the framework approach
- Informing the department of changes affecting the complaint including if help is no longer required.

Confidentiality, Privacy and Protected Disclosures

Greater Western Water's Complaint Resolution Policy is subject to our Privacy Policy. You can read more about this through our Privacy Policy here:

welcome.gww.com.au/privacy-statement

For protected disclosures to Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC), and not Greater Western Water, please visit our website:

gww.com.au

Non-english-speaking customers

For non-English speaking customers where a customer requires an interpreter to assist them in making a complaint, a free of charge interpreter service (EZISPEAK) is readily available and can be accessed directly (by calling the interpreter service), or indirectly, (via Greater Western Water). EZISPEAK can be contacted on 03) 9313 8989.

Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for incorporating our responsibilities under this policy into our business planning activities.

The General Manager, Customer Experience is responsible for directing, reviewing, and reporting upon the implementation of the Complaints Resolution Policy for our customers.

All our Customer Contact staff are trained in the Complaints Resolution Policy and programs and can sensitively engage with customers.

Definitions

Reference	Definition
Customer	Anyone who lives in, works in, or visits our service area.
Complaint	A written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction with a service, procedure, practice, staff conduct, a Greater Western Water decision or quality of services or products provided. This includes failure by Greater Western Water to observe its published policies, practices, or procedures.
Complainant	The person making the complaint.
Feedback	A customer's opinion about a business, product, or service.
Request for service	A request for service is contact with City West Water to seek assistance to access a new or existing service or to inform/make a report about something for which City West Water has responsibility, i.e. broken pipe, account information, land development application.
EWOV	Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria

References

IRD -136	Residential Hardship Guidelines
POL-29	Residential Hardship Policy
PRO-75	Procedure for Managing Enquiries and Complaints
POL-44	Social Policy
POL-20	Risk Management Policy
	Collections Policy
	Customer Service Charter
	Personal Privacy Charter
	Victorian Ombudsman: Councils and Complaints – a good practice guide
	Queensland Ombudsman: Guide to developing effective complaints management policies and procedures
	Customer Service Institute of Australia: International Customer Service Standard ICSS compliment 2010-14
	Standards Australia: Australian Standard AS4269 Complaints Handling

Accountability

GM, Customer Experience has overall accountability for this policy.

Manager Customer Care Ensures that this policy and procedure is adhered to across the organisation and provides monthly and quarterly reporting and feedback.

Review process

The policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently as required.

Approved by ELT – 10/06/2021

Next due for review by ELT – 10/06/2022