



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Corrective Services**

Administration of Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions (ACCESS)

Policy Statement

May 2009

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1. Policy

It is the policy of the Department of Corrective Services (the Department) that complaints, compliments and suggestions of all categories are administered professionally.

2. Intent

The Department is committed to:

- 2.1 Providing the community of Western Australia and staff with an integrated, accountable, transparent and timely process for administering complaints and community feedback received by the Department.
- 2.2 Ensuring that the administration of complaints, compliments and suggestions throughout the Department is performed in accordance with relevant legislation, public sector policies and standards.
- 2.3 Facilitating positive cultural reform throughout the Department through improved complaint administration practices and an enhanced understanding of, and safe access to, the complaints framework.
- 2.4 Creating a central registry for the lodgement of complaints, compliments and suggestions of all categories by aligning all complaint management policies and frameworks throughout the Department.
- 2.5 Facilitating improvements to inter-agency policies and practices concerning the joint coordination and administration of complaints, compliments and suggestions.
- 2.6 Establishing continuous evaluation and improvement practices in the administration of complaints, compliments and suggestions.

3. Principles

The principles underlying this policy include:

- Accountability and governance
- Compliance
- Continuous improvement
- Customer service
- Efficiency and effectiveness
- Total quality management.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Community	Refers to offenders and general members of the public.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction or concern with the Department's service delivery, or the action/inaction of its employees.
Employee	Refers to all classes of employees of the Department as well as volunteers, persons engaged in work experience and persons engaged on contracts for service and contracts of service.
Incident	Any matter that comes to the attention of staff and community member that may jeopardise the security of a prison or the welfare of prisoners, staff and community members

5. Functions of ACCESS

ACCESS provides a range of services including the professional administration of complaints, compliments and suggestions encompassing the reception, assessment, recording and assigning of complaints as well as monitoring and reporting of progress of the matter or managerial resolutions.

6. Quality Assurance

ACCESS is required to develop and maintain effective quality assurance practices and controls to ensure professional levels of quality with respect to:

- Customer service including all levels of internal and external stakeholders
- Records management and reporting practices
- Timeliness resolution on recorded matters
- Compliance with relevant legislation, Government values and public sector policies and best practice standards (AS ISO 10002-2006).

7. Corruption and Crime Commission

Nothing in this policy prevents an employee and community member from also reporting suspected, unethical or improper conduct directly to the Corruption and Crime Commission.

8. Ombudsman

Nothing in this policy prevents an employee from also reporting suspected maladministration directly to the Office of the Ombudsman.

9. External Agencies

ACCESS is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective relationships and practices with relevant public sector agencies and to optimise inter-agency administration of complaints.

10. Investigative Assessment of all Reported Matters

All matters of suspected unethical or improper conduct provided to **ACCESS** will be assessed and allocated to the appropriate investigative area.

11. Confidentiality

In all cases, information provided to **ACCESS** will be treated in the strictest confidence. While the identity of the complainant will be kept confidential, under certain circumstances it may be revealed. These circumstances include:

- 11.1 Situations where a complainant consents to the disclosure of information that may identify or tend to identify them.
- 11.2 Circumstances where it is necessary to reveal a complainant's identity to enable the investigative process to proceed. In such a circumstance, prior notice will be given to the complainant by the Investigator.
- 11.3 Where a matter proceeds to a Court or tribunal hearing and the identity of the complainant is exposed in keeping with the rules of natural justice.
- 11.4 Legal compulsion.