



## CODE OF PRACTICE

Customer Complaints

2017

IMS-SERV-D-2097-SW

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## **1 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to provide guidance on how customer and stakeholder complaints can be lodged and how they will be managed.

### **1.1 Scope**

This Code of Practice applies to all complaints lodged with Solo Water by customers, stakeholders or members of the public that wish to raise an issue regarding Solo Waters operations, products or services.

### **1.2 Objective**

Solo Water will endeavour to resolve all complaints and issues received to a level that is satisfactory to the person or body who lodges them within a reasonable timeframe and in turn improve our operations, products and services.

## 2 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS POLICY STATEMENT

The Solo Group is committed to managing complaints fairly, transparently, efficiently and effectively. Complaints will be managed without cost to a customer. Our complaint management systems and procedures are intended to:

- Enable us to respond to issues raised by customers making complaints in a timely and cost effective way.
- Ensure customer confidence in our business activities, products and services.
- Provide information to the company that can be used to deliver quality improvements to our business activities, products and services along with the way we manage complaints.

This policy is intended to provide guidance to our employees in managing complaints, and people who wish to make a complaint to the Solo Group regarding our business activity, products or services.

A "Customer Feedback" form is located within the "Contact" tab on all Solo Group websites which enables customers to raise issues that may need to be addressed or leave a comment regarding our business activity, products or services. Other means of contact details are also provided specific to individual operations within the Group.

**Solo Group Directors** - are committed to promoting a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution. The Group will:

- Report publicly on the groups complaint handling
- Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints.
- Review trends and issues arising from complaints.
- Encourage all employees to assist staff responsible for receiving and managing complaints to resolve them promptly.
- Encourage employees to make recommendations for improvements.
- Support recommendations for activity, products or services complaint handling procedures.

**Managers** - that are responsible for complaint handling will:

- Provide regular reports to directors on issues arising from complaints, the way they are handled, and strategies for improvement.
- Recruit, train and empower staff to manage complaints in accordance to this policy and its associated procedures.
- Encourage employees to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling them.
- Recognise and reward good complaint handling by staff.

**Employees** - will, as a condition of employment:

- Be aware of the Solo Groups complaint handling policy and procedures.
- Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.

- Assist people who wish to make complaints access the appropriate complaints process.
- Implement change or resolution as advised by management as a result of complaints received.

## 3 COMPLAINTS HANDLING

### 3.1 Customer Complaints

A Complaint, by definition as based on the Australian Standard for Complaint Handling - **AS ISO 10002-2006**: Is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Solo Water or its contractors related to its products and services, or the complaint handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

A complaint may be lodged by a customer, consumer, their representative or a member of the public.

If you have a complaint about our service, operation or our compliance with a contract, you should first contact us, either by telephone, website, in person or by writing to us. Customer complaints can be provided on **1300 765 698**; by email at [info@solowater.com.au](mailto:info@solowater.com.au) or; online via the Solo Water website at <http://www.solowater.com.au/>.

We will address your complaint promptly by:

- a) Lodging your complaint within our complaints management system.
- b) Organising face to face or telephone response within five working days where you have made a face to face or phone contact and the matter cannot be dealt with immediately;
- c) Providing a written or email response within five working days where you have made a written or email complaint and the matter cannot be responded to sooner by phone or face-to-face contact.

We will investigate each customer complaint and if the matter cannot be dealt with immediately, we will provide you with our intended course of action and/or identify when the action will be taken. Complaints will be assessed and prioritised in accordance with the urgency and seriousness of the issues raised.

Complaints will be recorded within our complaints management system which will track all complaints through to completion.

Complaints will be managed in accordance with our Privacy Policy to protect any personal or confidential information provided as part of the complaints handling process.

### 3.2 Complaints Review

If you are not satisfied with the solution offered or action taken by us, you may have the complaint reviewed by a Solo Divisional Manager.

The manager will:

- a) Clarify your complaint and the outcome sought;
- b) Ensure that the matter has been properly investigated;
- c) Advise you of the estimated timeframe for our proposed action;

- d) Communicate to you our final decision;
- e) Outline the relevant facts and regulatory requirements where appropriate;
- f) Indicate what we will do to address the issue;
- g) Notify you of your rights to external review, if you are still not satisfied with our decision.

### **3.3 Resolution of Disputes**

A dispute will be considered finalised if we provide you with a substantive response that:

- a) Resolves the dispute to your satisfaction or indicates how the dispute will be resolved to your satisfaction; or
- b) Provides an explanation of the relevant policy and/or regulatory requirements and why no further action is proposed in relation to the dispute; or
- c) Provides a date when the issue will be resolved if the complaint relates to future planned operational or capital work; or
- d) 28 working days have passed since receiving our response and you have not sought a further review by us or lodged a claim in an external dispute resolution forum.

We will extend the 28 working days by a reasonable period if:

- a) Within those 28 days you have requested an extension; or
- b) After the 28 days you demonstrate that, because of special circumstances, you were unable to seek an extension within the 28 days.

Where a further communication from you or your representative is received, this shall be regarded as a new enquiry or complaint.

### **3.4 External Dispute Resolution**

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome, you may seek external resolution of a dispute.

### **3.5 The Energy and Water Ombudsman, New South Wales (EWON)**

You have the right to refer a complaint or dispute arising under a customer contract to EWON, an independent dispute resolution body that can investigate and resolve disputes you have with us under a customer contract. This option is available to you at any time.

Disputes that may be referred to EWON include, but are not limited to, disputes about: supply of service, your account, credit or payment services, restriction or disconnection.

All our customers have the right to contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) at any time for independent advice and assistance.

#### **EWON Contact Details:**

Reply Paid 86550  
Sydney South, N.S.W. 1234  
Freecall: 1800 246 545  
[www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)

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