

Customer Complaints & Disputes Resolution

PCS-002
Revision 02

1 Background

The Corporation is required to implement and maintain a customer dispute resolution process as per Division 4, 110a of the Water Act 1989. In addition, the South Gippsland Water Customer Charter and the ESC Customer Service Code outline the Corporation's obligations in regards to customer complaints.

2 Purpose

The following policy outlines the Corporation's Complaint and Dispute Resolution process.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy only, the following shall mean:

Customer Complaint: any item relating to water taste, odour, colour, pressure and/or reliability; wastewater odour and/or reliability; billing, tariffs, rates; Corporation staff behaviour or actions; environmental or OH&S breaches.

Resolution: Any one of the following:

- Agreement reached between complainant and Corporation.
- Decision by external dispute resolution forum.
- Complaint dismissed by external dispute resolution forum.
- Complaint withdrawn.

4 Policy

- a) In the first instance, the Corporation will always endeavour to resolve customers concerns or issues prior to them escalating into disputes.
- b) The Corporation will always endeavour to resolve any disputes in good faith directly with customers and other affected parties.
- c) The Corporation will respond to a complaint made in person or by phone within 2 working days. Complaints made in writing will receive a written response within 10 working days.
- d) The Corporation's response will confirm the details of the complaint, proposed actions, timelines and any reasons for the decision made, including details of any legislative or policy basis for the decision.
- e) The Corporation will implement an internal investigation system for customers who request a further review of the decision, including the opportunity to raise the complaint up to the level of senior management.

- f) The Corporation will ensure that this system is accessible and communicated to all customers raising a complaint, is fair and reasonable, and is regularly reviewed to ensure that its operation is efficient and effective.
- g) Where a customer is not satisfied with the response, the Corporation will provide customers with information about appropriate external dispute resolution forums.
- h) The Corporation will not attempt to recover any monies which are in dispute, until the dispute has been resolved.

5 Responsibilities

The **Office Manager** is responsible for:

Managing the customer complaint system.

Investigating Customer complaints as per the Internal Investigation Process where resolution can not be achieved by the Customer Service Department/Complaints Handling Officer or other Corporation Staff.

The **Managing Director** is responsible for:

Investigating customer complaints as per the Internal Investigation Process where resolution can not be achieved by the Office Manager.

The **Board** is responsible for:

Investigating customer complaints as per the Internal Investigation Process where resolution can not be achieved by the Managing Director.

6 References

- South Gippsland Water Customer Charter
- Water Act 1989
- ESC Customer Service Code -Metropolitan Retail and Regional Water Businesses
- SCS-002 Complaints and Dispute Resolution

This document is to be reviewed in October 2009 or earlier as required.

This document must not be released to external parties without approval by the Managing Director.

DOCUMENT APPROVAL		
Board Approval:	Meeting N ^o : 152	Date: 25/10/2007
SMT Approval	Meeting No: 187	Date 19/09/2007
MD Signature:		