



Department of Planning,  
Lands and Heritage



# Complaints and Feedback Policy

December 2025

**SOLUTIONS FOCUSED FOR A  
VIBRANT WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

## Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of this land. We pay our respect to Elders past and present, their descendants who are with us today, and those who will follow in their footsteps.

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# Policy statement

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (the Department) is committed to effective complaint handling and values feedback as an opportunity to improve its services and strengthen relationships with the community and stakeholders.

The Department will ensure the complaint handling process is accessible and easy to use for all customers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, children and young people, those living in regional and remote areas, people with disability, and individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Complaints will be managed fairly, promptly and respectfully. Customers will be provided with clear reasons for decisions and informed of their right to request a review or appeal.

This policy aligns with the Department's [Customer Service Charter](#) and the Ombudsman Western Australia (Ombudsman) [Guidelines on Effective Complaint Handling](#).

## Purpose

This policy enables the Department to manage and resolve complaints in a consistent, systematic and timely manner. It also provides the Department with information to facilitate improvements in service delivery.

## Scope

This policy applies to all officers (as specified in the Definitions section) and includes activities undertaken by the Department on behalf of, or as authorised by, its affiliated statutory authorities.

This policy applies to feedback and complaints from customers, including:

- positive feedback or compliments about the Department's services, teams or officers, including suggestions for improvement;
- complaints related to the Department's services, teams, officers, procurement activities, privacy matters or complaint handling practices;
- complaints related to the Department's affiliated statutory authorities, including those involving administrative processes or individual conduct; and
- negative feedback that does not require a response.

This policy does not apply to complaints addressed by other formal mechanisms, including:

- government policies or legislation outside the Department's responsibility;
- matters that are the subject of current legal proceedings in a court or tribunal;
- formal decisions made independently by the Department's affiliated statutory authorities;

- decisions made by a court or tribunal, including decisions subject to appeal;
- approaches made directly to a Minister or the [Ombudsman](#);
- allegations of abuse and sexual misconduct by public officers involving a child (covered by the Ombudsman [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#));
- any review process available under the [Freedom of Information Act 1992](#);
- disclosures of wrongdoing within the State public sector involving improper conduct or misuse of public resources - these can be pursued through the [Public Interest Disclosure \(PID\) Process](#);
- allegations of misconduct by public officers involving corrupt or criminal activities:
  - the Public Sector Commission is responsible for dealing with minor misconduct; and
  - the Corruption and Crime Commission deals with serious misconduct;
- internal workplace grievances raised by employees which are managed under the Department's Human Resource policies and procedures; and
- tenancy matters relating to [Western Australian Planning Commission](#) properties.

The Department will advise customers of the appropriate process or authority to contact for complaints that fall outside the scope of this policy.

Note: The facilities managed by the Department, namely Fremantle Prison and Whiteman Park, have their own complaints handling processes, which align with the overarching principles and intent of this policy.

## Principles

The Department's complaint handling system is based on the following principles:

- **Customer-focused:** complaints are handled respectfully, and feedback is valued
- **Visibility:** easy to find information on how to lodge a complaint
- **Accessibility:** complaints can be made easily through multiple channels
- **Responsiveness:** complaints are acknowledged and resolved promptly
- **Objectivity and fairness:** complaints are handled impartially and without bias
- **Confidentiality:** personal information related to complaints is kept confidential
- **Remedy:** fair and proportionate remedies are provided where complaints are upheld
- **Review:** internal and external review options are available to complainants
- **Accountability:** clear responsibilities are assigned for handling complaints
- **Continuous improvement:** complaint data is used to inform service improvements

# Rights and responsibilities

Customers have the right to:

- lodge a complaint or provide feedback without fear of reprisal and be treated fairly and respectfully;
- be informed of the complaint process and outcome; and
- request a review or escalate the complaint if unsatisfied.

The Department reserves the right to:

- resolve complaints in accordance with internal procedures and legal obligations;
- protect officers from frivolous, malicious, or vexatious complaints; and
- set boundaries around communication that is abusive or unreasonable, including choosing not to respond.

## Policy requirements

### 1 Enabling complaints and feedback

The Department provides multiple channels for customers to submit complaints and provide feedback.

Method	Details
Online	<a href="#">Complaints, Compliments and Feedback form</a> via the Department's website
Email	<a href="mailto:complaints@dplh.wa.gov.au">complaints@dplh.wa.gov.au</a>
Telephone	+61 9 6551 8002 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
In writing	Coordinator Customer Relationships, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Locked Bag 2506, Perth WA 6001
In person	Any Department office or Department managed facility
Facility specific	<a href="#">Fremantle Prison Enquiry form</a> via Fremantle Prison's website <a href="#">Whiteman Park Feedback form</a> via Whiteman Park's website

*Note: Customers who raise concerns informally (either in conversations or direct email to officers) will be supported to lodge a formal complaint through the above channels to ensure their issue can be tracked and managed appropriately.*

The Department is committed to ensuring its complaints and feedback mechanisms are easy to access and understand. Customers can request support, including interpreter services or telephone assistance (such as relay services), either when speaking with an officer or directly through the [Complaints, Compliments and Feedback form](#). Complaints and feedback from children and young people can be made in writing, verbally, in person or with the assistance of a trusted adult.

When submitting a complaint or providing feedback, customers should note the following:

- There is no cost for lodging a complaint or providing feedback.
- All **personal information** and **sensitive personal information** will be handled confidentially and stored securely and in accordance with relevant privacy legislation<sup>1</sup> and the [Department's Privacy Policy](#).
- Anonymous complaints and feedback are accepted; however, anonymity may limit the Department's ability to respond or resolve the matter.
- Officers are familiar with the complaints and feedback process and can assist customers in lodging feedback or complaints.
- Complaints and feedback should be submitted respectfully. The Department does not tolerate abusive, threatening, or aggressive language or behaviour.
- Comments made on social media platforms are not treated as formal complaints. However, the Department monitors these platforms and may refer comments for action where appropriate.

## 2 Managing complaints and feedback

### 2.1 Acknowledging and recording

- Complaints and feedback submitted via the online form or official complaints email address will receive an initial written confirmation of receipt.
- Complaints will be formally acknowledged in writing within **ten business days**.
- If further information or clarification is required to progress a complaint, the Department will contact the complainant. If a response is not received within **30 business days**, a final deadline will be provided. If no response is received by that date, the complaint will be closed.
- All complaints and feedback will be recorded in a central Complaints and Feedback Management Register and managed in accordance with privacy legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> Most obligations under the [Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024 \(WA\)](#) (PRIS Act) will commence from 1 July 2026..

## 2.2 Assessing and responding

While all feedback will be recorded, acknowledged and reviewed, a formal written response will only be provided where appropriate.

Complaints will be assessed according to their nature and severity to determine the most appropriate resolution pathway: simple resolution; case review; full investigation.

Complainants will be informed of the process for managing their complaint and the expected timeframe for resolution. Standard timeframes are:

- **20 business days** for simple resolutions or case reviews; and
- up to **60 business days** for matters requiring a full investigation.

These timeframes will commence once all necessary information or clarification has been received from the complainant.

The Department is committed to ensuring fairness throughout the complaints process and will keep complainants informed of progress. If delays occur, the Department will notify the complainant in writing and provide a revised timeframe.

At the conclusion of the process, the Department will provide the complainant with a written response outlining the findings and the outcome. Where appropriate, the response will also include any remedy offered by the Department.

## 2.3 Complaint review

Complainants who are dissatisfied with the outcome or handling of their complaint, may request an internal review. Requests must be submitted in writing within **20 business days** of receiving the response.

Requests can be sent:

- by email to [complaints@dplh.wa.gov.au](mailto:complaints@dplh.wa.gov.au); or
- in writing to Coordinator Customer Relationships, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Locked Bag 2506, Perth WA 6001.

The internal review will be conducted by a senior officer who was not involved in the original investigation. This officer will act impartially and assess whether the complaint was managed fairly and in line with the Department's internal Complaints Management Procedure to determine whether any further action is required. The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the review.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the internal review, they may escalate their complaint to the [Ombudsman](#).

Following commencement of relevant provisions in the *Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024*, privacy complaints may be escalated to the [Western Australian Information Commissioner](#) if the complainant is dissatisfied with the Department's response.

### 3 Learning and improvement

The Department is committed to learning from complaints and feedback to improve services.

- The Coordinator Customer Relationships will analyse complaints data to identify trends and recurring issues and provide quarterly reports to the Corporate Executive.
- Insights will inform changes to processes and service delivery, including improvements for specific customer groups.

Officers involved in handling complaints will receive ongoing training to support respectful, effective, and inclusive communication. This includes skills in customer service, conflict resolution, recordkeeping, cultural awareness, working with interpreters and fraud and corruption awareness.

# Definitions

**Anonymous Complaint** is a complaint where the complainant has not provided their name and/or contact details or has requested not to be contacted..

**Complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the Department, relating to its services, procurement activities, privacy matters, officers, complaint handling, or affiliated authorities, boards or committees, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

**Complaints and Feedback Management Register** is a centralised register for recording, tracking and managing complaints and feedback.

**Customer** is a person or organisation receiving advice or a service, using the facilities, or engaging in a business relationship or any other person or organisation having an interest in the functions or activities of the Department.

**Feedback** is customer communication of their experience or opinion of the Department, its operations, services, facilities, officers or its affiliated authorities, boards or committees. Feedback can take the form of a comment, observation or suggestion.

**Negative feedback that does not require a response** is general negative statements about the Department, its operations, services, facilities or officers that do not provide any substantial information or evidence to enable a response (for example, 'the Department does a bad job').

**Officer** includes employees (permanent, fixed-term, and casual), seconded staff to the Department, volunteers, work experience students, internships and other work placements, external contractors and consultants engaged by the Department to provide a service, statutory office holders, and members of Department statutory boards and committees (provided that compliance with this policy is a term of their engagement).

**Personal information** is defined in [Section 4](#) of the [Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024](#).

**Sensitive personal information** is defined in [Section 4](#) of the [Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024](#).

# Reference information

## Legislation

- [Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003](#)
- [Disability Services Act 1993](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 1992](#)
- [Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment \(Reportable Conduct\) Act 2022](#)
- [Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003](#)
- [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#)

## Related documents

- [Commissioner for Children and Young People - Child Friendly Complaints Guidelines](#)
- [Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Customer Service Charter](#)
- [Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Privacy Policy](#)
- [Ombudsman Western Australia – Guidelines on Effective Complaint Handling](#)
- [Public Sector Code of Ethics](#)
- [Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020](#)