

## Customer Complaints Policy

### 1 Purpose

To ensure that customer complaints are recorded, investigated, corrected and that every action is taken to ensure that the issue is resolved or satisfactorily answered.

### 2 Scope

This policy applies to all landscape board employees, board and committee members.

This policy does not apply to complaints concerned with workforce conduct, public interest disclosures (whistle-blowing) or matters for the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, Office for Public Integrity or the Ombudsman South Australia (SA) – separate processes apply.

### 3 Context

In 2014 the Ombudsman SA conducted an audit of complaint handling practices across the South Australian government. This led to the development of Premier and Cabinet Circular *Complaint Management in the South Australian Public Sector* (PC039). PC039 requires an effective complaint management system to be established and maintained that conforms to principles in the Australian/New Zealand Standard: *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations* (AS/NZ 10002:2014).

The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board (Board) introduced a process to capture complaints across the Northern and Yorke Region in July 2020.

### 4 Policy Principles

Effective complaints management in government is an integral part of performance management and customer satisfaction.

#### Commitment

All customer complaints will be taken seriously and handled professionally, efficiently, respectfully and fairly. In doing so, the Board is committed to ensuring that the rights of the complainant are protected, as are those of the employee who receive complaints, or who may be the subject of a complaint.

#### Making a Complaint

The Board requires that all complaints are submitted in writing.

Complaints are encouraged to be lodged electronically via a feedback form at <https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ny/contact-us>, however complaints may also be lodged:

- in writing to 155 Main North Road, Clare SA 5453;
- in person; or
- by telephone on (08) 8841 3444.

The Interpreting and Translating Centre provides access to an interpreter or translator if required – refer to: <http://www.translate.sa.gov.au/home>.

The National Relay Service provides a phone service for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment – refer to: <http://relayservice.gov.au>.

A complaint should contain the following details:

- a clear description of the matter
- when and where the matter occurred
- the names and/or positions of anyone involved
- any relevant documentation
- the outcome(s) being sought
- contact information, or contact information of a representative.

Complaints may be made anonymously. However, anonymous complaints are more difficult to assess and investigate because the Board will not have the option to follow up if further information is required, nor will the Board be able to advise the outcome of the complaint.

#### Responsiveness and Timeframes

When complaints are received, they will be assessed and prioritised. Complaints will be promptly acknowledged and complainants are to be kept informed about the progress of their complaint.

Timeframes for the management of complaints must be reasonable and will not be excessively drawn out. The following timeframes will apply:

- Complaints must be acknowledged in writing within five business days of receipt of the complaint.
- Complaints must be resolved, and the complainant advised of the outcome, as soon as possible, ideally within 30 business days of receipt of the complaint.

#### Complaints Register

All complaints received are required to be recorded on a complaints register. Note that a complaint that has been resolved informally by frontline staff is not required to be recorded or reported by staff unless it is reoccurring or systemic.

The complaints register must contain sufficient details of each complaint to enable meaningful analysis of complaints and so that reports can be generated.

#### Monitoring Customer Complaints

Complaints data must be analysed to identify systemic issues that need to be addressed in order to improve system, procedures and performance.

The Board's Governance and Finance Committee and management:

- Will regularly monitor the quality and effectiveness of the Board's complaints management system and will make changes where needed.
- Monitor the time taken to resolve complaints.

#### Reporting

Information relating to complaints received from members of the public is required to be reported in the Board's annual report, as per Premier and Cabinet Circular *Annual Reporting Requirements* (PC013).

## 5 Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval and adherence of this policy.</li> </ul>
General Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall implementation of this policy.</li> <li>Approval of relevant procedures to support the implementation of this policy.</li> <li>Ensuring that managers and employees comply with this policy.</li> <li>Management of breaches of this policy.</li> <li>Review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</li> </ul>
Manager, Business and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that employees are familiar with this policy and procedure.</li> <li>Development and implementation of relevant procedures to support the implementation of this policy.</li> <li>Monitoring compliance with the policy and associated procedures.</li> <li>Ensuring that the General Manager is provided with information when breaches of this policy or discrepancies are identified.</li> <li>Providing advice and assistance to key staff responsible for handling complaints.</li> </ul>
Administration and Governance Services Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document complaints in the complaints register, liaise with the relevant employee on particular issues within their area of expertise and file all relevant documents on iShare.</li> <li>Collecting and reporting complaints data via 6-monthly reports to the Regional Leadership Team and Board's Governance and Finance Committee.</li> </ul>
Performance and Reporting Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report publicly on the complaint handling of the Board via the annual report.</li> </ul>
Managers and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that employees are familiar with the policy and procedure.</li> <li>Monitoring compliance of this policy and procedure within their teams and/or areas of responsibility.</li> <li>Review complaints related to their area of responsibility with the objective of ensuring recurrence of the complaint is prevented and/or the complaint is satisfactorily resolved.</li> <li>Support employees to respond to complaints.</li> </ul>
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarising themselves with this policy and associated procedures.</li> <li>Comply with requirements of the policy.</li> </ul>

## 6 Definitions

Business Day - a day when the Board is normally open for business.

Complaint - for the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the Board, related to its products, services, employees or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

## 7 Associated Documents and References

[Audit of state government agencies' complaint handling](#) – November 2014 [Ombudsman SA]

[Audit survey report: assessment of state agencies complaints management systems](#) – June 2018 [Ombudsman SA]

Australian/New Zealand Standard: *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations* (AS/NZ 10002:2014)

[Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#) [Office for the Public Sector]

[Complaints Management Framework](#) – March 2016 [Ombudsman SA]

Customer Complaints Procedure

[Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012](#)

[Ombudsman Act 1972](#)

Premier and Cabinet Circular [Annual Reporting Requirements](#) (PC013)

Premier and Cabinet Circular [Complaint Management in the South Australian Public Sector](#) (PC039)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018](#)

[Public Sector Act 2009](#)

## 8 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of first being adopted and then three yearly thereafter (unless there is a change in circumstances which requires an earlier review).

## 9 Policy Approval

Approved by	Northern and Yorke Landscape Board	Date Approved	14 December 2023
Responsible Officer	Manager, Business and Planning	Review Date	14 December 2024
Policy Author	Michelle Simes, Administration & Governance Coordinator, NY Landscape Board		

### EO Use Only

*Date registered in Policy Directory and next review date recorded: 15/12/2023*

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*Date distributed to Board personnel: 20/12/2023*

### QUALITY CONTROL

Version #	Approval Date	Meeting #	Amendments
1	14/12/23	29	New policy