

Customer Complaints and Disputes Resolution Policy

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 with respect 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 complaint including those relating to water taste, odour, colour, flow rate, pressure and/or reliability; wastewater odour and/or reliability; billing, payment issue, tariffs, rates; Corporation staff behaviour or actions; management of trade waste; environmental or OH&S breaches.

ESC: Essential Services Commission.

OH&S: Occupational Health and Safety.

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;
- Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV);
- Complaint withdrawn.

4 Policy

- a) In the first instance, the Corporation will always endeavour to resolve customer's 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 be issued 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 process 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 including EWOV.
- h) The Corporation will not attempt to recover any monies which are in dispute, until the dispute has been resolved.

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5 Responsibilities

The **Customer Service Team Leader** is responsible for:

- Managing the customer complaint system;
- Investigating customer complaints as per the Internal Investigation Process where resolution cannot be achieved by the Customer Service Department / Complaints Handling Officer or other Corporation Staff.

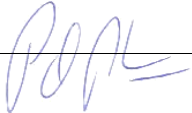
The **Community Relations Officer**: is responsible for investigating customer complaints as per the Internal Investigations Process where resolution cannot be achieved by the Customer Service Team Leader.

The **Managing Director**: is responsible for investigating customer complaints as per the Internal Investigation Process where resolution cannot be achieved by the Customer Service Team Leader.

6 References

- South Gippsland Water Customer Charter
- South Gippsland Water Trade Waste Customer Charter
- EWOV - Energy and Water Ombudsmen Victoria
- Water Act 1989
- ESC Customer Service Code - Metropolitan Retail and Regional Water Businesses
- ESC Trade Waste Customer Service Code
- [SCS-002 Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedure](#)
- [SCS-017 EWOV Correspondence Procedure](#)
- [STW-001 Trade Waste Procedure](#)
- [SCS-013h ESC Customer Charter 7 - Actions for Non Payment of Account Procedure](#)

This document is to be reviewed in **June 2018** or earlier as required.
 This document must not be released to external parties without approval by the Managing Director.

DOCUMENT APPROVAL		
Board Approval:	Meeting No.: 253	Date: 23/06/2016
ISD&C Committee Approval	Meeting No: 04	Date: 25/05/2016
Senior Management Approval:	Meeting No.: 464	Date: 14/05/2015
Managing Director Signature:		

Notify Community Relations Officer when revised for external publishing