



Client Feedback Policy

ASES Standards	Standard 8: Consumer Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requirement 8.1 Consumer and Community Engagement Standard• Requirement 8.2 Consumer Feedback and Complaints Standard
Contractual Obligation(s)	NSW DCJ Specialist Homelessness Services Funding Agreement: Lead Entity and/or Joint Working Agreements
Related Policies	Charter of Rights and Responsibilities Complaints Management Community Engagement Continuous Quality Improvement

1. SCOPE

The scope of this policy applies to the feedback received from clients who are accessing SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation (SEARMS) services and programs. This policy does not apply to complaints, which are covered in the Complaints Management Policy.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the processes for collecting and using client and/or tenant feedback to improve SEARMS services and programs.

3. POLICY

SEARMS seeks feedback from clients and/or tenants through the following mechanisms:

- as part of a routine service provision
- in annual surveys
- in face-to-face interviews
- in operational planning stakeholder consultations
- in client and tenant reference or advisory groups TAG
- by Community Engagement events.

After entering service with SEARMS, all clients and/or tenants receive information about feedback and complaints processes. SEARMS ensures that the processes are accessible and culturally appropriate to the needs of individual clients.

SEARMS understands that opportunities to provide feedback are an essential part of continuous quality improvement — and that they should be regarded as benefiting the organisation, while also upholding clients' and/or tenant rights.

All feedback that is received is recorded and responded to in a timely manner. SEARMS applies fairness and equity principles when responding to and acting on feedback.

4. PROCEDURE

1. Promoting Client and/or Tenant Feedback

SEARMS **surveys** clients and/or tenants to elicit feedback about the quality of SEARMS services and programs. The results are collated, reported to the Board, staff and any client/tenant representative(s) and then used for service improvements.

When relevant, summaries of the results are reported in the annual report and made available to partner organisations and on SEARMS website.

Feedback may be provided by individual clients, tenants and stakeholders at their own initiative, or in response to requests from SEARMS.

Clients and/or tenants can format feedback in any manner they wish, including verbally, in writing, via a website feedback form, personally or through an advocate/support person, or through any other method that they prefer. If a client and/or tenant requires communication support to provide feedback (e.g., an interpreter), then SEARMS facilitates this.

SEARMS manages feedback in three stages — receiving, responding and recording feedback.

2. Receiving Feedback

SEARMS receives both informal and formal feedback, in which

- Informal feedback is primarily received verbally and focuses on resolving the issue quickly and without escalation. Examples include issues that can be easily fixed or complaints that are simple misunderstandings and that can be easily remedied (see the Complaints Management Policy).
- Formal feedback is primarily received through service/program and/or management processes. This may include feedback that is collated through SEARMS feedback forms, surveys, interviews and evaluation processes. Formal feedback also includes complaints, in which case the Complaints Management Policy should be followed.

3. Feedback Forms

SEARMS requests feedback using a feedback form after such things as:

- Community Engagement Events
- Before, during and after a project or service implementation
- When Policy or procedures change that immediately impact the Client and/or tenant

These are collected by the following methods:

- Via direct face-to-face Contact with the client/tenant
- Via email
- Via post to PO BOX 225 Batemans Bay 2536
- These can be taken verbally over the phone to ensure that all client/tenant groups can provide feedback

4. Responding to Feedback

All formal feedback submitted to SEARMS are acknowledged in a timely manner. The Service Delivery Manager acknowledges the feedback within five working days of receiving it. Depending on the nature of the feedback, responses may include:

- thanking the individual/service
- informing the individual/service of its value
- explaining how the information will be used
- following the procedure set out in the Complaints Management Policy.

The staff member, in receiving the feedback, advises the person of the next steps in the process. This may include:

- the time frame for responses
- a request for the preferred contact method
- the name and contact details of the staff member who is responding
- a request for additional or supporting information (when relevant)
- the organising of follow-up actions.

The level and type of response required depends on the assessment of the feedback provided, the method of receipt and any explicit or implicit requests for a response or resolution.

5. Recording Feedback

Managing feedback is critical in promoting SEARMS reputation of valuing all feedback. The staff member who receives positive or negative feedback raises the issue with his or her direct supervisor and discusses a plan to respond to it or provide further resolution. When receiving negative feedback, Chief Services Officer is required to record the feedback in the Complaints Register (see the Complaints Management Policy). This document records factual information, which can be supported by evidence, or it should note that the information is not yet substantiated.

6. Using Feedback for Service Improvement

The Chief Services Officer is responsible for preparing a client feedback report regarding services and programs. These reports are used to assist with service planning and improvements (see the Continuous Quality Improvement Policy).

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility	Delegation
Oversee feedback administration	Chief Business Officer
Respond to feedback	Chief Services Officer
Review feedback	Chief Services Officer
Report on feedback outcomes	Chief Services Officer
Monitor feedback	Chief Services Officer

6. LEGISLATION

- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00143>

- Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Cwlth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2012A00197>

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Feedback Form

Appendix 2: Feedback and Complaints Registers

8. FURTHER RESOURCES

- Australian Human Rights Commission: 'Developing and implementing internal complaints procedures' (2015)

www.humanrights.gov.au/employers/

- Local Community Service Association: Sector Development, Policy Development

<https://www.lcsansw.org.au/>

VERSION	APPROVAL	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVIEW DATE
---------	----------	----------------	-------------

Version 001	Chief Services Officer	23 April 2024	23 April 2026
-------------	------------------------	---------------	---------------