

State Records Office of Western Australia

Complaints Policy

Policy

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Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

The State Records Office recognises the value of complaints as an important tool in monitoring and responding to customer expectation. In order to assist the State Records Office to respond appropriately, all forms of complaint need to be documented and assessed as part of an on-going process.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the responsibility of the State Records Office to:

- Recognise, promote and protect the customer's right to complain about their dealings with the State Records Office;
- Ensure an accessible and well publicised complaints procedure is in place;
- Recognise the need to be fair to both the complainant and the organisation or person complained about;
- Provide a mechanism for responding to complaints in a timely and courteous manner;
- Determine and implement remedies;
- Provide adequate resources to support the complaints management process; and
- Record, assess and review complaints on a regular basis to ensure responsiveness and on-going commitment to service improvement.

3. Definition

Complaints are expressions of dissatisfaction made by consumers and as such form a major source of the public's perception of services received from a government agency¹.

Complaints can be made:

- by letter – either through the mail, facsimile or e-mail;
- on a specific customer complaint form;
- verbally – either in person or over the telephone;
- through comments and feedback on surveys, training summary response sheets and customer feedback forms; or
- via a ministerial or Freedom of Information request.

Complainants may be members of the general public, local government, State Government agencies, service providers and businesses or community organizations.

¹ Auditor General of Western Australia – *Righting the wrongs: Complaints management in the Western Australian public sector*, Report No. 9, October 2001.

4. Commitment

This policy is endorsed by the Director : State Records, and is to be disseminated among staff and customers. A customer's right to complain is recognised, and staff will handle and forward complaints to the appropriate area as needed. All staff are empowered to provide information and advice on the complaints handling process. Complaints which are complex or require additional support will be referred upwards or to the relevant area of responsibility.

All complaints will be reviewed in a timely and efficient manner, with a view to resolving issues in a non-confrontational, non- adversarial environment. Complaints will be documented and reviewed regularly as part of an on-going service quality assessment.

5. Resources

Staff will be trained in the complaints handling process through seminars and information sessions. Complaints procedures will be documented and a central manual, located in the State Records Office filing system, will be maintained to which staff will have access at all times. A complaints officer or officers will be authorised to accumulate data on complaints and to provide summary data to Managers and the Director on an annual basis for inclusion in the annual report.

6. Complaints handling process

Complaints will be handled fairly and justly and in a consistent manner, and with the understanding that complainants should not be disadvantaged by the complaint process. Complaints against staff will be directed to the relevant Manager and all correspondence and assessments will be confidential. Customers will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint and of the final resolution. Complainants will be advised of avenues for further review of their complaint, if not satisfied with the resolution.

7. Responsiveness

Ensuring that complaints are met in a timely and effective manner is a major factor in ensuring satisfactory outcomes. Conversely, complaints which are inadequately assessed, or where responses are set in a spirit of urgency are unlikely to be adequate. Accordingly, the State Records Office will implement standard response times and procedures for dealing with complaints, which will be assessed regularly to ensure that staff and clients are satisfied with the time frames set and that sufficient time for quality outcomes has been set.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Director State Records Office and Managers no less than every five years. In reviewing the policy the Director may call on individuals and agencies for information and advice regarding the implementation and benefits or disadvantages of the policy.