

# COMPLAINTS POLICY



Policy Owner: SWS CEO  
Reviewed / Approved: 10 September 2024

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## 1. PURPOSE

Southern Waste Solutions (SWS) is committed to the consistent delivery of quality services, as highlighted in our values.

SWS recognises an individual's right to complain and seeks to resolve complaints in a timely, transparent and confidential manner. SWS considers any complaints as an opportunity to improve our systems and service deliveries.

This policy provides guidance on how SWS handles and resolves complaints received with regards to its services and business activities.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to Board members, employees and agents of SWS with regards to any complaint from customers, suppliers and members of the public about our services or our employees.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Contractor** is any person or organisation that undertakes work for SWS in accordance with a contract for services (whether verbal or written).

**Employee** is any person employed by SWS, whether on a permanent, fixed term or casual basis and includes members of the Board.

**Complaint** is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction conveyed to SWS with regard to the quality of an action, decision or service provided by SWS employees or a contractor.

**Complainant** is a person who raises a formal complaint.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** Oversees the consistent execution of this policy. Support the execution of relevant resolution processes in relation to this policy as required.

**Managers** Ensure employees are aware of and abide by the terms of this policy. Support the execution of relevant resolution processes as part of this policy.

**Employees** Abide by this policy. Participate in resolution processes in a respectful and collegial manner when required.

## 5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Dealings of complaints will be guided by the following principles:

- a) **Accessibility** – This policy is made easily accessible to complainants and SWS employees can assist them to navigate the process.
- b) **Accountability** – SWS is accountable internally and externally for its decision making in its complaint handling. SWS treats complaints fairly, provides explanations and reasons for decisions and ensures that our decisions are subject to appropriate review processes.
- c) **Confidentiality** – Complaint information is handled according to SWS Privacy Policy. Complaint data is de-identified if reported on more widely. Personally identifiable information concerning the complainant is actively protected from disclosure unless the complainant expressly consents to its disclosure.
- d) **Continuous improvement** - Acting on, learning from, and using complaint data helps us identify problems and improve services.
- e) **Fairness** – Complaints are dealt with courteously and impartially in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.
- f) **Transparency** – SWS makes it clear how to complain, where to complain and how the complaint will be handled. The steps taken to respond to a complaint are recorded and can be reviewed.
- g) **Responsiveness** – Complaints will be addressed in a timely manner in accordance with their urgency. Complainants will be kept informed of the progress throughout the complaints-handling process.

## 6. COMPLAINTS HANDLING

### 6.1. LODGING A COMPLAINT

Complaints should be made in writing, where possible.

In the first instance it is encouraged that concerns be raised and attempted to be resolved directly with the SWS staff member or contractor involved.

When making a complaint, please provide the following information:

- Name and contact details (including the organisation name and position title if applicable). Anonymous complaints may be accepted but will only be dealt with if the matter is considered serious and there is a risk to persons and/or property, as anonymity may limit our ability to fully investigate the matter.
- Description of the complaint (what you are complaining about and why you are dissatisfied).
- The relevant details, such as dates, times, location, who was involved, third party and/or witness contact details.
- Copies of any documentation that supports the complaint (if any).
- The outcome you are seeking from making your complaint.

A complaint can be made to SWS by

- phone on: 03 6273 9712;
- email to: [info@swstas.com.au](mailto:info@swstas.com.au); or
- post to: PO Box 216 New Twon TAS 7008.

If you require any assistance in formulating or lodging a complaint, please contact us at the contact details set out above.

## 6.2. COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

Upon receipt of a complaint, we will acknowledge the receipt within five (5) business days.

Each complaint will be assessed and investigated in accordance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures. A written response will be provided within 20 business days. Where a complaint is complex and will require a longer period to investigate, we will advise the complainant when the result of the investigation can be expected.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the complainant has a right to ask for a review. Such a request should be made in writing to the CEO and forwarded by post or email to the addresses provided above.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, or the manner in which the complaint has been handled, the complainant is entitled to seek an external review from the following organisations:

<b>Organisation</b>	Ombudsman Tasmania	Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner (Equal Opportunity Tasmania)
<b>Mailing Address</b>	GPO Box 960 HOBART TAS 7001	GPO Box 197 HOBART TAS 7001
<b>Phone</b>	1800 001 170	1300 305 062
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au">ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au</a>	<a href="mailto:office@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au">office@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au</a>

## 7. COMPLAINT REPORTING

Complaints will be recorded in the SWS Complaints Register and data will be analysed periodically to identify any recurring or systemic problems. If any such problems are identified, we will resolve them to improve our delivery of services.

When reporting to external bodies, as part of our regulatory requirements, any personal information will be de-identified to protect complainants' privacy.

## 8. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

- *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* (Tas)
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2002* (Tas)
- SWS Code of Conduct
- SWS Privacy Policy

## 9. FURTHER INFORMATION AND DATE OF REVIEW

Please contact SWS by phone on 03 6273 9712 or via email [info@swstas.com.au](mailto:info@swstas.com.au).

Policy Owner	CEO, Southern Waste Solutions
Policy approved by	Acting CEO, Southern Waste Solutions
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Next review date (unless a need arises earlier)	September 2027