

# Complaint Management Procedure

## Purpose

This procedure outlines the process for complaint management at the City of Sydney in accordance with the City’s Complaint Management Policy.

This procedure is intended to:

- provide guidance to a person wanting to make a complaint to the City
- inform City staff of their obligations to communicate, investigate and record complaints

## Scope

This procedure applies to the following:

- People wanting to make a complaint to the City in accordance with the City’s Complaint Management Policy
- City of Sydney (City) staff responsible for recording, investigating and actioning complaints

## Definitions

Term	Meaning
Complaint	<p>Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.</p> <p>Examples of a complaint are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to achieve specified standards of service</li> <li>• Delay in responding</li> <li>• Behaviour or attitude of employees</li> <li>• A Council decision or policy and/ or</li> <li>• Withdrawal or reduction of service</li> </ul>
Complaint Management System	All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used in the management of complaints.
Dispute	An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.
Feedback	Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, services or complaint handling where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Service request	<p>The definition of a service request includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• requests for the provision of works or services</li> </ul>

Term	Meaning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• routine inquiries about the organisation’s business</li> <li>• requests for the provision of services and assistance</li> <li>• reports of failure to comply with laws regulated by the organisation</li> <li>• requests for information or explanation of policies, procedures and decisions</li> </ul>
Grievance	A clear, formal written statement by an individual staff member about another staff member or a work-related problem.
Policy	A statement of instruction that sets out how we should fulfill our vision, mission and goals.
Procedure	A statement or instruction that sets out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.
Public interest disclosure	A report about wrongdoing made by a public official in New South Wales that meets the requirements of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994

**How to make a complaint**

Complaints can be made:

**On-line**

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/report-issue/make-complaint-or-provide-feedback> and select ‘Report an issue’ from the drop-down menu

**Email**

[council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

**By telephone**

Customer Service (02) 9265 9333

**In person**

At any of Council’s Offices during normal business hours.

**By mail**

City of Sydney  
 GPO Box 1591  
 SYDNEY NSW 2001

**Customers who have a hearing or speech impairment**

The City of Sydney welcomes calls made through the National Relay Service (NRS).

The NRS is a government sponsored initiative that allows people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment to make phone calls in the same way as anyone else. This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

**National Relay Service (NRS)**

Tel: 1800 555 677

Web: [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

- **Voice/Text phone users**  
To make a call dial: 133 677 (24 hours 7 days per week).
- **People who have speech/communication impairment only (do not have a hearing impairment)**  
Speak and Listen Service (SSR) on 1300 555 727

**Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National)**

The City offers a Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) and can be accessed by calling 13 14 50 (24 hours 7 days per week).

**Process for when a complaint is received****Acknowledgment and time to resolve**

For complaints received in writing, email and on-line, the responding City staff member will send an acknowledgement to the complainant within 2 working days.

Where a complaint cannot be resolved within 10 business days, it is the responsibility of the responding City staff member to let the complainant know and keep them informed of progress.

**Recording of Complaints**

The responding City staff member is responsible for recording the complaint, investigation, outcome and response in the relevant City system.

**Investigating and responding to complaints*****Level 1 Complaints – Resolution at first contact***

City staff are to make every effort to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact.

Where a complaint is resolved at first point of contact, the actioning City staff member will record in the relevant City system:

- details of the person making the complaint
- the reason for complaint
- reference number
- outcome

If it is not possible to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact, due to the complexity, the need for investigation or breach of legislation, the responding City staff member will inform the complainant of the following:

- the complaint is being escalated
- the reason for escalation
- the staff member or team who the complaint is being referred to
- a reference number for the escalation

### ***Level Two Complaints – Internal review or investigation***

A complaint that requires internal review or investigation is classified as a Level Two complaint.

If the review or investigation is going to be longer than 10 working days, the responding City staff member must inform the complainant of the new timeline and keep them updated on the progress.

The responding City staff member must advise the complainant of the outcome in writing (email or letter) and will include

- the outcome of the complaint and any action taken
- the reason/s for the decision
- the remedy or resolution proposed or put in place, and
- any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an external review or appeal

The responding City staff member is responsible for recording the complaint, investigation, outcome and response in the relevant City system.

### **Level 3 Complaints – External review**

People who are dissatisfied with the response to their complaint can refer their complaint for review to the following third parties.

#### **NSW Ombudsman**

Level 24,580 George Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000

Phone: 02 9286 1000 or 1800 451 524

Email: [nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au)

#### **NSW Department of Local Government**

Locked Bag 3015, NOWRA NSW 2541

Phone: 02 4428 4100

Email: [dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au)

#### **The Independent Commission Against Corruption**

GPO Box 500, SYDNEY NSW 2001

Phone: 02 8281 5999 or 1800 463 909

Email: [icac@icac.nsw.gov.au](mailto:icac@icac.nsw.gov.au)

**The Information and Privacy Commission NSW**

GPO Box 7011, Sydney NSW 2001

Phone: 1800 472 679

Email: [ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au)

**The Office of the Small Business Commissioner NSW**

GPO Box W275, Parramatta NSW 2150

Phone: 1300 795 534

E-mail: [we.assist@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au](mailto:we.assist@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au)

**Unreasonable Conduct by Customer**

In cases where the complaint is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant (after all the relevant processes have been followed) the City may, in accordance with the Unreasonable Conduct by Customer Policy, impose a limit on communication with the complainant if the same issue continues to be raised.

**Responsibilities**

City staff are responsible for applying this procedure.

Business Unit Managers are responsible for ensuring that this procedure is followed.

**Consultation**

This procedure is based on the NSW Ombudsman Complaint Handling Model Policy and Framework (2015).

The review of this procedure has been carried out in consultation with Legal, Governance, Workforce Services, Rates, Health & Building, Waste & Cleansing, City Rangers, Data & Information Management Services, Social Programs & Services and Office of the CEO.

**References**

Laws and Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Ombudsman Complaint management framework and model policy 2015</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (1998)</li> </ul>
Policies and Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unreasonable Conduct by Customer Policy (2020)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code of Conduct Policy (2020)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to Information Policy (2021)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fraud and Corruption Internal reporting Policy (2020)</li> </ul>

**Review period**

This procedure will be reviewed every 2 years.

**Approval**

CEO approved this procedure on 18/11/2021

*P. M. Barone*

**Approval History**

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Procedure			
Reviewed			
Next Review Date			

**Ownership and approval**

Responsibility	Role
Author	Manager Customer Service
Owner	Manager Customer Service
Approver	Chief Executive Officer