

As an Aboriginal organisation, our vision is for stronger and healthier families and communities through the provision of sustainable, quality housing and related services.



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy No	ML008	Version No	4
Effective Date	20 February 2018	Last Revised	16.02.22
Approved by	Board of Directors	Responsible Officer	Manager Corporate Services

Policy Statement

MLAHMC actively encourages the raising of complaints with the services, products or facilities provided by MLAHMC. All complaints will be managed in a clear, consistent and transparent manner and comprehensively reviewed.

Purpose

MLAHMC vision is for stronger and healthier families and communities through the provision of sustainable, quality housing and related services, MLAHMC aims to continually improve on these services. Effective complaint resolution is a key element of effective service provision. Tenant feedback directly contributes to the development of effective service delivery to meet tenant needs.

The policy and procedure outlines a structured process to ensure:

- All complainants are listened to, treated with respect and have their complaints and/or disputes resolved within agreed timeframes.
- All tenants are encouraged to raise any issues or complaints without fear of retribution.
- All complaints are managed in a clear and transparent manner.
- Responsibilities for the management of complaints are outlined.
- Complaints are reviewed by the Board and executive staff and considered during organisational planning.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint	<p>A complaint is defined as 'any indication that an external person or organisation is dissatisfied with the services, products or facilities provided by MLAHMC where resolution or response is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required'.</p> <p>A complaint covered by this procedure can be distinguished from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievance • Public interest disclosures made by our staff • Responses to requests for feedback about the standard of our service provision (see the definition of feedback below) • Reports of problems or wrongdoing merely intended to bring a problem to our notice with no expectation of a response (see definition of 'feedback'), service requests (see definition of 'service request' for information). • Complaints relating to fraud, corruption, or organisational legal activity please refer to MLAHMC policy ML 013 – Fraud, Corruption and Criminal Conduct Policy and Procedure.
Dispute	An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation

Feedback	Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Service request	A service request includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for approval or action. • Routine inquiries about MLAHMC business. • Requests for the provision of services and assistance. Requests for explanation of policies, procedures and decisions.
Grievance	A clear, formal written statement by an individual staff member about another staff member or work related incident.

**Extract from the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office Complaints Resolution Procedure V2.0, 2 March 2017*

Scope

This policy applies to people and organisations that receive or engage with services, products or facilities provided by MLAHMC. This includes but is not limited to tenants, housing stock owners, community members, or service providers and/or government agencies that deal with or receive services from MLAHMC both directly and indirectly.

This procedure does not apply to:

- Complaints being handled by the New South Wales Aboriginal Housing Office, WATASS or the housing appeals service.
- MLAHMC staff grievances.
- Public interest disclosures.

Informal Complaint

1. In the first instance, the person dissatisfied with MLAHMC should first discuss the problem with the person(s) directly involved with the aim of clearing up any misunderstandings or confusion and consequently solve the problem quickly.
2. If the matter is not resolved or if the person feels uncomfortable about raising the problem with those directly involved, he/she may take the complaint to the next higher level of management.
3. If after following the above process the complainant is not satisfied with the result, they may wish to lodge a formal complaint following the process below.
4. The complainant may also take the complaint to an agency that provides advocacy services. The organisation will support the complainant with information about access to those services.
5. The complainant has the right to have a representative of their choice to assist them. A representative may be, for example, a relative, friend or advocate.

Lodging a Formal Complaint

1. Complaints can be made to MLAHMC in person or by way of MLAHMC Complaint Form, letter, telephone, electronically by email or website or via correspondence to a MLAHMC employee.
2. Complaints can also be made by an advocacy or support service nominated to act on behalf of the complainant.
3. Complaints received by Facebook or other forms of social media will be redirected to one of the above methods.

Complaints Process and Support

Processing Complaints

1. When discussing or receiving a complaint the complainant and/or MLAHMC staff member shall complete the MLAHMC [Complaint Form](#).
2. The staff member receiving the complaint shall forward the Complaint Form to the Manager Corporate Services
3. The Manager Corporate Services shall:
 - Ensure the complaint is recorded on a Complaint Form.
 - Register the complaint in the [Complaint Register](#).
 - Endorse the Complaint Form with the unique number.
 - Direct the complaint to the relevant manager to initiate an appropriate investigation.
 - Outline the nature of the complaint, the results of the investigation and the final outcome on the Complaint Form.
4. The Relevant Manager shall:
 - Within 5 working days, inform complainant that the complaint has been received, contact information of the staff member assigned to handle the complaint and an expected timeframe further feedback will be provided.
 - Investigate the complaint and attempt to take steps to resolve the problem as soon as possible or at the very latest within 14 days.
 - If the complaint is about another person, then that person must be told about the nature of the complaint and impending action. This person then has the right to respond and to have support from a representative of their choice.
5. Following completion of the investigation the relevant manager shall:
 - Implement appropriate corrective and/or remedial action and document on the MLAHMC Complaint Form.
 - Inform complainant and other relevant parties of the outcome, how and why MLAHMC has reached this outcome
 - Inform the complainant of further avenues for complaint if they are still unsatisfied and wish to pursue the matter further.
 - Attach all relevant documentation to the Complaint Form and provide to Corporate Services Manager for close off.

Access and Copies

- The manager or designate shall ensure that the complainant has access to the Complaint Form registered to them.
- The manager or designate shall record and place the original copy of the Complaint Form in the Complaint Register and where appropriate inform each party involved of any action.

Review of Complaints

1. The General Manager shall review complaints at least every three months and ensure that appropriate corrective and/or remedial action is considered, agreed and implemented. And if applicable are addressed within MLAHMC strategic/business planning and systems.
2. The Corporate Services Manager shall ensure that decisions reached as a result of the complaint review process are documented and records of implementation and follow up are maintained.
3. The Corporate Services Manager shall ensure all complaints registered are tabled at the first available Board meeting following receipt.