	POLICY AND PROCEDURE COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES RESOLUTION	
	Document Code	CEACA-PP-019
	Date Effective	01/09/2023
	Version Number	3.0

1.0 PURPOSE

This document sets out Central East Accommodation & Care Alliance Inc (CEACA) policy with respect to accepting, recording and resolving complaints. CEACA is committed to freely receiving and resolving complaints in an accessible and transparent way.

CEACA, through this document, makes the commitment to continual quality improvement by taking into consideration the data provided by the implementation of an effective complaints management system.

2.0 DEFINITION

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction and it can be received:

- On the basis of products and/or services provided by us or our agents, contractors and other representatives.
- Due to perceived inadequacies in the complaints handling process itself.

CEACA will consider all complaints to be opportunities to improve and they will be freely received by telephone or in writing. Specifically, a complaint is where a customer expresses dissatisfaction and seeks a response or resolution regarding the conduct, action, proposed action or failure to act by CEACA, its employees, agents, contractors or other representatives. Complaints also include:


- Failure by CEACA to observe its published or agreed practices or procedures.
- Failure in respect of a product or service offered or provided by CEACA or its representatives.
- Where a customer threatens to involve, or seek information about possibly involving, a third party such as the jurisdictional Ombudsman or Member of Parliament.
- Where a complaint is directed to CEACA on behalf of the customer by an industry Ombudsman.

Where a complaint relates to more than a single aspect of CEACA’s services or products, a separate complaint will be recorded for each component.

3.0 ACCESSIBILITY

CEACA will actively bring this policy to the attention of customers. CEACA is committed to promoting and ensuring visibility of our complaints management program. To help us do this we:

- Make this policy available free of charge (online or in hard copy).
- Make special arrangements for those with a disability, ensuring they and their advocates have access to this policy (free of charge) and are aided in the resolution of their complaint.
- Make sure that all relevant staff, Members, volunteers and representatives of CEACA are aware of the requirements of this policy and procedure and are provided with relevant training or coaching if required.
- Publish the Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedure on the CEACA website (www.ceaca.org.au) and send to customers on request. It is intended as a clear and concise guide to our standard complaints and dispute resolution procedure.

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4.0 RESPONSIVENESS

CEACA will:


- Promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.
- Assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. Higher priority will be given to those complaints where there is a perceived financial hardship, termination of contracts and matters relating to health and safety. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

In all instances, CEACA will:

- Freely accept complaints lodged by telephone or in writing.
- Acknowledge any complaint received as soon as possible.
- Begin an investigation into the reasons for a complaint within 24 hours of acknowledgment.
- Keep the complainant updated about the investigation and any proposed resolution.
- Notify the complainant as soon as possible of the outcome of our investigation and any proposal we have for resolution.
- Provide the complainant with the option of an internal review of their complaint if they are unsatisfied with the outcome of the investigation or the proposed resolution.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- All staff are required to comply with this policy.
- All staff have a responsibility to assist people who wish to make complaints access the CEACA complaints process.
- All staff, Members, volunteers or representatives managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.
- CEACA will ensure that management of complaints is not hindered by a lack of resources.
- CEACA Managers will ensure that adequate training is provided to assist with managing complaints and provide coaching and mentoring to ensure the correct process is followed.
- The Executive Officer and Operations Manager are responsible for:
 - Ensuring the Complaints and Disputes Resolution policy is kept up to date and available to CEACA Members, staff and representatives, electronically or in hard copy.
 - Establishing and implementing the process of complaints management.
 - Allocating resources to ensure compliance under applicable laws and this policy.
 - Promoting and advocating for a customer centric approach in the company as a whole and in the resolution of complaints.
 - Reporting of complaints and disputes to the Chairman and Members, to include the number and nature of complaints or disputes.
 - Continually reviewing the effectiveness of managing CEACA complaints or disputes, including the processes in place.

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6.0 CEACA Members

The CEACA Members:

- Ensuring they are kept informed of all complaints and disputes lodged with CEACA.
- That the CEACA Complaints and Disputes Resolution policy and processes are read and understood not only by Members but the Shire staff.
- Must ensure that quality improvements are made based on areas identified by genuine complaints.
- Ensure any complaints of a serious nature are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

7.0 MONITORING AND IMPROVING

- Complaints will be tracked at an individual and organisational level.
- Any systemic issues identified will be brought to the attention of the CEACA Chairman and Members during their routine meetings.
- CEACA's Members will direct the Executive Officer to address systemic issues identified during a complaints process.

8.0 CUSTOMER'S RIGHT TO COMPLAIN

- Customers have a right to lodge a complaint at any time.
- Once a complaint is received it will be dealt with in accordance with this Policy.


9.0 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ESCALATION

- At any time, a customer may request an internal escalation of their complaint and such a request will be granted.
- Complaints will also be escalated where they are complex, urgent or sensitive.
- Customers will be informed of the review options available to them if they are dissatisfied with the process being followed.
- Staff who manage complaints will be required to review the complexity, urgency and sensitivity of any complaint received and seek assistance from a specialist where required.
- If a customer advises that they are not satisfied with CEACA's response to their complaint they will be informed of their ability to contact the Department of Communities. CEACA will provide the contact details for the Department on request and will seek to assist any complainant in lodging a complaint with the Department of Communities on request.

10.0 COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMERS

In all instances, we will:

- Treat customers with respect.

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- Take any complaints seriously.
- Respect our customer’s privacy and the need to keep personal information confidential.
- Ensure equitable access to our complaints policy.
- Respond quickly to any complaints in a professional, courteous and fair manner.
- Properly investigate and report on complaints.
- Endeavour to resolve all concerns at the customer’s initial contact.
- Provide clear and informative responses to complaints.
- Advise customers of their right to escalate complaints to the CEACA Executive Committee or if the issue is still not resolved, to the Department of Communities.
- Monitor and review complaints in order to identify any trends and take appropriate steps to rectify potential problems.

Our customers have rights under various laws including the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth)*. We will ensure that we respect those rights.

We will provide adequate resources, including appropriately trained and qualified personnel, to enable us to manage customer complaints efficiently and effectively.

11.0 COMPLAINTS AND MANAGEMENT PROCESS

When a dispute arises between CEACA and a customer the following will apply. Customers may contact us at any time to lodge a complaint by:

Phone: 089 441 4815

Post: CEACA Inc, C/- Regus, PO Box 1257, Osborne Park WA 6017

Email: info@ceaca.org.au