

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Classification	Policy
Date Reviewed	May 2026
Next Review	May 2028
Responsible Officer	Head of Customer Experience
Related Policies	Nil

1. Purpose

Effective complaints management is crucial for maintaining a positive reputation, ensuring the satisfaction of stakeholders and accountability to the public. Complaints can be a valuable prompt to review organisational performance and processes.

The aim of this Policy is to provide a fair, consistent and structured process for the Adelaide Festival Corporation's (the 'Corporation') stakeholders to make a complaint and for the Corporation to deal with such complaints.

This policy supports the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector, including the requirements for professional and courteous behaviour and accountability.

2. Strategic Plan Desired Outcomes

The following aims within the Corporation's Strategic Plan are relevant in this instance.

'Festival is seen as an exceptional delivery partner for cultural, economic, and social impact to the State'

'Strong media coverage locally and nationally'

'Grow and improve AF local, national and international brand recognition and positioning'

3. Legislative Requirements and Corporate Policy Context

The following legislations are relevant in this instance.

PC Circular 039 – Complaints management in the South Australian public sector

Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)

Ombudsman Act 1972 (SA)

Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012 (SA)

Australian/ New Zealand Standard: Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organizations (AS/NZS 10002:2014).

Privacy Act 1988

4. Policy

4.1 The following Guiding Principles will be used by the Corporation in managing complaints:

- **Fairness and Respect:** The Corporation is dedicated to treating all complainants with fairness, respect, and empathy.
- **Transparency:** The Corporation seeks to maintain transparency throughout the complaints handling process, providing clear communication and updates to complainants about the status of their complaints.
- **Responsiveness and accountability:** The Corporation seeks to resolve complaints promptly and efficiently, striving for a satisfactory outcome for all parties involved.

- Confidentiality: The Corporation respects the privacy and confidentiality of all complainants and will handle personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.
- Continuous Improvement: The Corporation is committed to view complaints as opportunities for growth and enhancement and will endeavour to make positive changes that benefit future festivals.
- Natural Justice: Complaints will be handled impartially, with fair consideration given to all parties.
- Accessibility and Inclusion: The Corporation will ensure complaint processes are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to diverse needs, including people requiring assistance due to disability, language barriers, or cultural considerations. Assistance will be provided to complainants who require support, including translation services, accessibility accommodations, and assistance in documenting complaints where required.

4.2 Complaints may include:

- Service complaints (e.g. events, ticketing, customer experience)
- Conduct complaints (e.g. staff or contractor behaviour)
- Reportable matters (e.g. corruption, misconduct to be escalated under ICAC obligations). The Corporation has a separate policy on public interest disclosure which should be referred to in these instances ([link here](#))

Complaints and feedback may be made orally or in writing and can be made via the following methods:

- Over the phone on 08 8216 4444. Where a complaint is made verbally, the Corporation may request for the complaint in writing to ensure it is properly assessed and addressed.
- Via email to info@adelaidefestival.com.au;
- Via post to PO Box 8221 Adelaide SA 5000; and
- In person to venue staff, festival staff or volunteers during festival delivery at various locations.

4.4 When contacting the Corporation, the complainant should include as a guide the following details where relevant:

- date, time and location of event(s);
- description of the event(s);
- names of Corporation staff to whom the complainant spoke and dates;
- copies or references to letters or documents relevant to the complaint (if any); and
- the outcome the complainant hopes to achieve.

4.5 The Corporation expects customers will:

- Provide accurate and complete details when contacting the Corporation;
- treat the Corporation staff with courtesy and respect; and
- not engage in unreasonable conduct.

4.6 The Corporation has dedicated staff members to deal with complaints (with the following order of escalation):

- Head of Customer Experience and/or Head of Marketing and Communications
- Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- Executive Director
- Board of Directors

5. Process

- 5.1. On receipt, a complaint will be acknowledged and assessed based on the severity and urgency of the situation. Allegations of misconduct, corruption or maladministration will be managed in accordance with the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012 (SA), including referral where required.
- 5.2. Where a complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the complainant will be advised of the process to be undertaken. The Corporation will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three [3] business days. The

Corporation will then respond within ten [10] business days, and where possible, resolve it at that time. If a resolution is not possible at that time, the complainant will be kept regularly informed of the progress.

- 5.3. If an acknowledgement is not received, the complainant should make contact with the Corporation as the complaint may not have been received.
- 5.4. In case of events/circumstances which result in a high volume of enquiries and complaints – such as COVID vaccination mandates, or inclusion of controversial/ political programs, the timelines above may vary. Each event will be assessed, and complaints will be dealt with as best as possible.
- 5.5. Instances where no action will be taken on a complaint are as follows:
 - where a complaint needs no action or is found to be irrelevant, frivolous or vexatious, and the Executive Director has agreed with the assessment;
 - where there is a high volume of complaints, including multiple complaints containing substantially similar or duplicated content;
 - where the complaint is addressed to a third party and the Corporation is just a CC on the correspondence;
 - where the complaint contains profanities or direct insults and/or accusations; and
 - where a response has already been provided and there is no new content in the follow up complaint.
- 5.6. Where a complaint is found to be justified, the Corporation will, where practicable, remedy the situation in a manner that is consistent and fair for the complainant, the Corporation and any other parties if possible. The solution chosen will aim to be proportionate and appropriate to the circumstances. This may include acknowledgment of error by the Corporation, with an apology where appropriate and warranted.
- 5.7. Where appropriate, complainants will be provided with an explanation of changes proposed or made as a result of the investigation of their complaint.

6. Privacy and confidentiality

- 6.1. It is the intention of the Corporation to manage personal information in a manner that is consistent with the *Privacy Act 1988* and with community expectations.
- 6.2. However, it should be noted that the Corporation can be subject to *The Freedom of Information Act 1991* which gives a legally enforceable right of access by members of the public (subject to certain restrictions) to corporate records held by government agencies. As such confidentiality cannot be guaranteed under the provisions of that legislation. Our Privacy Policy can be viewed at [this link](#).
- 6.3. Information relating to complaints is accessible only by staff who are required to use the information.
- 6.4. The Corporation will monitor and identify complaint trends after each festival, providing feedback to relevant areas of the organisation where potential improvements can be made.
- 6.5. This policy will be reviewed every two years and at other times if any significant new information or legislative or organisational change warrants a change to ensure that it remains effective and appropriate for performance improvement.

7. Relevant Procedures

Nil