

Feedback and Complaints Management Policy

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Australian Government

Fair Work
OMBUDSMAN

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About this Policy

The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) is an independent statutory office. We support compliant, productive and inclusive workplaces and ensure compliance with Australian workplace laws including the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Fair Work Act).

At the FWO, we care what our customers think of our services. Feedback helps us improve and respond to community needs and expectations.

This Policy explains how the FWO manages customer feedback and complaints. We will regularly review and update this document.

Related documents

This Policy is designed to be read in conjunction with the:

- [Commonwealth Ombudsman Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling](#)
- [Commonwealth Ombudsman Better Practice Guide to Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct](#)
- [FWO Customer Service Charter](#)
- [FWO Apology Policy](#).

Objectives

This Policy provides a framework for a Feedback and Complaints Management system that's transparent, easy to understand, consistent and responsive.

Scope

This Policy applies to feedback and complaints the FWO receives.

Feedback

Feedback is commentary on FWO services from customers or other external parties where no action or response is expected. An example is positive feedback about an Infoline adviser's service or a comment on the FWO Facebook page about the outcome of an audit.

Service complaints

Service complaints are an expression of dissatisfaction with some aspect of our service where the customer expects a response or resolution. An example is a customer who says they can't find their pay rate because the website isn't working.

Requests for review

A request for review is an expression of dissatisfaction where a customer wants a FWO decision reassessed. An example is asking us to reconsider an investigation outcome. Customers can request any FWO decision to be reconsidered.

This Policy doesn't apply to:

- minor issues raised with FWO staff during normal customer interactions
- a complaint or request for review where another specific statutory framework or process is in place to address the issue raised, such as a request for review where a Compliance notice or Infringement notice was issued
- FWO mediation outcomes
- matters previously/currently dealt with by an external complaints agency, tribunal or court.

Enquiries about the FWO's general services don't fall within the Policy's scope. This can include requests for information and assistance, or Customers using resources and services. An example is a request for general workplace relations advice.

FWO's approach to managing feedback and complaints



1. Receive and acknowledge

We accept feedback and complaints through any channel. However, we encourage customers to contact us via www.fairwork.gov.au or by completing the [online form](#) so everything can be centrally managed in our Feedback and Complaints Management system.

We'll generally provide initial acknowledgement of the feedback or complaint within two business days. Where possible, we'll also resolve the matter in this timeframe.

Time limitations

Timely feedback and complaints help us respond to the evolving needs and expectations of customers. An issue's age can affect the availability and quality of information, and can make it difficult or unnecessary to pursue and resolve an issue.

We encourage customers to lodge a request for review within 28 days of the original decision.

Customers making a service complaint should do so within three months of the interaction.

The FWO may accept feedback and complaints outside these timeframes where there are good reasons to do so. This can include extenuating or exceptional circumstances, such as serious ill health or a natural disaster.

2. Assess and prioritise

When we receive feedback or a complaint, we consider how we can best assist. In assessing feedback and complaints, we consider:

- the seriousness of the allegation or concern
- how long it's been since the issue occurred
- whether the customer attempted to resolve the issue previously
- customer vulnerability
- if there's a systemic or administrative issue.

So we can respond effectively, the FWO asks customers to:

- clearly explain and identify the issues in the feedback or complaint
- provide all the relevant information they hold
- cooperate with requests for information or evidence and assist with our enquiries
- engage and communicate in a respectful manner
- recognise all parties in a feedback and complaints process have rights and responsibilities
- make only reasonable and proportionate follow-up contact and requests after providing the initial feedback or complaint.

3. Respond

All matters are recorded in our Feedback and Complaints Management system so we manage them in a consistent manner.

Following assessment, we'll decide on an appropriate and proportionate response. This can range from acknowledging feedback, to an independent assessment of a FWO decision. The best outcome is often achieved when the feedback or complaint is allocated to a staff member

in the related business area. This is because that person will already have a good knowledge of the matter. However, sometimes it is appropriate to allocate the complaint to a senior staff member or someone who is independent of the business area.

We ensure procedural fairness by gathering the relevant facts and circumstances to understand the issues. This may include:

- asking the customer to provide more information about the feedback or complaint, the preferred outcome and any supporting evidence
- notifying all affected parties and seeking their version of events and any relevant information
- contacting other parties for information or evidence that could assist a resolution.

Once we've gathered the relevant facts and circumstances, we'll decide on the appropriate and proportionate response to achieve the best outcome.

4. Communicate the outcome

FWO actions could include:

- acknowledging the issue
- referring the matter to the relevant business area, to a specific legislative or other process/mechanism, or to another agency
- providing additional information or assistance
- issuing an apology
- reconsidering a decision
- conducting an independent review.

We'll keep customers informed about the progress of their feedback or complaint and the outcome.

5. Learn from our customers

Feedback and complaints provide valuable information we can use to improve future customer experiences and satisfaction.

To ensure we learn from our customers, feedback and complaints are categorised and recorded in our central Feedback and Complaints Management system. The data informs quarterly reports, which highlight trends and systemic issues.

From there, we develop strategies to continuously enhance our services and provide opportunities to innovate and improve the FWO's operational effectiveness.

We deal with personal customer information in accordance with the FWO's [Privacy Policy](#).

What if our customers are not satisfied?

Upon request, the FWO may decide on an appropriate additional response that's consistent with this Policy.

If customers aren't satisfied with the way we handled their concerns, they can contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) in writing, by phone, in person or via an online form.

Phone: 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au/pages/making-a-complaint/

Post: GPO Box 442, CANBERRA ACT 2601