



CODE OF PRACTICE

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT

HANDLING

Purpose

This code of practice provides a guideline for complaint handling by representatives, management and employees of **Wilton Recycled Water** (WRW) in relation to its recycled water, wastewater and trade waste services.

This code of practice shall be made available to customers and to the general the public on the WRW website.

Scope

WRW owns and operates the recycled water treatment plant and recycled water and wastewater reticulation network at Bingara Gorge. As part of the operations, WRW have supply contracts with its customers.

WRW and its specialist Utility Operator each commit to provide these services in accordance with this code of practice. WRW and its Utility Operator will share responsibility for customer communication, complaints handling and debt recovery. The split of responsibility is as follows:

- **WRW** - all financial-related customer interface matters including tariff setting and debt recovery; and
- **Utility Operator** - all operational-related customer interface matters.

This policy applies to all complaints from customers or other members of the community received by WRW or its Utility Operators.

Licence Holder Obligation

Pursuant to the Water Industry Competition (General) Regulation 2008¹, WRW shall:

- establish and comply with this code of practice for complaint handling, and
- provide copies of this code of practice to the Minister, IPART and to the ombudsman (Energy and Water Ombudsman, or EWON), and
- keep its customers informed as to the provisions of this code of practice and the existence of EWON and the procedure for referring complaints or disputes to them; and
- furnish periodic reports to the Minister and IPART in relation to complaints that it receives.

Scope

This code of practice applies to small retail customers being a person with one or more water supply contracts (relating to all premises that the person may own, lease or occupy) for:

- water services, where the person receives less than 15 megalitres a year in aggregate; or
- sewerage services, where the person receives less than 10.5 megalitres a year in aggregate.

Reference Standard

This code of practice conforms to and takes from *AS/ISO 10002—2006 Customer Satisfaction; Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations*, as published by Standards Australia.

¹ Schedule 2, clause 4(1)

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Policy

WRW and its Utility Operator share a common corporate value of being Customer Focussed. We are committed to customer service excellence including handling customer complaints in relation to service, technical and financial matters. We assure our customers of this commitment through the following actions:



Receipt of complaints

Upon receiving a complaint, the complaint will be recorded with supporting information. The record of the initial complaint will identify the remedy sought by the customer and any other information necessary for the effective handling of the complaint. WRW aims to resolve customer complaints at the first point of contact by providing a solution or negotiating an agreed course of action.

Tracking of complaints

The complaint will be tracked from initial receipt through the entire process until the customer is satisfied or the final decision is made. An up-to-date status will be made available to the customer upon request.

Initial assessment of complaint

After receipt, each complaint will be initially assessed against certain criteria such as severity, safety implication, complexity, impact, and the need and possibility of immediate action.

Investigation of complaints

Every reasonable effort will be made to investigate all the relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint. The level of investigation will be commensurate with the seriousness, frequency of occurrence and severity of the complaint.

Response to complaints

Outlined here is a list of response timings to complaints received by telephone, email or mail.

- Telephone - Initial Response: immediate
- Email - Initial Response: immediate automated acknowledgement
- Mail - Initial Response: within 1 business day from the day the complaint was received
- Resolution: within 15 business days from the day the complaint was received

Our initial response can be:

- a solution presented to, and accepted by, the customer or
- our intended course of action to resolve the complaint.

If the complaint cannot be resolved to the customer's satisfaction, it will be escalated to the next level of management for resolution.

Following an appropriate investigation, if we can, we will offer a resolution. If the complaint cannot be immediately resolved, then it will be dealt with in a manner intended to lead to its effective resolution wherever possible.

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Communicating the decision

The decision or any action taken regarding the complaint which is relevant to the customer will be communicated to them as soon as the decision or action is taken.

Closing the complaint

If the customer accepts the proposed decision or action, then the decision or action will be carried out and recorded. If the customer rejects the proposed decision or action, then the complaint will remain open. We will continue to pursue resolution of the complaint until all reasonable internal and external options of recourse are exhausted or the customer is satisfied.

Lessons learned

WRW and its Utility Operator will regularly review all complaints received annually and identify where improvements may be achieved to prevent future complaints and ensure the highest level of customer satisfaction. WRW and its Utility Operator, where identified through this review process, may:

- design and develop training,
- review our policies and codes of practice, or
- review communication techniques.

Recourse to further action

In the event a customer is not satisfied with the handling of their complaint, they may escalate to the Energy and Water Ombudsman of NSW (EWON). This option is also available at any time after first lodging a complaint with Wilton Recycled Water.

EWON can be contacted on 1800 246 545 or at www.ewon.com.au

