



Defence SA Customer Complaints and Feedback Management Policy

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About This Document

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Approvals Record:

Approver	Version	Title/Role	Date	Signature
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Managed by: Corporate Services Team **Responsible position:** Director, Corporate Services

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Purpose

The Defence SA Customer Complaints and Feedback Management Policy (the policy), outlines Defence SA's complaints and feedback expectations, roles and responsibilities.

Defence SA is committed to effective and efficient complaints and feedback management. Defence SA strives to manage complaints and feedback in an accountable, transparent, fair, and timely manner.

This policy applies to all Defence SA employees.

Scope

In scope

Matters in scope for this policy include services, programs and products provided by Defence SA, including the Defence Innovation Partnership (DIP), Veterans SA and the South Australian Space Industry Centre (SASIC) business units to customers and stakeholders external to Defence SA.

Out of scope

Where an alternative whole of government complaints management policy is mandated, the Defence SA policy is not applicable.

Administrative law, appeal decisions, judicial decisions, employment decisions, or matters relating to [Public Interest Disclosure](#), are out of scope to this policy.

- Section 61 of the *Public Sector Act 2009* outlines that any employee aggrieved by an employment decision of a public sector agency which directly affects the employee may apply for an [internal review](#) of the decision.
- **Employment Decisions:** An employment decision is defined in this policy as an administrative decision relating to the engagement, promotion, transfer, remuneration, entitlements, disciplinary actions against, or termination of employment, of a person.
- **Corruption and other criminal conduct, misconduct or maladministration.** These obligations for public authorities and public officers are in accordance with the [Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#) and directions and guidelines issued by the Office for Public Integrity and Ombudsman SA.
- **Matters relating to the Public Interest Disclosure:** The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* establishes schemes that encourage and facilitate the disclosure of public interest information to prescribed persons or authorities.

Context

The policy conforms to the guiding principles of the Australian Guidelines for Complaints Management in Organisations (AS 10002:2022) as described in SA Ombudsman's Complaints Management Framework (March 2016).

The policy responds to the requirements of *PC Circular 039 – Complaints Management in the South Australian Public Sector*.

Policy Detail

Defence SA applies a three-level model for complaint handling.

Level 1	Initial complaint	Employee conducts an assessment and determines a resolution. Complainant is satisfied with the outcome and no further action is required.
Level 2	Escalated complaint	Complainant is dissatisfied with initial outcome. Complaint is subsequently escalated to a Director for consideration and outcome.
Level 3	External referral	If complaint remains unresolved after escalation to Director level. The complaint is referred to an external agency for further investigation, consideration, and resolution.

Defence SA aims to resolve complaints within 21 business days, which is the prescribed timeframe for this policy. If a complaint cannot be resolved within the prescribed timeframe, the complainant will be notified, along with an alternative response date.

The Complaints Management procedure outlines responsibilities and processes to enable consistent management of customer complaints and feedback across Defence SA.



Roles and Responsibilities

Position title or unit/team	Listed responsibilities
Chief Executive	<p>Accountable for the effective implementation of the policy within Defence SA.</p> <p>The Chief Executive promotes a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution. The Chief Executive supports the use of complaints data to inform customer service improvements.</p>
Executives, Directors and Managers	<p>Responsible for ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complaints and feedback information (Appendix A) and a link to the complaints and feedback email address is included on all Defence SA and associated websites • the policy and procedures are visible, accessible, and promoted throughout the agency and to customers • complaint and feedback data is collected, analysed and used to identify opportunities for systematic service improvements • employees managing complaints are resourced appropriately and supported in a timely manner • outcomes of fair, effective, and efficient complaints management within their teams are occurring in accordance with this policy • training, support, and timely advice to employees who are managing complaints • employees are fully informed of their obligations and responsibilities under the policy, and trained where required • service improvements identified through customer complaints data are implemented • Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is offered to employees managing complaints.
All Staff	<p>Must treat customers with respect.</p> <p>Are required to assist customers to make complaints and provide feedback where appropriate.</p> <p>Must comply with the policy and procedure.</p> <p>Are required to provide prompt responses to complaints, resolve matters within the prescribed timeframe.</p> <p>Are required to assist with developing service improvements based on customer complaints data.</p> <p>Are encouraged to support colleagues with an active complaints management role where necessary.</p>

Reporting

Complaints data and service improvement reports are conducted every six months and are provided to Defence SA's Executive Leadership Team. The report includes:

- the number and types of complaints received
- the outcome of complaints, including matters resolved at first point of contact
- any systemic issues identified
- any service improvements made resulting from customer complaint or feedback
- the number of requests received for internal and/or external review
- if the prescribed timeframe for resolution has been met.

This information will also be used to meet Defence SA's annual reporting requirements. Reporting requirements and metrics may change overtime.

Related Documents

- Australian: Guidelines for complaint management in organisations (AS 10002:2022)
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet [Circular 039 - Complaint Management in the South Australian Public Sector](#)
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet [Circular PC013 - Annual Reporting Requirements](#)
- Ombudsman SA [Complaints Management Framework \(March 2016\)](#)
- [State Records Act 1997](#)
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet [Circular PC012 - Information Privacy Principles \(IPPS\) Instruction](#).
- Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment - [Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#)
- Directions and Guidelines issued by the Office for Public Integrity
- Directions and Guidelines issued by Ombudsman SA

Definitions

Term	Definition
Customer	Consumers and stakeholders who receive or use services provided by Defence SA, attend an event, or are part of a delegation hosted by Defence SA. A customer can be an individual or an organisation and can be internal or external to government.
Complainant	A person, organisation or their representative/advocate making a customer complaint.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about a service or action of a South Australian public-sector agency, or its employees. This expression is made by a person or organisation directly affected by the service or action. A response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required as a result of this expression of dissatisfaction.
Feedback	Any opinion, comment/suggestion, compliment, or expression of interest/concern. These are made directly or indirectly by a customer. A response or resolution is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Complaint Management System (CMS)	Comprises of policies (Defence SA Complaints and Feedback Management Policy), procedures (Defence SA Complaints Management Procedure), complaints and feedback mechanisms (phone, email, post, online via the Defence SA website), organisational culture, employees, and the hardware and software required to manage complaints and feedback.
Public Officer	Includes public sector employees and contractors performing contract work for a public authority or the Crown.
Procedure	Instructions that set out how complaints and feedback is managed.
Prescribed Timeframe	Timeframe allocated to handle and manage complaints and feedback. The policy states that the prescribed timeframe for this policy is 21 business days.



Appendix A – Complaints and Feedback (online) Information

We understand that mistakes happen despite our best efforts.

If you are dissatisfied with the service you received, please tell us. Any feedback/complaint is handled in line with our Defence SA Complaints and Feedback Management Policy.

Please use the following information to decide if you would like to provide feedback or make a complaint.

What is feedback?

Feedback is your positive or negative comments about a service/issue, but you don't necessarily want a response from the department.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service, product or program provided by Defence SA and its business units including Veterans SA, the Defence Innovation Partnership and the South Australian Space Industry Centre that you feel requires a response.

Some matters we can't assist you with include those relating to administrative law, appeal decisions, judicial decisions, employment decisions, or Public Interest Disclosure.

Matters concerning the conduct and practice of public officers and public authorities in the South Australian Government, specifically corruption, misconduct, and maladministration should be reported to the [Office for Public Integrity](#).

What we need if you are making a complaint:

- Your name, preferred contact phone number or email address during business hours (you can also make a complaint or provide feedback anonymously, and we will investigate it as far as possible).
- The name of the business unit or the person concerned (if you know it).
- A clear description of your experience, including whether you have previously contacted us.
- Any relevant information about your complaint.
- The action you would like us to take.

If you are not sure whether your complaint or feedback relates to Defence SA or one of the Defence SA business units or would like some assistance to make your complaint, please contact enquiries@defencesa.com. This could include helping you to:

- find useful information for the complaint
- work out what outcomes you would like
- tell us if there is anything we need to know about you and your situation. For example, if you prefer to speak with a woman or a man or someone from your community.



What happens once you've lodged a complaint?

Once you have lodged your complaint, you will receive an acknowledgement that includes a reference number.

We may also contact you to confirm or clarify the information you have provided. We will contact you as soon as we have completed the investigation.

We will aim to resolve your complaint within 21 business days. If it is not possible to give you a full reply within this time, we will contact you and advise of a due date for resolution. This may happen if your complaint requires more detailed investigation.

We will also contact you at the completion of the investigation to ask you about your experience. As part of this process, we will acknowledge where things could have been done better. We will tell you what will be done to avoid the same thing happening again.

Equally, if we do not uphold your complaint, we will let you know why.

If you feel your complaint has not been dealt with properly, please let us know. If you remain unsatisfied, you can refer your complaint to the Ombudsman SA.

How to make a complaint or give feedback

- Online: via defencesa.com
- Email: enquiries@defencesa.com
- Post: Defence SA, Level 4, 151 Pirie St, Adelaide SA 5000
- Phone 8463 7153 (during business hours)
- If English is not your preferred language, please contact the Interpreting and Translating Centre (ITC) on 1800 280 203 and then ask for 8226 3500.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, please contact us through:

- National Relay Service (Speak and Listen): call 1300 555 727
- National Relay Service (TTY users): call 133 677
- Internet Relay users can connect to the National Relay Service.