



Complaints and Disputes Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure we have effective systems and processes in place to receive and resolve complaints, and to identify, collect, analyse and use feedback from our customers and stakeholders, including complaints, compliments, enquiries and requests.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees and includes all complaints, compliments, enquiries and requests received by Wannon Water. This feedback can come from any source, including customers and stakeholders (e.g. general public, suppliers or potential suppliers).

3. Policy statement

Wannon Water is a regional urban water corporation with a purpose to deliver water and sewerage services and improve the lives of people in South West Victoria.

We are committed to effectively and efficiently receiving and managing enquiries, complaints, disputes, compliments and requests to ensure effective customer service.

We will achieve this through:

- Providing customers and other relevant stakeholders with clear information about how to lodge a complaint and about our complaint handling procedures
- Increasing the level of customer and stakeholder satisfaction and minimising the risk to corporate reputation by using reasonable endeavours to resolve any dispute directly and in good faith with customers and stakeholders who are affected by our operations in an expedient and effective manner
- Providing an efficient, fair and accessible mechanism for the resolution of complaints and disputes in accordance with the principles of Australian Standard (AS/NZS 10002)
- Providing, where requested, written responses to enquiries and complaints, dealing with the substance of the enquiry or complaint, within 10 business days. Where the enquiry or complaint is complex, a reply will be provided within 10 business days informing the customer or stakeholder when they will receive a reply that addresses the nature of the enquiry or complaint
- Providing customers and stakeholders with the opportunity to have their enquiry or complaint escalated internally to a manager or referred for an independent review if the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved. If the matter cannot be resolved, the customer or stakeholder will be informed of the opportunity to have the matter referred to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV), the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB), or any other relevant external dispute resolution forum, as appropriate
- Providing customers with the reasons for a decision on their complaint, including providing details of the legislative or policy basis for the reasons where relevant
- Suspending the recovery of money that is in dispute until the dispute has been resolved
- Only considering that a dispute about non-payment is resolved if:
 - We have informed the complainant of our decision on the complaint or any internal review of the complaint; and
 - 10 business days have passed since the complainant was informed; and

- The complainant has not sought further review or lodged a claim with EWOV, VGPB or another external dispute resolution forum
- Investigating the causes of complaints and disputes to enable rectification and to improve policies and practices to prevent re-occurrence when appropriate
- Recognising, promoting and protecting customers' and stakeholders' rights, including the right to complain, and providing reasonable assistance to a customer or stakeholder who wishes to initiate a complaint
- Adequately resourcing our complaints handling system to provide an effective framework to resolve complaints
- Training employees to deal with complaints in a consistent and appropriate manner and empowering them with sufficient levels of delegation to resolve complaints effectively. Where possible, complaints should be resolved at the first point of contact
- Accurately and systematically recording all complaints in the customer relationship management system
- Ensuring the information provided by customers and stakeholders during the course of lodging their complaint is treated in accordance with Wannon Water's privacy requirements

We will learn from complaints and disputes, maintain a consistent resolution process, and embrace a philosophy of continuous improvement.

Senior management will communicate the content of this policy to employees, customers and stakeholders and the policy will be publicly available.

4. Definitions

Term	Means
Complaint	A written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action, proposed action or failure to act by Wannon Water, our employees or contractors, requiring a resolution (as per AS/NZS 10002)
Compliment	A polite expression of praise or appreciation – something more than a “thank you”
Enquiry or request	The act of asking Wannon Water for information or to do something

5. Governance

Associated procedures/standards	Customer Feedback Procedure
Legislation and standards	AS/NZS 10002 Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service Water Industry Standard – Rural Customer Service
Category	Non-IMS
Endorsement	Executive Committee
Approval	Executive Committee

Policy owner	General Manager Community & Corporate Services
Content enquiries	Branch Manager Retail Services

6. Document version history

Version	Changes made to document
6	Updated to new SoControl template and inclusion of stakeholders as a source of feedback.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Republished to rectify issue with footer not populating• Removed reference to “Responding to Customer Feedback Employee Guide” as this document was made obsolete by the “Customer Feedback Procedure”
8	Updated to incorporate requirements of the Water Industry Standards issued by the Essential Services Commission