



# Complaint and Dispute resolution procedure

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Energy Locals Pty Ltd

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## **Our commitment**

Energy Locals aspires to deliver exceptional customer experience in energy retailing. Our Board and Senior Management team are committed to achieving this aspiration by promoting and developing a culture of doing the right thing by the customer and providing the necessary support and resources to enable our employees to effectively and efficiently help our customers.

This support includes but is not limited to: hiring the right people with strong interpersonal skills and empathy, and training and coaching our employees so they can competently manage enquiries, escalations and complaints.

We have implemented and will continue to maintain a robust complaints capture and reporting system. In addition, employee responsibilities on complaints resolution will be clear with prompt internal reporting of issues, risks or actual or potential compliance breaches as a result of customer enquiry or complaint.

The complaints resolution policy and process will align to best practice principles contained in AS/NZS ISO 10002:2014 and AS ISO 10002-2006 Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations.

### Commitment to our customers

At Energy Locals, we strongly believe in “doing the right thing” by our customers and stakeholders. This means that we respect that everyone has the right to provide feedback or to make a complaint. When this occurs, we will listen to the customer, treat their enquiry with dignity, respect, and without discrimination, be objective and maintain confidentiality at all times unless disclosure is approved by the customer to resolve their enquiry.

We acknowledge that complaints identify gaps in our systems, process and people capability, and provide us with an opportunity to improve. We take all complaints seriously and we will strive to resolve them in a timely manner. Please note there will be no charges or fees associated with managing and resolving a complaint.

## Customer focused principles

Aligning to best practice principles contained in AS ISO 10002-2006 and AS/NZS ISO 10002:2014, Energy Locals complaints resolution principles are designed to provide a consistent, customer focused approach in resolving complaints effectively and efficiently. The following is a description of principles that employees are expected to follow when helping our customers:

- Customers will be able to contact Energy Locals via their preferred method to make an enquiry or raise a concern. When they do, we recognise each customer's right to provide feedback or make a complaint and we will be respectful and protect the details from disclosure, unless we receive customer consent.
- Our interactions with the customer will be friendly and we will “make it easy” for the customer. We will make decisions with the customer in mind and be proactive in contacting customers if we make an error.
- Our management team will demonstrate and drive a culture of ownership and accountability. We will listen to our customers when resolving their enquiries, and at the centre of our approach our employees will be fair, equitable, objective and unbiased.
- We will manage customer enquiries in a timely and efficient manner. We will respond promptly and deliver on our promises. Our management team will support and empower our employees to resolve issues ‘first time’. We will be clear and transparent with our customers on our complaints process and keep our customers up to date on the progress of resolving their complaint. Customers can escalate their complaint to a team leader or senior manager if they are dissatisfied with the response from the initial point of contact
- Energy Locals will learn from our customers as this is good business and will help us retain our customers, improve service and reduce costs. We will achieve this by ensuring that we accurately record and track complaints, identify the cause, develop and implement actions that will in turn enable us to be proactive, predictive and preventive.

## **Custodian responsibilities**

The Compliance Analyst is the custodian of the Complaints resolution policy and procedure and is responsible for reviewing and maintaining the content.

Energy Locals aspire to provide exceptional customer experience; accordingly, the Compliance Analyst will consult broadly with employees, customers and other sources of valuable input to update this document with positive changes.

The Compliance Analyst is responsible for publishing the current version of the Complaints policy and procedure on our website. The document can be located at [energylocals.com.au/complaints](http://energylocals.com.au/complaints).

Senior management will ensure their relevant teams and staff are trained and tested on their understanding of the Complaints resolution policy and procedure.

The Compliance Analyst is responsible for reporting of feedback and complaints on a regular basis. They must report on internal and Ombudsman complaints to Senior Management on a weekly basis and to the Director on a monthly basis.

The Compliance Analyst will undertake sample audits on a quarterly basis to identify and gaps in resources, training or capability that may result in non-compliance of this document

## **Purpose**

Energy Locals is committed to providing our customers an exceptional customer experience. However, we appreciate that we will not be 100% perfect all of the time and this may impact our customers. Therefore, we need a process for customers and other stakeholders to provide feedback and complain so we can listen, learn and improve.

We appreciate that customers have taken their valuable time to contact us and we respect their rights to provide feedback and let us know when they are unhappy with us. If a customer phones, emails or writes to us with a complaint, Energy Locals will acknowledge the receipt of their complaint within 24 hours (either by email, text or telephone). We will continue to keep our customers updated throughout the process until the issue has been resolved.

The Complaint resolution policy and procedure will help our employees by providing clear direction on how to manage these scenarios so we can provide customers consistent, effective and efficient resolution of their enquiries.

### **Goals - What are we trying to achieve?**

The Policy is designed to deliver a consistent, efficient, effective process that is aligned to our commitment and aspiration to provide exceptional customer experience. In addition, it's clear and simple for employees to understand, follow and help with complaints resolution decision making, improve customer experience and reduce future escalations and complaints.

This policy is aligned to AS ISO 10002-2006 and AS/NZS ISO 10002:2014 and is supported by the following policies:

- Customer Charter
- Compliance Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Policies

### **Coverage - Who does this cover?**

The Complaints Policy and procedure document covers all of our customers both current and sadly those who have left us. It also covers external stakeholders that can provide insights that will help us improve our business and service that we deliver to our customers.

It covers all interactions with our customers as we want customers to contact us in the medium they feel most comfortable whether it be on the phone, email, in writing or in digital form as technology becomes a greater part of our lives and the way we do business.

We will have a customer centric approach when dealing with our customers as they see us as a single point of contact. This document covers all of our employees, and our senior management team's expectations is that we are all customer advocates who will work together to resolve each customer's enquiry.

### **Definition - What is a complaint and how do we recognise them?**

A customer will contact us to escalate an issue or complaint if they are unhappy due to an error, action, no action or a process that wasn't followed.

A customer can raise an escalated enquiry or complaint through direct or indirect means. The latter will involve greater awareness and perception by our employees to identify signs such as repeat contacts, emotive language and frustration.

Customers will be able to contact Energy Locals using their preferred method to make an enquiry, provide feedback or raise a concern. A summary of our complaints process will also be available online via our website.

If a customer wishes to make a complaint via telephone, they can reach us between 9am and 5pm (AEDT) on weekdays, except Public Holidays.

Alternatively, they can send us feedback or a complaint via our website [energylocals.com.au/complaints](http://energylocals.com.au/complaints) or email us at [hello@energylocals.com.au](mailto:hello@energylocals.com.au). We will acknowledge receipt via email within 24 hours.

## **Actions - What to do?**

We expect that all of our employees will follow the documented Policy and undertake any training or coaching to achieve a clear understanding of how to handle complaints. If employees are uncertain or unclear on how to resolve a customer's enquiry, then we strongly encourage a culture of learning and ask or escalate if in doubt.

A complaint can occur at any time during our current or previous interactions with customers and it can be about single or multiple issues. Training and coaching will focus on recognising a complaint (including early detection), accurate recording and categorising complaints, and effective and efficient resolution of enquiries and complaints.

We will acknowledge receipt of a customer's complaint within 24 hours. Customers will be advised that they will continue to hear from us and be kept in the loop along the way until the issue has been resolved. Customers will always be contacted to be advised of the outcome of their complaint and whether we have been able to satisfactorily resolve it or not.

Appendix A contains timeframes for resolving the complaint by escalation level.

Appendix B contains the checklist to help staff with the process of identifying and resolving a complaint and tracking its stage.

## **CEO**

The role is responsible as the highest escalation point within the business to manage escalated enquiries and complaints.

If the Founder is unable to provide guidance to resolve the complaint, the staff member will inform the customer of their right to contact the Ombudsman.

## **Energy Ombudsman**

The role of the Energy Ombudsman is to provide customers with a free, independent and fair dispute resolution process. The Ombudsman is also a good source for general information and assistance.

*Customers have the right to contact the Energy Ombudsman at any time. However, Energy Locals hopes that our customers will contact us in the first instance to give us a chance to rectify any issues*

### **Changes to this policy**

The Senior Operations Manager will review this policy annually and any changes to it will be approved by the management team.

### **Interpreter Services**

If our customer experiences difficulty understanding the English language, they can request to speak with us utilising our interpreter service.

## Appendix A. Escalation and complaints timeframes

Level	Response type		Method					
			Inbound call	Chat	Email	Social media	In writing	Walk in
Call Centre Staff								
	Acknowledgment		Immediate	Immediate	1	1	1	Immediate
	Initial		2	2	2	1	2	1
	Unresolved		10	10	10	5	Call in 10	5
	Resolution		20	20	20	10	Call in 20	10
Team Leader/Senior Staff Member	Escalated resolution		5	5	5	5	Call in 5	5
CEO or Operations Manager	Escalated resolution		2	2	2	5	Call in 2	5
Ombudsman								
	Referral							
		Initial	2	n.a.	2	2	2	2
		Resolution	20	n.a.	20	10	20	10
	Investigation							
		Initial	5	n.a.	5	5	5	5
		Resolution	20	n.a.	20	10	20	10
	Priority							
		Initial	2	n.a.	2	2	2	2
		Resolution	20	n.a.	20	10	20	10

Note: timeframes are in business days.

## Appendix B. Complaints resolution checklist

The following checklist aims to help staff with the process of identifying and resolving a complaint and tracking its stage:

- Confirm with the customer that the enquiry requires escalation or is a complaint;
- Accurately record the details of the complaint against the customer's account and also in the complaint management register to enable objective, effective, efficient and timely resolution;
- If the customer has complained but is happy for the call centre staff member to manage and resolve the complaint, no further escalation is required and the staff member will report and manage the complaint until resolved. Staff are advised to seek further assistance if needed via relevant teams, team leader or senior management;
- Assess and report whether the complaint is about multiple or repeated issues; if it is a repeated issue this will be flagged via the Compliance Analyst to investigate further to ensure there is no process or training gaps within our business.
- Explain the escalation / complaint process to the customer; staff are to escalate the complaint to relevant person if required.
- Throughout the complaints resolution process, employees will protect the customer's privacy and maintain confidentiality of the enquiry and only share the details with relevant parties such as distributors if approved by the customer;
- Throughout the process, keep the customer informed on progress and resolution;
- The enquiry or complaint will be directed to the employee / team best able to manage resolution as per policy and procedure;
- Clearly identify the root cause of the issue(s) and take effective and efficient action to resolve the complaint;
- Close the case only when resolved or reasonable efforts have been made to contact the customer without success;
- If customer is unhappy or wants to complain to the Ombudsman, refer the complaint to a senior manager as per process described in this document below;
- If case is not resolved, provide details and refer the customer to Ombudsman as described in this document;
- Identify business improvement opportunities and inform relevant manager.

## Appendix C. Fast track triggers to escalate an enquiry

The following is a list of fast track triggers to escalate an enquiry by the relevant team.

Escalation contact	Trigger
Senior Staff Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ombudsman complaint (existing case)</li> <li>● Tribunal matters / cases (existing case)</li> <li>● Threats or damage to person and / or property</li> <li>● Customer walk in</li> <li>● Third party service provider escalation</li> <li>● Social media complaint</li> </ul>
Senior management (SM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Privacy breach</li> <li>● Competition and Consumer Act / Consumer Law breach</li> <li>● Fraud</li> <li>● Litigation</li> <li>● Media enquiry or complaint</li> <li>● Ministerial or Government Department enquiry or complaint</li> <li>● Senior Management or Board escalation</li> </ul>

## Appendix D. Ombudsman contact details

### ACT

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal  
Mail: DX5691, GPO Box 370, Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone: (02) 6207 1740  
Fax: (02) 6205 4855  
Email: [tribunal@act.gov.au](mailto:tribunal@act.gov.au)  
Web: [www.acat.act.gov.au](http://www.acat.act.gov.au)

### NSW

Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW  
Mail: Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234 Phone: 1800 246 545  
Fax: 1800 812 291  
Email: [complaints@ewon.com.au](mailto:complaints@ewon.com.au)  
Web: [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)

### Queensland

Energy Ombudsman Queensland  
Mail: PO Box 3640, South Brisbane QLD 4101 Phone: 1800 662 837  
Fax: (07) 3227 7068  
Email: [info@eoq.com.au](mailto:info@eoq.com.au)  
Web: [www.ewoq.com.au](http://www.ewoq.com.au)

### South Australia

Energy Industry Ombudsman SA  
Mail: GPO Box 2947, Adelaide SA 5001 Phone: 1800 665 565  
Fax: 1800 665 165  
Email: [contact@eiossa.com.au](mailto:contact@eiossa.com.au)  
Web: [www.eiossa.com.au](http://www.eiossa.com.au)

### Victoria

Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria  
Mail: Reply Paid 469, Melbourne VIC 8060 Phone: 1800 500 509  
Fax: 1800 500 549  
Email: [ewovinfo@ewov.com.au](mailto:ewovinfo@ewov.com.au)  
Web: [www.ewov.com.au](http://www.ewov.com.au)