Customer Feedback Management Policy

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| **Status:** | Final approved |
| **Approved by:** | Director General |
| **Contact person:** | Manager, Corporate Services Executive |
| **Next review:** | 5 years |
| **HPRM reference:** | 2018/06552 |
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# Policy Statement

Premier’s Circular 2009/27 requires State Government Agencies to have in place a complaints management system that conforms to the principles of the *Australian standard on complaints handling (AS 4269)*.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

* Provide the guiding philosophy and commitment of the Department of Justice (the Department) to the principles of effective complaints handling.
* Meet an appropriate standard of complaints management including suitable commitment and resources, monitoring and evaluation of complaints processes and data received by agencies to ensure service delivery improvement.
* Ensure equitable access to, and knowledge of, customer feedback services offered by the Department.
* Maintain compliance with the *Australian Standard Customer Satisfaction Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations (AS/NZS 10002:2014)*.

# Scope

## This policy applies to:

### All staff and business areas of the Department.

* Feedback regarding the services provided by the Department to the public, where feedback refers to complaints, compliments and suggestions.

This policy does not apply to:

* Feedback regarding matters directly related to purchasing and contracting for goods and services. A separate dispute resolution process exists for this feedback.
* Feedback made by staff about internal matters. These issues are covered by the Department’s Workplace grievance management policy.
* Ministerial correspondence. Ministerial correspondence is not to be counted or recorded as customer feedback, and is to be managed independently through the ministerial correspondence system.
* Feedback related to administrative law, appeal decisions or judicial decisions. This type of feedback is acknowledged and processed according to the business area’s local processes.
* Feedback regarding public interest disclosures and allegations of misconduct and corruption. These are governed by specific legislation.
* Prisoner placement and assessment, except where appeal procedures do not apply or cannot be accessed (Adult Custodial Rule 18).
* Unit conference decisions except where appeal procedures do not apply or cannot be access (Adult Custodial Rule 18).
* Statutory disciplinary decisions.

# Definitions

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| Term | Definition |
| Feedback | Complaints, compliments and suggestions. |
| Customer | A member of the public providing feedback on a service provided by the Department. |
| Complainant | A member of the public providing a complaint relating a service provided by the Department. |
| ACCESS | Feedback system used by the Corrective Services division that manages complaints, compliments and suggestions for and related to prisoners and offenders state-wide. |
| CFMS | Feedback system used by the Department of Justice to capture feedback received about services provided to the public by Court and Tribunal Services, Births, Deaths and Marriages, Office of the Public Advocate, Public Trust Office. |
| Feedback coordinator | Employee appointed by Division Head to review feedback and allocate feedback to an officer managing. Feedback Coordinators also close off feedback once completed and ensure the appropriate information has been completed. |
| Officer managing | Employee identified as being responsible for acknowledging, investigating and responding to the customer. Officer Managing completes the process for the feedback, closes feedback and notifies the Feedback Coordinator once completed. |
| Corporate Services | Refers to the Corporate Services Executive team and the Executive Director Corporate Services. |

# Policy

## The Department actively supports the commitment made by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to all Western Australians to improve the standard of complaints handling across all Government agencies.

## Feedback will be administered in accordance with relevant legislation, public sector policies and standards.

## All feedback is treated seriously and in the strictest confidence.

## No fee will be charged for lodging feedback with the Department.

## Feedback from customers is welcomed and encouraged.

## Complaints will be heard and actioned in a way that is fair and accessible.

### Fairness

#### The complaints process must be fair. This means that:

* the customers must be given the option to be identified to the individual(s) they are complaining about.
* both parties to a complaint are entitled to be listened to and to have their views taken into account.
* the person being complained about must know all the claims that are made against them and have the opportunity to put their case forward.
* all information relevant to the case must be taken into account.
* the decision made must be fair and unbiased.

## 4.6.2 Accessibility

4.6.2.1 As stated in the Department’s Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP), complaints can be made in a variety of formats.

4.6.2.2 Customers can nominate another person to represent them in lodging a complaint.

## Department employees are to exercise proper courtesy, consideration and sensitivity in their dealings with members of the public.

## The Department is committed to utilising customer feedback in order to maintain and improve the quality of services provided.

## The policy supports the principles of other departmental policies and plans that impact on customer service delivery, including, but not limited to:

* + 1. Disability and access inclusion policy; and
    2. Language services policy.

# Visibility: Formats for feedback

## Information about how and where to provide feedback will be publicised through a variety of service delivery points.

## Customers may provide feedback to the Department via a variety of methods including electronic form available on the Department’s website, hard copy customer feedback form, letter, telephone, fax, email and in person.

# Recording Feedback

Two systems will be used to record feedback. The ACCESS system will be used to record feedback for services provided by the Corrective Services division (Corrective Services). The Customer Feedback Management System (CFMS) will be used to record all other feedback received by the Department.

6.1 **ACCESS**

6.1.1 ACCESS is responsible for the receipt of all feedback received by Corrective Services.

6.1.2 Any feedback received by any part of the Department that relates to a service provided by Corrective Services, should be redirected to ACCESS.

6.1.2 Feedback is administered in a timely and professional manner, in accordance with the Australian standard customer satisfaction guidelines for complaints handling in organisations (AS/NZS 10002:2014). All feedback provided to the Department is acknowledged, and where appropriate a response is provided to the complainant.

6.1.3 ACCESS assesses all feedback received by the Division and allocates this feedback to the responsible business area for resolution. The most appropriate method of resolution differs with each instance of feedback received, and is determined on a case by case basis.

6.1.4 The progression and resolution of all feedback received is monitored by ACCESS. ACCESS regularly reviews the resolution of feedback to identify opportunities for improvement and provides training and advice to Division stakeholders on effective feedback resolution.

6.1.5 ACCESS is responsible for ensuring that the Division’s administration and resolution of feedback meets the AS/NZS 10002:2014. All complainants are provided the opportunity to comment on the administration and resolution of their feedback and ACCESS may determine if a review of the feedback is warranted.

6.1.6 ACCESS will be administered by the Corrective Services. The Corrective Services will also be responsible for the management of system upgrades, communications and maintenance of training material.

6.1.7 Reporting on ACCESS feedback in the Department’s annual report will be prepared by Regulation and Operational Services.

## Customer Feedback Management System (CFMS)

### Complete, accurate and auditable customer feedback records will be maintained.

### All types of feedback lodged with the Department should be entered into the Department’s CFMS.

### Complaints resolved immediately that are deemed as low risk to the Department do not need to be recorded in the CFMS.

### Feedback should be recorded in CFMS where a matter is rated as significant, moderate or high risk, has been assessed as requiring business head notification or where a business area improvement is identified.

### All responses to complainants and actions taken to resolve complaints should be uploaded to the CFMS.

### Corporate Services will be responsible for the administration of the CFMS. This will include the responsibility of allocating feedback which is unallocated on submission by the public. Corporate Services is also responsible for the management of system upgrades, communications and maintenance of training material.

### Business Area Responsibilities

#### Feedback that is allocated to a business area is the responsibility of a Feedback Coordinator (coordinator). The coordinator has the authority to allocate the feedback to a designated officer known as Officer Managing (officer).

#### An initial acknowledgement of the feedback should be sent to the customer within five (5) working days. Corporate Executive Committee members can formally waive the requirement to provide an initial acknowledgement in writing.

#### All complaints require a final response letter or email to be sent within ten (10) working days. Suggestions and compliments require a final response letter or email within the same timeframes.

### Quarterly reporting on the performance of customer feedback management across the Department will be provided to the Department’s Corporate Executive Committee by Corporate Services.

### Reporting on CFMS feedback management in the Department’s annual report will be prepared by Corporate Services.

# Dissatisfied customers

* 1. Where a customer is dissatisfied with the response received from the Department they are entitled to discuss this further with the business area coordinator or contact.
  2. Where a customer has spoken with a business area coordinator/contact and remains dissatisfied with the response received from the Department, the Department can consider the response at a higher level and/or refer them to the Ombudsman of Western Australia.

# Records Management

Under the *State Records Act 2000* all feedback correspondence, including complaints requiring a specific response, must be kept for a period of seven years after the last action. In the case of a complaint, this is seven years after the last action relating to the investigation or resolution of the complaint.

# Recurrent complaints

Where a complaint has been received on numerous occasions and cannot be resolved by the Department to the satisfaction of the customer, the coordinator/contact is responsible for the preparation of a response to the customer.

# Management of abusive or inflammatory feedback

## Where correspondence to the Department contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or material clearly intended to intimidate, a decision will be made as to whether it will be acted on and the complainant will be advised that no further action will be taken given the nature of the contents.

## All correspondence will be retained as per the *State Records Act 2000.*

## Where the person has a history of being vexatious no further action will be taken and the system will be noted accordingly.

## Where there is evidence of an offence, consideration should be given to the matter being referred to Police for investigation. Where such comments are made in telephone conversations or interviews, these may be terminated at the discretion of the staff member after providing a warning to the caller of that intention.

# Management of public disclosures regarding corrupt or improper conduct

Where a public disclosure is made by staff or members of the public regarding corrupt or improper conduct, the Department’s Public Interest Disclosure officer will be responsible for receiving disclosure and managing to conclusion.

# References

## Policies and directives

* Department of Justice Disability access and inclusion plan
* Department of Justice Disability and access inclusion policy
* Department of Justice Language services policy
* Department of Justice Workplace grievance management policy
* Department of Justice Public interest disclosure policy
* Department of Justice Risk management policy
* Australian Standard on Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations (AS/NZS 10002:2014)
* Premier’s Circular 2009/27 – Complaints management.

## Legislation

* *State Records Act 2000*
* *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003*

## Procedures and Forms

* Customer Feedback Management System (CFMS) user guide

## Other documents

* [Ombudsman of Western Australia – Procedural Fairness](https://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/State_Revenue/Publications_and_Resources/Customer_Service_Charter.aspx)
* [Ombudsman of Western Australia – Managing unreasonable complaint conduct](https://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/State_Revenue/Publications_and_Resources/Customer_Service_Charter.aspx)

# Approval

Approved by

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| Name: | Dr Adam Tomison |
| Position title: | Director General |
| Date: | 10 January 2019 |

# Document version history

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