

H33. COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND FEEDBACK

Content:	Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation Policies and Procedures
Version:	2.0
Section:	Housing
Applies To:	Board, Management and Staff of all IAC Services
Date:	October 2015 (Review October 2018)

Background and Purpose

The IAC's Housing policies articulate our aims, goals and philosophies in providing housing services for Aboriginal tenants and their families. They explain how the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation works with its staff and other agencies to ensure that our tenants are afforded the best and most appropriate services and that we meet all of the requirements of the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Office of Community Housing.

Principles

Tenants and Applicants:

- have the right to complain using procedures that are simple and easy to use and are effectively promoted.
- are entitled to be heard and have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency

The IAC:

- recognises that the issue of complaint is important to the complainant and must be taken seriously.
- will attempt to resolve complaints, where possible, to the satisfaction of the complainant.
- will deal with complaints in a timely manner
- will keep parties to the complaint informed of progress of the complaint.
- will reflect the principles of natural justice.
- will use complaints (positive and negative) in organisational reviews and follow up.
- makes its board members, staff, volunteers and students aware of the procedures for managing client feedback and complaints.
- takes a pro-active approach, through its communications strategy to ensure all service users, stakeholders and members are aware of the complaints policy and procedures.

Making a complaint

Tenants and Applicants:

- should make their complaints in writing to the Board of the IAC to ensure that we can use source material rather than hearsay in our investigations.
- can call the Housing Manager to have minor complaints resolved and then write to the Board if the matter is not resolved to their satisfaction

Complaints and Appeals Process

The IAC will:

- provide applicants and tenants with a standard complaints and appeals form that they can either sign or send in anonymously
- appoint a senior staff member (the "complaint handler") to look at the complaint within seven days of the complaint being received. They may contact the complainant for more information. The staff member investigating the complaint will decide how to respond to the complaint and make sure action is taken.
- send a letter to the complainant within 14 days of the complaint being received explaining what is being done to investigate and resolve their complaint.
- investigate and aim to resolve all complaints within 28 days of receipt of the written complaint. If this time frame cannot be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative time frame for resolution.
- deal with all complaints:
 - ◊ seriously
 - ◊ quickly
 - ◊ confidentially; and
 - ◊ without impacting the complainant's right to use IAC services
- allow tenants and applicants the right to access a support person at all stages of the complaints resolution process.
- maintain copies of all complaints and details of actions taken are centrally filed in the Complaints File, held in the Housing Manager's office.
- ensure that this file is confidential
- ensure that the outcome of the complaint or appeal is approved by the Board
- ensure that we provide the tenant with external avenues of appeal if they are not happy with the decision of the IAC

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Complaints and Appeals Process (c)

This section of the policy expands on the General Complaints and Appeals policy to provide further specific information for housing tenants and applicants that are not satisfied with the outcome of their initial complaint or appeal.

The Next Step

The IAC's outcome letter to the tenant or applicant will include information about external support services and other organisations that the tenant or applicant can approach if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their initial complaint or appeal.

IAC tenants with a complaint or appeal about rental and tenancy matters can seek support from:

- Murra Mia 25 Gregory St, Batemans Bay NSW 2536 - (02) 4472 9363

IAC tenants and applicants that wish to seek external support for their complaint or appeal can contact:

Registrar of Community Housing

- Locked Bag 4001
Ashfield BC 1800
1800 330 940

or lodge online at:

<http://www.rch.nsw.gov.au/Enquiries+Notifications+Complaints/EnquiryComplaint.htm>

COMPLIANCE

This policy complies with:

- NSW Housing Act 2001
- NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010

Complaints and Appeals Process

IAC tenants and applicants that wish to seek external support for their complaint or appeal can also contact:

- Aboriginal Housing Office
Level 6, 31-39 Macquarie Street
PO Box W16 Westfield
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150
(02) 9354 1550

or lodge online at:

<http://www.aho.nsw.gov.au/tenants/tenant-enquiries/feedback>

The IAC will:

- ensure that the support agency or organisation has your consent for us to discuss your complaint or appeal
- work with yourself and the support agency or organisation to resolve the complaint or appeal in a transparent, fair and equitable manner
- be bound by the decision of the Registrar of Community Housing where their investigation finds that we were not compliant with applicable policies and codes.

REFERENCES

This policy should be read with:

- **Housing NSW** "Changing a Tenancy Policy"
- **National Regulatory Code** - 1. Tenant and housing services (f) managing and addressing complaints and appeals relating to the provision of housing services