

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

The New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM) is committed to responding to customer feedback and complaints in order to improve our services and deliver better outcomes.

This policy outlines the principles and procedures that will be used by NERAM in managing customer complaints.

2. SCOPE

The Customer Complaints Management Policy and Procedure applies to customer complaints received in relation to all NERAM services, programs, and staff.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

NERAM aims to resolve complaints with as little formality and disputation as possible, and will use mediation, negotiation and informal resolution where appropriate.

4. DEFINITIONS

Complaint – an expression of dissatisfaction made to NERAM orally or in writing, about its products, services, actions of NERAM staff, volunteers, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complainant – the person, organisation or its representative, making a complaint i.e. the person or organisation aggrieved about a matter.

Customer – the organisation or person that receives a product or service.*

Feedback – an opinion, comment and/or expression of interest in the products or the complaints-handling process itself.

*A NERAM employee is able to complain if they are also a customer of the Museum.

5. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Complaints may be made orally or in writing; however, customers are encouraged to submit their complaint online. Complaints may be made as follows:

- online via the NERAM website 'Contacting NERAM' form
- in writing to New England Regional Art Museum, PO Box 508, Armidale NSW 2350.
- in person, please ask to see a staff member at the NERAM front desk

Customers wishing to make a complaint in person are advised that, depending on the nature or complexity of the complaint, a resolution may not be immediately available and may require follow up by the appropriate staff member/supervisor. Customers may also be directed to submit their complaint in writing, or via the NERAM website 'Contacting NERAM' form.

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback may be provided via any of the methods listed in section 5. Customers are encouraged to register their feedback via the website 'Contacting NERAM' form.

7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING COMPLAINTS

Guiding principles	This means we will...
Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear information about how to make a complaint and how complaints are managed.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish NERAM's Customer Complaints Management Policy on the NERAM website and make hardcopies available to the public on request • Provide reasonable assistance to customers in making complaints and providing feedback including answering enquiries about this policy, how to submit a complaint or, where appropriate, recording the details of a complaint to be submitted on behalf of the complainant.
Responsiveness and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record, track, acknowledge and process complaints in a timely manner, in accordance with the Customer Complaints Management Policy and Procedure • Advise the complainant about the process, timeframes, and their likely involvement, the possible modes of redress to the complaint, and any other necessary information. • Report our actions, investigations, analysis, and decisions relating to complaints in the Museum's Customer Complaints Register.
Objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage complaints objectively and deal with them fairly, respectfully, consistently and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and without actual or perceived conflicting interests. • Take all reasonable steps to ensure that a complainant is not adversely affected. • Protect the rights of employees and volunteers where they are the subjects of a complaint

Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deal with complaints confidentiality to the extent possible and in accordance with the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>.
Customer-focused approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise and respect everybody's right to provide feedback. Address feedback and complaints in a timely manner and without charge Involve the complainant in the process as far as is practicable and appropriate Provide the complainant a range of internal and external review options should they be unsatisfied with the resolution.
Continual improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use feedback and complaints as an essential tool for continuous improvement. provide feedback and complaints to relevant areas of NERAM to inform continuous improvement of NERAM's services and/or systems. Ensure NERAM staff are adequately trained in the Complaints Management Policy and Procedure and that key complaints management staff receive disability and cultural awareness training.

8. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS



NERAM will endeavour to:

- acknowledge complaints found to be of a complex, serious or urgent nature within two working days of their receipt.
- Respond to complaints made via NERAM's social media channels within 2 working days of the comment being posted.
- respond to all other complaints within 14 working days of their receipt.

Step 1: Receipt or first contact resolution

All complaints, oral and written, are recorded in the Museum's Customer Complaints Register.

NERAM will try to resolve complaints at the first point of contact if possible, for example in person. Where appropriate, complaints and/or complainants may be referred to external agencies upon receipt of the complaint.

If a complaint is unable to be resolved at step 1, the complaint will go through the following process of assessment, investigation, and resolution. If the customer is unsatisfied with the resolution they can request a further internal or external review of their complaint.

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and assessed as per this procedure.

Step 2: Assessment

Complaints not resolved at step 1 are assessed on the basis of seriousness and complexity.

Complainants will receive feedback on the progress of their complaint depending on the complexity and length of the investigation and resolution process.

NERAM will handle all complaints fairly and with due regard to natural justice and the rights of staff of the department who may be the subject of a complaint. If a complaint is made about a person, the person will be provided with the details of the complaint and will be given the opportunity to make a statement of reply. All people involved in the complaint process have the right to be supported by an appropriate third party.

When a complaint is lodged that may be considered to be vexatious or trivial, the complaint will be referred to the Art Museum Director.

The Art Museum Director determines the complaint to be vexatious or trivial, no further action is required.

Step 3: Investigation

Once a complaint is assessed and a response is determined necessary, the key complaints management staff will send the complaint to the relevant business area delegate/s and request further investigation and analysis of the issues raised by the complainant.

The Front of House staff provides an investigation report to the Art Museum Director with the outcomes of their investigation. The investigation report is logged in the Customer Complaints Register and the original filed on the Museum's record management system.

The Art Museum Director will review the Front of House staff's report and make a determination on the response.

Step 4: Resolution

In general, written advice will be provided to a complainant on the outcome of their complaint.

Where only a contact number is provided, the relevant NERAM staff member will telephone the complainant to provide the outcome. Modes of redress offered may include:

- communication with the complainant
- rectification of the problem raised by the complainant
- mitigation of the adverse consequences experienced by the complainant
- satisfaction of the reasonable concerns raised by the complainant who has suffered
- detriment through non-material means
- compensation for detriment sustained directly or indirectly by the complainant as a
- result of a mistake

Responses will clearly outline reasons for decision and avenues of review should the complainant be unsatisfied with the resolution.

NERAM's response to the complaint is recorded in the Customer Complaints Register, and if a written response is provided, it is filed in NERAM's record management system.

Step 5: Internal review

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or how the complaint was handled, they may seek an internal review by a senior member of NERAM staff. All requests must be made in writing directly to NERAM. On receipt, NERAM will conduct an internal review of the processes taken to arrive at the original outcome to determine if further information regarding the decision or any suitable alternative outcomes can be provided.

An internal review will be conducted by a different staff member from the one who handled the original complaint and will be overseen by the Art Museum Director.

Step 6: External review

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the internal review process, they may seek an external review by writing to an independent external review body. External review bodies available include:

- Ombudsman New South Wales
- Office of the Information Commissioner (for complaints about breaches of privacy).

9. STAFF AWARENESS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All NERAM staff have access to the Customer Complaints Management Policy and Procedure and are made aware its requirements during their induction.

Front of House staff receive regular customer service and complaints management training as well as disability and cultural awareness training.

Front of House and customer service staff will always attempt to resolve at a local level.

Written and unresolved oral complaints will be managed by NERAM's key complaints management staff.

The Art Museum Director is responsible for overseeing Museum's Customer Complaints Management Policy and Procedure.

10. MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS

NERAM's Customer Complaints Management Policy and Procedure, and its application, will be reviewed every two years by the Art Museum Director and at other times if any significant new information or legislative or organisational change warrants a change to these documents to ensure that they remain effective and appropriate tools for performance improvement.

NERAM will monitor and identify complaint trends, providing feedback to relevant areas of NERAM staff where potential improvements may be made to NERAM's services and/or systems.

11. REPORTING

The Front of House staff will provide quarterly reports to the NERAM Board on the Museum's Customer Complaints data.

At the end of each calendar year the Front of House staff will provide the Art Museum Director and the NERAM Board with an annual report of the Customer Complaints data.

12. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Privacy Act 1988
- New England Regional Art Museum | Conditions of Entry