



Fire Protection Association Australia
Complaints Handling Policy
FPAA006V002

<i>Policy Code</i>	<i>FPAA006</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>V002</i>	<i>Version History</i>	8.11.21 to current: V002 Includes updated policy formatting and clarification of complaints handling process and workflow.
<i>Department Responsible</i>	<i>FPA Australia</i>	<i>Accountable</i>	<i>Quality and Compliance Manager</i>		

FPA Australia Complaints Handling Policy

1.0	Purpose.....	3
2.0	Scope.....	3
3.0	FPA Australia's Commitment.....	3
4.0	Complaints management.....	4
5.0	How to make a complaint	4
6.0	Types of complaints.....	4
6.1	Anonymous.....	4
6.2	General	4
7.0	Receipt of complaints	4
7.1	Acknowledgement of complaints	5
8.0	Complaint Assessment.....	5
8.1	Assessment	5
8.2	Addressing complaints.....	5
9.0	Response to complaints	5
9.1	Early resolution	6
9.2	Responsiveness	6
9.3	Responding flexibly.....	6
9.4	Communicating with multiple parties	6
10.0	Alternative avenues for dealing with complaints	6
10.1	Referral to another agency	7
11.0	Complaint Finalisation	7
11.1	Notification of Finalisation.....	7
11.2	Record Keeping	7
12.0	Confidentiality	7
13.0	Accessibility	7
14.0	Accountability and learning.....	8
14.1	Analysis and evaluation of complaints.....	8
14.2	Monitoring complaints handling	8
14.3	Continuous improvement.....	8
15.0	Definitions	9
16.0	Review	9

1.0 Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that FPA Australia handle complaints fairly, efficiently, and effectively. The Complaints Workflow is intended to:

- (i) enable FPA Australia to respond to issues raised by people making complaints in a timely manner
- (ii) boost public confidence in FPA Australia administrative process; and
- (iii) provide information that FPA Australia can use to deliver quality improvements in our products, services, staff and complaint handling.

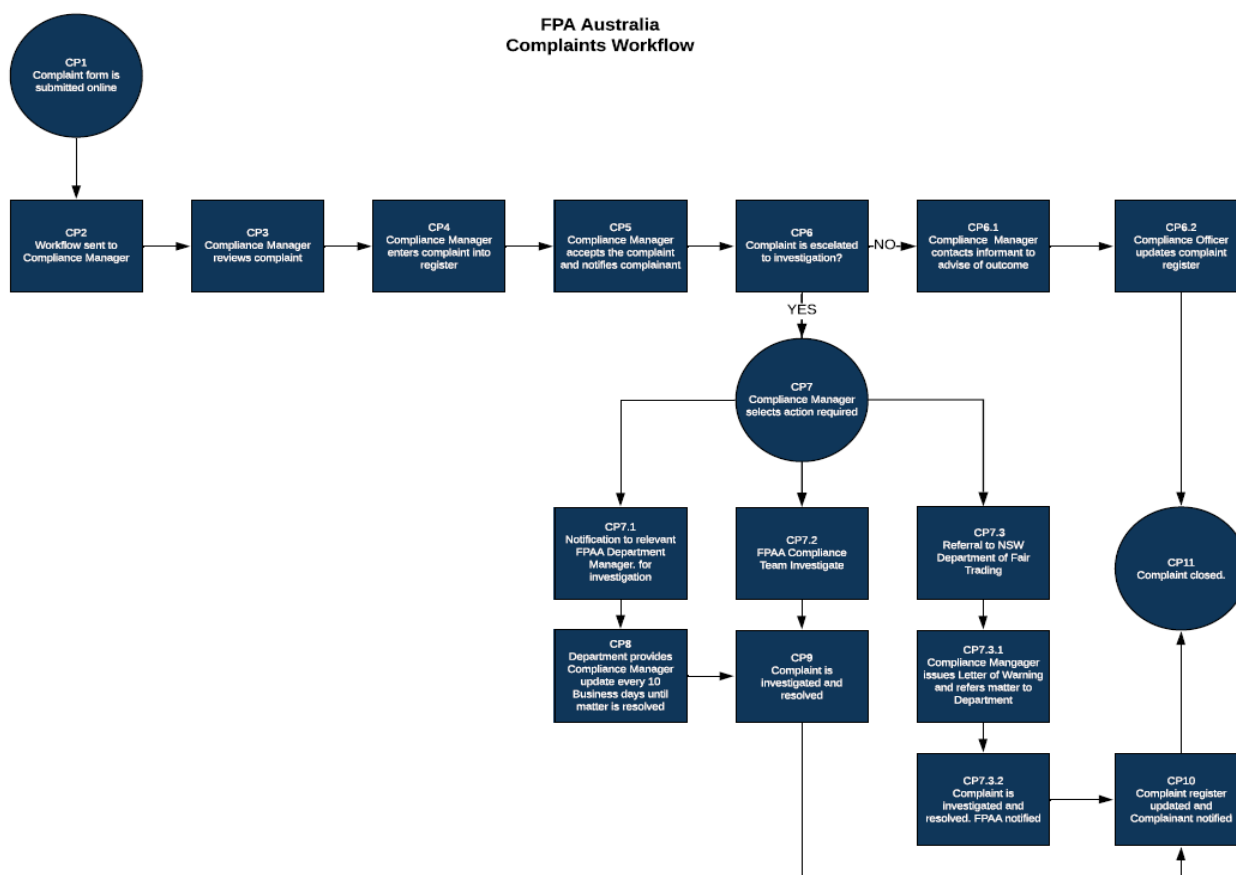
This policy provides guidance to FPA Australia staff and people wishing to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of how complaints are managed.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all FPA Australia staff receiving or managing complaints from the public made to or about us, regarding accredited individuals, members, services, FPA Australia staff and complaint handling.

3.0 FPA Australia's Commitment

FPA Australia expects staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. The following Complaints Workflow outlines the nature of the commitment expected from staff and the way that commitment should be implemented.



4.0 Complaints management

When responding to complaints, FPA Australia will act in accordance with this policy, and any other internal documents which provide guidance on the management of complaints.

FPA Australia will consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

5.0 How to make a complaint

FPA Australia will accept complaints through the online complaints form located on the FPA Australia [website](#).

People who are unable to access the online complaint form and wish to make a complaint must contact FPA Australia by phone or emailing compliance@fpaa.com.au

People making complaints will be:

- (i) provided with information about FPA Australia complaint handling process
- (ii) provided with accessible ways to make complaints; and
- (iii) listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate.

FPA Australia will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

6.0 Types of complaints

6.1 Anonymous

FPA Australia accept anonymous complaints. Where an anonymous complaint is received with enough information, and where it is deemed in the best interests of FPA Australia and the community, FPA Australia will endeavour to carry out an investigation of the issues raised as normal.

6.2 General

Complainants who do not elect to remain anonymous will be treated with the same confidentiality as anonymous complaints. FPA Australia may however consider disclosing details to parties to assist in the investigation and complaint resolution when handling general complaints.

7.0 Receipt of complaints

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, FPA Australia will record the complaint and its supporting information in a complaint register. FPA Australia will also assign a unique identifier to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

- (i) the contact information of the person making a complaint
- (ii) issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- (iii) any other relevant information; and
- (iv) any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

7.1 Acknowledgement of complaints

FPA Australia will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, aiming to provide receipt within one working day.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g., email, phone) for communicating with the complainant.

8.0 Complaint Assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, FPA Australia will confirm whether the issues raised in the complaint are within FPA Australia's control. FPA Australia will also consider the outcome being sought from the complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be addressed separately.

8.1 Assessment

When determining how a complaint will be managed, FPA Australia will consider:

- (i) how serious, complicated, or urgent the complaint is
- (ii) whether the complaint raises concerns about life, property or environment
- (iii) how the person making the complaint is being affected
- (iv) the risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed; and
- (v) if a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations or FPA Australia departments.

FPA Australia may request that the complainant provide further information and evidence to support the complaint. If the complainant does not respond or provide this information or evidence within ten (10) business days, FPA Australia may close the complaint and file the matter pending further information.

The complaint may be investigated again if the complainant contacts FPA Australia and/or provides appropriate information or evidence.

8.2 Addressing complaints

After assessing the complaint, FPA Australia will consider how to manage it. To manage a complaint, FPA Australia may:

- (i) provide the complainant with information or an explanation
- (ii) gather information from the product, person or area that the complaint is about; or
- (iii) investigate the claims made in the complaint.

FPA Australia will endeavour to keep the complainant up to date on their complaint's progress, particularly if there are any delays. FPA Australia will then communicate a response once the complaint has been finalised.

9.0 Response to complaints

FPA Australia will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

FPA Australia will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interests, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. Internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by an impartial party other than the original decision maker.

9.1 Early resolution

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with FPA Australia. Complaints that cannot be resolved at first contact may result in an investigation.

When a complaint cannot be resolved by FPA Australia, the matter may be referred onto another organisation or regulatory body.

9.2 Responsiveness

FPA Australia is committed to promptly acknowledging receipt of complaints.

FPA Australia will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to life, property or environment, the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

FPA Australia are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible of the following:

- (i) the complaints process
- (ii) the expected time frames for FPA Australia's actions
- (iii) the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- (iv) their likely involvement in the process; and
- (v) the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

FPA Australia will advise people as soon as possible when FPA Australia are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).

FPA Australia will also advise people as soon as possible when unable to meet periods for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

9.3 Responding flexibly

FPA Australia aim to resolve complaints promptly and with as few delays to the process as possible. FPA Australia will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving in order to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

FPA Australia will assess each complaint on its merits and involve complainants and/or their representatives in the process as far as possible.

FPA Australia are unable to provide a specific timeframe in relation to complaint resolution as this will vary based on the information that needs to be gathered and the complexity of the investigation. FPA Australia will however endeavour to resolve a complaint as soon as reasonably practicable.

9.4 Communicating with multiple parties

When similar complaints are made by related parties, FPA Australia will endeavour to communicate with a single representative of the group in order to ensure that communication is clear and coordinated.

10.0 Alternative avenues for dealing with complaints

FPA Australia will inform complainants about any internal or external review options available to them (including any relevant Ombudsman or oversight bodies).

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may seek a review of FPA Australia's decision from the New South Wales Secretary of the Department of Customer Service.

10.1 Referral to another agency

FPA Australia may be required to refer a complaint to another agency for investigation. In this instance, FPA Australia will contact the complainant prior to the complaint being referred.

Once a complaint has been referred onto another agency for investigation, FPA Australia will keep the complaint open until such time that the agency provides advice to FPA Australia.

Once advice is received, FPA Australia will notify the complainant once of the finalisation and the complaint will be closed.

11.0 Complaint Finalisation

FPA Australia will determine the most suitable way of finalising a complaint based on the information obtained and the outcome of inquiries and the investigation. When finalising a complaint, FPA Australia may:

- (i) Close the complaint (filed pending further information)
- (ii) Close the complaint (no action taken)
- (iii) Close the complaint (action taken)

11.1 Notification of Finalisation

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, FPA Australia will contact the person making the complaint and provide them with:

- (i) a response which outlines that the complaint has been finalised and;
- (ii) instructions on how to access FPA Australia's register of Notice of Decisions

11.2 Record Keeping

FPA Australia will keep comprehensive records about:

- (i) how the complaint has been managed
- (ii) the outcome/s of the complaint, including whether it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations; and
- (iii) any outstanding actions that need to be followed up.

FPA Australia will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored, and reported to the complaint handling manager and/or senior management.

12.0 Confidentiality

FPA Australia will protect the identity of complainants wherever this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by FPA Australia as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

13.0 Accessibility

FPA Australia will ensure that information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is publicised. FPA Australia will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly those who may require additional assistance.

If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, FPA Australia will communicate with them through their representative. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (e.g., advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation).

FPA Australia does not investigate complaints made from persons who are under the age of eighteen (18). Persons under the age of eighteen (18) require an adult representative to make a complaint on their behalf.

14.0 Accountability and learning

14.1 Analysis and evaluation of complaints

FPA Australia will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis.

Regular reports will be run on:

- (i) the number of complaints received
- (ii) the outcome of complaints, including matters resolved at the frontline
- (iii) issues arising from complaints
- (iv) systemic issues identified; and
- (v) the number of requests FPA Australia receive for internal and/or external review of our complaint handling.

Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Both reports and their analysis will be provided to FPA Australia's state manager for review.

14.2 Monitoring complaints handling

FPA Australia will continually monitor our complaints handling process to:

- (i) ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints; and
- (ii) identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system.

Monitoring may include an audit by the Department of Customer Service on FPA Australia's Complaint Management System.

14.3 Continuous improvement

FPA Australia are committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, FPA Australia will:

- (i) support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- (ii) implement best practices in complaint handling
- (iii) regularly review the complaints management system and complaint data; and
- (iv) implement appropriate system changes arising from our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

15.0 Definitions

Complaint	An expression of grievance or dissatisfaction with a service offered or provided by an APFS or Fire Protection Association Australia.
Complainant	The person who makes the complaint to FPA Australia
Complaints Workflow	All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by FPA Australia in the management of complaints.
Dispute	An unresolved complaint that has been escalated, either within or outside of FPA Australia.
Feedback	Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about FPA Australia's products, services or complaint handling, where a response is neither expected nor legally required.
Policy	A statement that sets out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.
Procedure	A statement that sets out how FPA Australia should fulfil our vision, mission and goals.

16.0 Review

This Policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and a full review will occur by **31 March** each calendar year.

Approval

Department Responsible: FPA Australia
Accountable: Quality and Compliance Manager
Date: 8.11.2021
Signature:

