

The State Library of Western Australia

Complaint Handling Policy

1. Introduction

As a public sector agency with a major public focus, the State Library strives to provide best practice service delivery to its clients, and effective complaint handling is a key part of good customer service.

The first of the State Library's values is "Our clients are the focus of our services, our planning and how we measure our success". However, as with any service agency, we receive complaints, compliments, and suggestions. This feedback from clients helps to develop our services to better meet client needs by reinforcing what we are doing right and providing positive feedback to staff, as well as how we can improve services.

This policy is based on the requirements of Australian Standard AS 4269-1995: Complaints Handling.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to give context and direction to the State Library's complaint handling procedures. Under this policy we:

- Recognise, promote and protect the customer's right to comment and complain about their dealings with the State Library;
- Provide an efficient, fair and accessible framework for resolving customer complaints;
- Identify how we will communicate with customers about the complaints handling process;
- Set standards for dealing with customer complaints; and
- Support the monitoring of customer complaints in an endeavour to improve the quality of the services the State Library provides.

3. Definition

A complaint is defined as:

Any indication that an external person or organisation is dissatisfied with the services, products or facilities provided by the State Library.

The complaint can be received:

- by letter or on a State Library feedback form,
- in person,

- by telephone,
- electronically (e-mail or from the State Library's website); or
- via a ministerial or Freedom of Information request.

This definition includes complaints from members of the public, local governments, public librarians and other government, business or community organisations.

4. Commitment

All customer complaints will be handled quickly, fairly, effectively and courteously. In doing so, the State Library is committed to ensuring the rights of the complainant are protected, as are those of the staff who receive complaints, or who may be the subject of a complaint.

5. Promoting the State Library's Complaint Handling Procedures

The State Library will ensure that customers are aware of their right to complain by promoting its complaint handling procedures widely. This will include providing information in the State Library Customer Service Charter, on the State Library's websites, via customer feedback forms throughout the State Library Building, and in the Library Board's Annual Report.

The State Library will regularly survey its clients to determine customer satisfaction.

6. Recording Customer Complaints

It is important to record customer complaints in order to:

- Track progress of complaints
- Ensure accountability
- Identify and fix root causes
- Enable data analysis and management reporting.

The State Library will identify and record all customer complaints. Procedures will be developed which guide staff in identifying a complaint, and ensuring there are simple processes to record complaints.

One Customer Feedback Form will be used throughout the State Library for all Customer Complaints.

Data about complaints will be electronically recorded at one centralised point to allow for the monitoring of complaint procedures, to analyse complaints, and to report to management on complaints to allow for service improvement.

The physical record of all complaints and responses to those complaints will be filed in the Corporate Information Unit to allow for accountability and audit.

7. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all staff to respond to customer complaints in a courteous manner and to provide them with information on the State Library's complaint handling systems. If a complaint is received which they are unable to handle themselves, the complaint will be recorded and referred to the appropriate person.

Staff have a responsibility to record all customer complaints in compliance with State Library procedures.

8. Response Standards

Speed of response is consistently identified as being one of the attributes which most influence perceptions of a successful customer response system. Standards for response to a customer complaint at the State Library will be:

- **Complaints made in Person**

Complaints received from a person within the State Library Building will be handled immediately by the staff member receiving the complaint if possible, or referred to someone who can resolve the matter immediately.

Where a matter cannot be resolved immediately the complainant's name and contact details will be recorded and the person making the complaint will be contacted within 3 working days to answer the complaint if possible or, at a minimum, acknowledge receipt of the complaint and let the person know what is happening.

- **Telephone**

If possible, complaints made by telephone will be answered immediately. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately it will be responded to within 3 working days to answer the complaint or, at a minimum, acknowledge receipt of the complaint and let the person know what is happening.

- **E-mail**

Complaints by e-mail will be responded to within 3 working days to answer the complaint if possible or, at a minimum, acknowledge receipt of the complaint and let the person know of the progress of the investigation.

- **Letter or Feedback Form**

Complaints received by letter or via a customer feedback form will be responded to as soon as possible. Where a contact telephone number or e-mail address is provided an initial response will be made within 3 working days. If only an address is provided, a written response will be provided within 10 working days.

9. Monitoring Customer Complaints

Understanding patterns of complaints empowers managers to improve service delivery systems and prioritise resources for future planning.

The State Library will analyse and monitor the customer complaints received and provide 6 monthly reports to the Strategic Management Team.

10. Empowering our Staff

Staff are the single most important resource in the complaints handling process. So that State Library staff feel confident in dealing with clients with complaints and take their comments in a spirit of improving services:

- All staff will have easy access to the State Library's complaint handling policy and procedures and be made aware of them by team leaders.
- Staff will be aware of and have access to up-to-date policies and procedures.
- New staff will receive information about the State Library's complaint handling process when they receive their induction in service delivery areas.
- The State Library will examine ways in which staff can be trained in customer service techniques and complaint handling procedures.

11. References

Australian Standard AS 4269-1995: Complaints Handling.

Office of the NSW Ombudsman. Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines. 1995

Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office. A Good Practice Guide for Effective Complaint Handling. 1997