



Title: Housing Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures		
Policy Area: Social Programs - Housing		
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Author: Colleen Murray		
Approved by Special Administrator A Bowcher		
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Policy:

This policy and procedures will establish a framework for the lodgment of complaints and ensure that matters are investigated and dealt with adequately and fairly without fear of retribution, and as far as is practicable to the satisfaction of the person complaining.

Woomera Aboriginal Corporation (WAC) acknowledges that consumers of our service are entitled to expect a quality service and have a right to complain if this expectation is not met.

WAC is committed to:

- Providing a safe environment for each person to make a complaint with due attention to the confidentiality, privacy, and cultural concerns of the client
- Ensuring each person has access to information
- Ensuring each person has the opportunity to have a chosen support person such as an advocate or key contact to assist or represent them during the process
- Ensuring that there are no negative consequences or retribution for any person who makes a complaint
- Supporting participation of any person in the complaints process and enabling the person to access resources to assist them
- Demonstrating fair and timely resolution of complaints
- Informing each person at all stages of the decision-making process concerning their complaint and the reasons for any decisions eventually made
- Whilst maintaining confidentiality, storing and analysing complaints data to drive organisational policy development and continuous improvement

This policy excludes complaints and appeals by applicants and tenants relating to:

1. Disputes and grievances between staff and /or management
2. Complaints by a tenant about another tenant unless it is directly related to a tenant's behavior (noisy, loud music, threats etc.) or damage to WAC housing stock
3. Complaints about WAC and its tenants by people who are external to WAC staff, members, and tenants.

Definitions:

Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a policy, procedure, decision or service provided. It may also refer to dissatisfaction with the way that a staff member may have treated someone.

All complainants must be encouraged to put their complaint in writing and to lodge the complaint form into the locked boxes in each work site. Complaints must be actioned within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the complaint.

Appeal

An appeal is a request to reconsider a decision that has been made prior to any action being taken.

An appeal is to be in writing and addressed to the Manager at Woomera Aboriginal Corporation within twenty (21) days of the decision.

For tenants – examples of appeals are listed below:

- The level of rent being charged;
- Being refused re-housing;
- Being refused a rent rebate;
- Being refused permission to make modifications to the property;
- Issues governed by the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, e.g. nuisance and annoyance, noise, use of premises etc; and
- Issues relating to repairs and maintenance.

For applicants – examples of appeals would include:

- Not being accepted on the waiting list;
- Being given a low priority on the waiting list;
- Removal from the waiting list; and
- Being allocated a property which the applicant does not want to accept.

Informing Applicant and Tenants

- The Property Officer should provide a hand out to the applicants and tenants regarding the complaints and appeals process at WAC at the time of applying for housing and/or when they sign the tenancy agreement.

Recording Complaints and Appeals

- The Manager is responsible for recording complaints and appeals in the Complaints Register
- The Manager is also responsible for investigating and managing the matter to resolution
- The Manager must brief the Management Board regarding all complaints and appeals

Timelines for Acknowledgement & Action

- Acknowledgment of any complaint or appeal request shall occur within two – five (2-5) working days of receipt.
- Complaints from tenants will be processed as quickly as possible and within a maximum fourteen (14) day response time.
- Appeals, where possible will be resolved within twenty-eight (28) working days

All replies to a complainant or an appellant are to be in writing and clearly state:

- What the decision is;
- The name and position of the person/s that made the decision;
- The facts on which the decision was made;
- The reason behind the decision and
- A contact person the applicant or tenant can talk to about the decision.

External Bodies

If the complainant or the appellant remains dissatisfied with the decision and the matter is unresolved, the complainant or appellant must be informed of other avenues for complaint within the state eg NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, NSW Fair Trading and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Continuous Improvement

All complaints and appeals received will be reviewed by the Leadership Group every three (3) months to identify trends and remedial actions required to mitigate the potential for the situation occurring again eg policy or procedural changes, upskilling or training requirements etc.

Related Policy and Procedures

Housing Policy
All Housing Procedures

Reference Guide

www.tenants.org.au/resource