

Guidance

To promote effective complaints management across the sector all agencies should:

- have in place a complaints management system that conforms to the principles of the Australian and New Zealand Standard, AS/NZS 10002:2014 *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organizations* (as, from time to time, reviewed, amended or replaced with new editions);
- have a direct link on the front page of their website to information assisting people to make a complaint about that agency (those agencies with websites); and
- where complaints remain unresolved at the agency level, refer people to appropriate external bodies such as the Ombudsman.

Agencies should review their complaints management processes against AS/NZS 10002:2014 and determine what action is needed to meet or exceed the Standard.

AS/NZS 10002:2014 states:

To maintain their currency, all Standards are periodically reviewed, and new editions are published. Between editions, amendments may be issued. Standards may also be withdrawn. It is important that readers assure themselves they are using a current Standard, which should include any amendments which may have been published.

Guidance objectives

This guidance forms part of a broader strategy designed to increase:

- community access to complaints mechanisms;
- community knowledge of complaints mechanisms and what to expect regarding complaints procedures;
- capacity of agencies to meet an appropriate standard of complaints management, including suitable commitment and resources; and
- monitoring and evaluation of complaints processes and data received by agencies to ensure service delivery improvement.

The Western Australian Ombudsman will be actively monitoring agencies' compliance with this guidance and can undertake a range of activities to promote effective complaints management, including, undertaking own-motion investigations.

Applicability of guidance

The definition of 'complaint' in AS/NZS 10002:2014 is an 'expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organization, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.'

Certain matters are not considered complaints under this system, such as matters of administrative law, appeal decisions and judicial decisions. Nor is it intended to include complaint-handling processes that are an agency's core function, for example, consumer complaints lodged with the Department of Commerce, although complaints concerning the way in which the agency exercises that particular function would be within the scope of this guidance.

Further information on the applicability of this guidance and on complying with AS/NZS 10002:2014 can be found at www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Agencies/Agencies.htm.

Implementation tools

AS/NZS 10002:2014 can be purchased from SAI Global Limited at: <http://www.saiglobal.com/shop>

Address: GPO Box 5420
SYDNEY NSW 2001
Telephone: 131 242
Fax: 1300 65 49 49

The Ombudsman Western Australia's website contains a suite of tools to assist agencies with their complaint handling role at www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Agencies/Agencies.htm

