

State Water Policy: SW2006-P0104**Complaints Handling and Resolution Policy**

This policy should be read in conjunction with State Water Procedures SW2006-P0105: Complaints Handling Procedures.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- All employees are receptive to our customers and other people who raise concerns about the services we provide.
- All complaints are handled in a fair and consistent manner.
- Feedback and complaints are handled confidentially and at no cost to the customer.
- Feedback and complaints are used to improve customer service.
- Employees clearly understand their obligations to help resolve complaints.

Complaints Handling Principles

Feedback is important to State Water, particularly from our customers. It is also important to State Water that our employees respect the rights of customers and members of the community to make a complaint.

If there is any doubt about whether an issue raised by a customer or member of the public is within State Water's responsibility or is outside the scope of a State Water policy, employees must seek clarification from their supervisor before providing advice or, where possible, referring the customer to another organisation.

The following principles apply in dealing with complaints:

- State Water employees will be receptive to customers and other people who raise concerns about our services.
- State Water employees will provide as much assistance as possible to customers or other people making a complaint.
- All employees will attempt to resolve issues locally in the first instance.
- All feedback and complaints will be treated fairly, confidentially and at no cost to the customer.
- If a customer is dissatisfied with the response they receive to an issue, they will be given the opportunity to formalise their complaint by completing a form on the internet or by asking an employee to take the details of that complaint, either in person or over the phone.
- Customers have the right to make complaints to the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON).

Complaints Categories

As per the requirements of the Operating Licence, State Water, in consultation with IPART, developed the following categories for the purpose of registering complaints:

1. Asset management
1. Water release/river operations
2. Water metering (including metering accuracy)
3. Water Account balances
4. Environmental management
5. Billing (including any qualifications on the accuracy of any bill)
6. Customer Service Charter
7. Performance of employees (regarding the discharge of their duties)
8. General - complaints about matters not specifically categorised above.

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Compiled by Donna Ambler, Corporate Services Branch

Complaints Handling and Resolution Policy

In respect of the Fish River Water Supply, the following additional categories apply:

9. Standard quality of water delivered; and
10. Continuity of water supplied.

Follow-up Action

Follow-up of complaints may involve one or more of the following:

- mutually satisfactory resolution;
- better understanding;
- changes to the way State Water conducts its business;
- acknowledgement of error if any, and/or making an apology;
- refunds for over-payment; or
- payment of damages/ restoration of any damage caused by the negligence of State Water employees.

Complaints Lodged with EWON

State Water is a member of the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) which provides an independent means of resolving complaints. EWON uses its own independent processes when a customer contacts it concerning a complaint and State Water abides by those processes.

Reporting of Complaints

In accordance with the Operating Licence, State Water will report on the number of complaints, how and when they were addressed and whether or not they were resolved, to IPART by 1 September every year.

All complaints and progress in addressing them will be collected in a central database and reported quarterly to the State Water Management Team and six-monthly to the Board.

Policy Administration

The responsibility and authority to implement and enforce this policy rests with each manager and supervisor who has employees who interact with customers and other members of the public who may wish to make a complaint. This responsibility includes effective communication of the policy and any necessary related procedures to all affected staff. Approval to deviate from this policy can be given only by the Manager Corporate Services or the CEO.

Complaints Handling Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with State Water Procedure SW2006-P0105: Complaints Handling Procedures.

Feedback

Feedback on this policy is welcome. Feedback and enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Corporate Policy and Communication Group on (02) 6841 2077.

Adopted by: The Board, 28 July 2006

Issued by:
Abel Immaraj, CEO
(02) 6841 2010

Issue Date: 10 October 2006
Issued to: All State Water staff
Review due: 28 July 2007