

## 1. PURPOSE

You have the right to complain about GWMWater's actions, decisions and services. We value your feedback and commit to resolving issues quickly, fairly, efficiently and with courtesy. We promote access, equity, and transparency throughout the complaints process, while maintaining privacy.

The purpose of this policy is to explain how you can make a complaint or provide feedback and how we will work with you to resolve it.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy covers all complaints received from external parties in relation to products and services provided, or decisions made, by GWMWater or contractors performing functions on our behalf.

A **complaint** is defined as a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction where a response is sought, reasonable to expect or legally required. Anyone who has been affected by a decision or action (including a failure to make a decision or take action) can make a complaint.

It includes dissatisfaction with GWMWater or our contractors':

- customer services
- actions or decisions
- inaction or delay
- policy or processes.

**Feedback** is a compliment, criticism, comment or suggestion where a response is not sought, or not reasonable to expect.

A **procurement complaint** is defined as an issue or concern expressed by a supplier, including a potential supplier, in relation to the process and probity applied by an organisation when engaging contractors or suppliers for products and services.

## 3. METHOD

### 3.1 How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint in several ways. These include but are not limited to:

- During business hours by phoning 1300 659 961
- In person at 11 McLachlan Street Horsham or directly to any of our employees
- Online via our website ([www.gwmwater.org.au/complaints](http://www.gwmwater.org.au/complaints))
- Via mail to PO Box 481, Horsham VIC 3402.

## 3.2 Accessibility

GWMWater will make its Complaints Policy available on our website. A copy will also be made available at our McLachlan Street office.

We are committed to ensuring all customers can make a complaint easily, fairly and without barriers. We will take reasonable steps to make our complaint handling process accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of our customers.

You can make a complaint using your preferred communication method, and GWMWater will not disadvantage you for raising a complaint. Where required, we will provide appropriate support and adjustments to assist you to lodge and participate in the complaint process.

GWMWater provides access to the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)** for customers who need language assistance. Customers can call TIS National on **131 450** and ask to be connected to **GWMWater on 1300 659 961**.

Customers who are deaf, hearing impaired, or have a speech or communication impairment can contact GWMWater through the **National Relay Service (NRS)**. Customers can dial **133 677** (TTY service) and quote **1300 659 961**

## 3.3 Privacy

When gathering information to respond to a complaint, we will only:

- use it to deal with the complaint or to address systemic issues arising from the complaint
- provide it in a de-identified format when disclosing data to the public
- share it with staff on a need-to-know basis
- act in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

## 3.4 Complaint handling procedure

GWMWater will acknowledge all complaints in the same method they were received.

Complaints will be addressed in accordance with their urgency, for example significant health and safety issues will be processed immediately. This includes all water quality complaints.

### Receiving a complaint

Customer Service staff will:

- Clarify the complaint and the outcome sought
- If the complaint cannot be resolved directly by the customer service team, they will determine who is responsible for resolving the complaint and assign for further investigation

- Advise the complainant how long it will take to respond and who they can contact for an update.

## Investigation and Response

GWMWater will:

- Contact the customer within 4 business days to discuss the complaint and aim to have complaints resolved within 28 business days
- Escalate a complaint if it has not been resolved or remains open after 28 to the relevant Executive Manager
- Recognise the customers' rights, as set out in the Customer Charter.
- Escalate complex complaints that have been deemed sensitive or important (such as breaches of privacy, potential legal action) to the relevant Executive Manager
- Not proceed with action to recover any amount of money which is in dispute, until the dispute has been resolved.
- Ensure our response deals with the substance of the complaint or, if the complaint is complex, tell the customer when they will receive a response.
- Provide the reasons for a decision to the complainant, including details of any relevant legislation or policy, if appropriate.
- Explain the escalation process to the customer if they are not satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled or the outcome.
- Document and report root causes and complaint trends to identify where business processes require review.

If you are dissatisfied with the process or outcome of your complaint, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria). This can be done via email at [ewovinfo@ewov.com.au](mailto:ewovinfo@ewov.com.au), lodging the complaint online from their website or by calling 1800 500 509, or to any other external dispute resolution forum in the event that the customer is not satisfied with the response.

## 4. Procurement Complaints

GWMWater is committed to ensuring complaints about our procurement processes are handled fairly, efficiently and effectively.

### 4.1 Lodge a Complaint

- Email the Chief Procurement Officer at [cpo@gwmwater.org.au](mailto:cpo@gwmwater.org.au) Include:
  - Contact details (name, company, address, email)
  - Procurement details (contract number and description)
  - Description of the complaint

### 4.2 Acknowledgement

- GWMWater will acknowledge the complaint in writing within **4 business days**
- Complaint will be recorded in the GWMWater Procurement Complaints Register

## 4.3 Resolution

- GWMWater will provide a response with actions taken or reasons for decisions
- The outcome will be recorded in the Procurement Complaints Register

If unresolved or if you are dissatisfied with GWMWater's response, the complaint can be referred to the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB). This can be done via email or letter addressed to **The Chair, VGPB**

Email: [vgpb@dtf.vic.gov.au](mailto:vgpb@dtf.vic.gov.au)

Address: GPO Box 3001, Department of Treasury and Finance

VGPB will manage the complaint according to its own Complaints Management processes.

## 5. RELATED LEGISLATION

- a) *Water Act 1989*

## 6. RELATED POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- a) [CMS/2321 Urban Customer Charter](#)
- b) [CMS/2320 Rural Customer Charter](#)
- c) [CMS/2504 Complaint Handling Procedure](#)
- d) [CMS/307 Risk Management Board Policy](#)
- e) [CMS/579 Privacy Policy](#)

## 7. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

GWMWater will report on complaints to monitor our performance. We have a customer-focused approach that is open to feedback, resolving any complaints received in a timely manner to continuously improve the delivery of quality products and services that are valued by our customers and communities.

## 8. DOCUMENTATION

- a) Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) Guidelines
- b) Essential Services Commission (ESC) – Water Industry Standards
- c) Australian Standards – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations (ISO 10002:2006, Incorporating Amendment No. 1)