

# Seqwater complaints process

The process is consistent with Australian Standard AS ISO 10002-2006, 'Customer Satisfaction — guidelines for complaints handling in organisations'.

## 1 The value of complaints

Seqwater takes complaints seriously and uses them as a mechanism for business improvement. An effective complaint handling process can increase levels of support and trust in Seqwater and its services. Complaints can also be used to inform decision making about future service delivery and assist in seeing what is needed to make systems work more effectively. Complaint information is a valuable resource for evaluating possible strengths and weaknesses in new programs and services. As such, Seqwater conducts annual complaint analyses as part of its continuous cycle of review and improvement.

## 2 Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint	A complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction made to or about Seqwater related to a policy, procedure, service, conduct, or product provided by Seqwater, its staff and contactors, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. <sup>1</sup>
Stakeholder	An individual, group of individuals, organisation or a political entity with a specific stake in the outcome of a decision on a policy, project or proposition of Seqwater. Stakeholder relations is the term commonly used to describe engagement and proactive and reactive interactions with stakeholders.
Customer	An individual or organisation who receives a product, good, service or idea from Seqwater in exchange for money or some other valuable consideration.
Community	A group of people: A community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of practice), or a community of affiliation or identity (such as an industry or sporting club). Community relations is the term commonly used to describe engagement and proactive and reactive interactions with communities and community members.
Complainant	Person initiating the complaint – they may be a stakeholder, community member or customer.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Water Services Association of Australia Complaints Management guideline.

Ver. no.	Doc No.	Doc Owner	Version Date	Doc Approver	
2	PRO-01981	Team Leader Engagement - P5634	16/08/2021	Manager Communication, Education and Engagement - P6060	Page 1 of 5

### 3 Engagement

At Seqwater we engage with purpose guided by our values, including during the complaint process. We keep our values of care, integrity, courage and respect at the heart of our engagement with stakeholders, customers and communities.

Our values	Care	Integrity	Courage	Respect
Our commitment to engagement	We identify our stakeholders, customers & community, find ways to include them and work together to achieve better outcomes.	We are honest, transparent and consistent in our engagement and set clear expectations.	We are accountable for our decisions and use feedback as an opportunity to improve.	We actively listen, acknowledge and seek to understand.

### 4 Complaints management at Seqwater

#### Complaints management stages

There are three stages in the complaint management process:

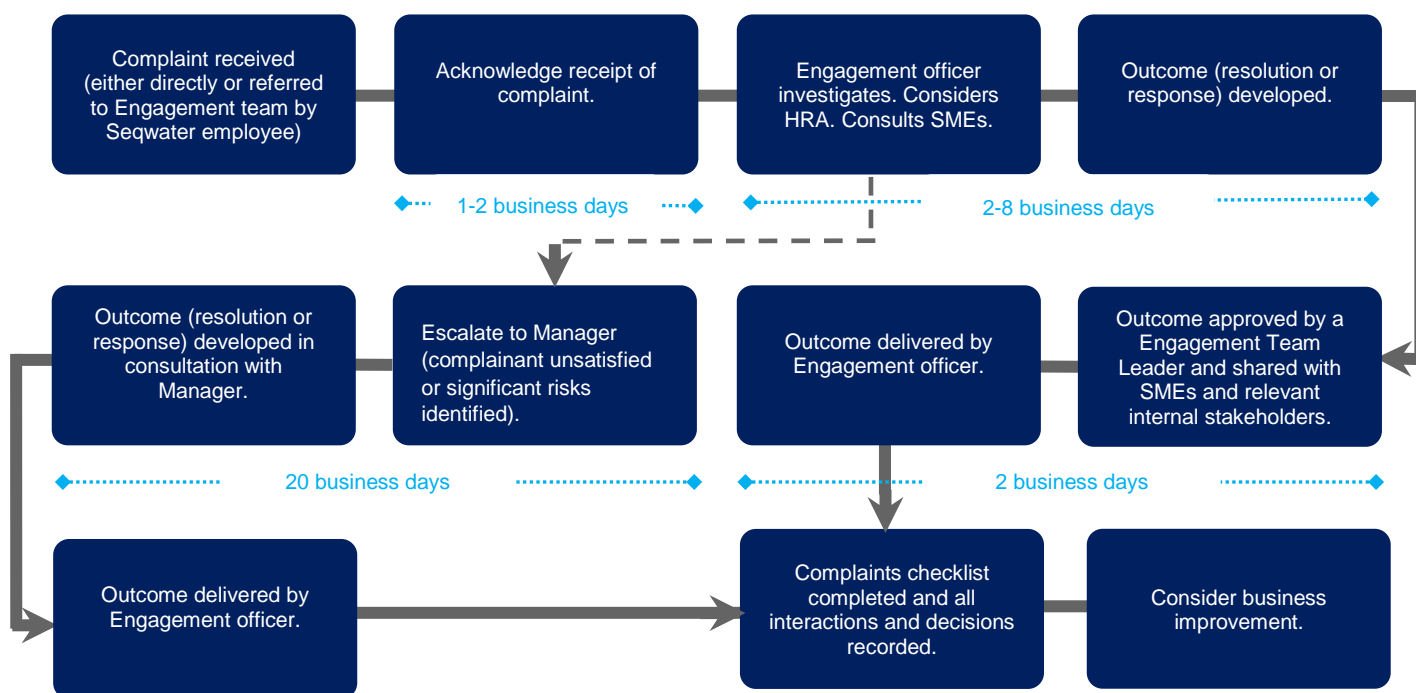
- 1A – Initial resolution – complaint is resolved at the first interaction
- 1B – Investigation – complaint requires further investigation internally, before a response is provided to the complainant
- 1C – Escalation – complaint is referred to and reviewed by a Manager for investigation or review

All complaints should be resolved or responded to within 30 business days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. If the complaint is going to take longer than 30 business days to resolve or respond to, the complainant should be advised of why and provided with regular progress updates. If the complaint can be resolved within a working week, notice of the outcome of the investigation and the acknowledgement can be combined for operational efficiency.

Ver. no.	Doc No.	Doc Owner	Version Date	Doc Approver	
2	PRO-01981	Team Leader Engagement - P5634	16/08/2021	Manager Communication, Education and Engagement - P6060	Page 2 of 5

## 5 Process and timeframes

Figure 1. 1B & 1C Complaints process



### Resolution or response?

Complaint resolution occurs where Seqwater can remove or reduce the impact of an issue or concern the complainant has. This occurs where the engagement officer can identify specific action for Seqwater employees, contractors or consultants to take. However, Seqwater may not have capacity to resolve all complaints. In these cases, a response is required, to explain Seqwater’s position and why a resolution cannot be provided.

### Complaint withdrawal

Complaints can be withdrawn at any time. Seqwater may choose to continue to investigate if the issue is of a systematic or operational nature or includes allegations of professional misconduct.

### Ability to investigate

Seqwater may not be able to investigate a complaint if it is reported 12 months or more after the incident. However, Seqwater will make reasonable efforts to investigate complaints, where possible. Details of these efforts must be provided to the complainant.

Seqwater values all feedback, but there may be times when we're unable to manage a complaint.

This may include if:

- a matter is being dealt with by an external complaint agency, court or tribunal
- it's not possible to establish Seqwater's jurisdiction in the matter

Ver. no.	Doc No.	Doc Owner	Version Date	Doc Approver
2	PRO-01981	Team Leader Engagement - P5634	16/08/2021	Manager Communication, Education and Engagement - P6060

- the complaint is outside of the 12-month timeframe and there are no special circumstances identified which warrant action
- the complaint is abusive, threatening or contains offensive language.

## 6 Frequently asked questions

### Can a complaint be submitted on behalf of someone else?

A complaint can be submitted on behalf of someone else. For privacy reasons we are not able to proceed with the complaint until we receive authority from the person making the complaint, in writing. An 'Authority to Act Form' should be completed and signed by the person the complaint is being made for.

### Is there anything that does not constitute a complaint?

The following items do not constitute a complaint:

- Negative off-hand comments and vexatious complaints (a vexatious complaint is one that is falsely made; that is, it is not made in good faith or based on evidence).
- Complaints about matters outside of Seqwater's control, for example, a complaint about another organisation.
- Anonymous complaints will be accepted based on assessment by a L3 Manager.

Where complaints are made about other organisations or legislation, Seqwater employees will act in good faith and where possible provide details about where the complainant should direct their complaint.

## 7 Reporting

Seqwater reports the number of complaints received in a financial year by 30 September each year. As a part of this reporting, Seqwater advises the number of complaints resulting in further action (resolution complaints) and the number not resulting in any action (response complaints). All complaints are recorded in Seqwater's records management system.

## 8 Useful references

[Australian Standard AS ISO 10002-2006](#)

[Queensland Ombudsman complaints website](#)

### Related legislation

[Crime and Corruption Act 2001](#)

[Human Rights Act 2019](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010](#)

Ver. no.	Doc No.	Doc Owner	Version Date	Doc Approver	
2	PRO-01981	Team Leader Engagement - P5634	16/08/2021	Manager Communication, Education and Engagement - P6060	Page 4 of 5

The controlled version of this document is registered. All other versions are uncontrolled.

[Information Privacy Act 2009](#)

[Right to Information Act 2009](#)

[Public Sector Ethics Act 1994](#)

[Public Service Act 2008](#)

[South-East Queensland Water \(Distribution and Retail Restructuring\) Act 2009](#)

[Water Supply \(Safety and Reliability\) Act 2008](#)

[Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006](#)

Ver. no.	Doc No.	Doc Owner	Version Date	Doc Approver	
2	PRO-01981	Team Leader Engagement - P5634	16/08/2021	Manager Communication, Education and Engagement - P6060	Page 5 of 5