

COMPLAINTS HANDLING - GUIDING PRINCIPLES BASED ON AUSTRALIAN and INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

- 1. VISIBILITY** Information about how and where to complain should be well publicised to customers, personnel and other interested parties.
- 2. ACCESSIBILITY** The complaints handling process should be easily accessible to all complainants. This includes readily accessible information about the process, flexibility in the methods of making complaints and special arrangements and/or support for complainants with specific needs (including interpreters).
- 3. RESPONSIVENESS** Receipt of each complaint should be acknowledged to the complainant immediately. Complaints should be addressed promptly, complainants should be treated courteously and kept informed of the progress of their complaint through the complaints handling process.
- 4. OBJECTIVITY** Each complaint should be addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner through the complaints handling process.
- 5. CHARGES** Access to the complaints handling process should be free of charge to the complainant.
- 6. CONFIDENTIALITY** Personally identifiable information concerning the complainant should be available where needed, but only for the purposes of addressing the complaint within the organisation and should be actively protected from disclosure, unless the customer or complainant expressly consents to its disclosure.
- 7. INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS** Every reasonable effort should be made to investigate all the relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint.
- 8. CUSTOMER-FOCUSED APPROACH** The organisation should adopt a customer-focused approach, be open to feedback including complaints, and should show commitment to resolving complaints by its actions.
- 9. RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINT** Following an appropriate investigation, the organisation should offer a response, for example, correct the problem and prevent it happening in the future. The decision or action taken regarding the complaint should be communicated to the complainant as soon as the decision or action is taken.
- 10. ACCOUNTABILITY** The organisation should ensure that accountability for and reporting on the actions and decisions of the organisations with respect to complaints handling is clearly established.
- 11. CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT** The continual improvement of the complaints handling process and the quality of services should be a permanent objective of the organisation.

Paraphrased from the Australian Standard™
Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations
(AS ISO 10002-2006).