

Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation

Complaints Policy

Content:	Complaints Policy
Version:	2
Applies to:	Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation
Date:	Endorsed by board 05/08/2025

Background:

Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation is a Community Housing Provider that specialises in providing social housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation aims to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to successfully sustain tenancies by linking clients into support services where applicable. Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation aims to educate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by providing pathways into improved housing outcomes delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.

Scope:

This policy applies to all tenants, applicants and stakeholders of Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation. It outlines how Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation will deal with complaints from tenants, applicants and stakeholders in relation to service delivery.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline how complaints will be handled within the organisation. Its purpose is to:

- Ensure all tenants, applicants and stakeholders are aware of their rights to complain
- Help Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation understand what is and isn't working well
- Make it easy for tenants, applicants and stakeholders to exercise their rights.

Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation records all complaints on the complaints register. The purpose of this register is to assist in the improvement of service delivery.

Principles:

Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation prides itself on delivering a transparent service that is culturally appropriate. All tenants, applicants and stakeholders have the right to complain and will not be penalised or disadvantaged for lodging a complaint. Complaints received are reviewed and investigated and where possible the complainant is advised of the outcome. Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation will utilise the outcome of complaints as lessons learnt and ways to improve approach to service delivery.

What is a complaint:

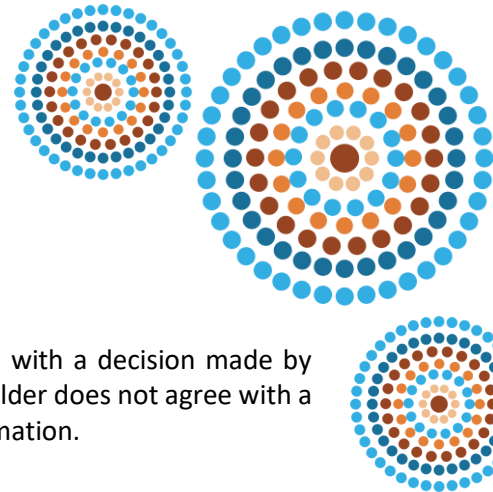
A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the service standards or products provided by Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation, including contractors. A complaint is not an avenue for

Compliance

Community Housing Issues and Appeals Management Framework
Residential Tenancies Act 2010
Housing Act 2001
Aboriginal Housing Act 1998
Complaints, Issues and Appeals Management Referral Map

Reference

Community Housing Fact -Sheets
Tenants of Community Housing Complaints and Appeals
Applicant of Community Housing Complaints and Appeals
Roles and Responsibilities Community Housing



tenants, applicant and stakeholder to request information or to disagree with a decision made by Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation. If a tenant, applicant or stakeholder does not agree with a decision made, they will need to refer to the appeals policy for more information.

Who can lodge a complaint:

Any member of the public is able to lodge a complaint providing the complaint relates to either a service delivery, products or properties managed by Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation. All complaints lodged with Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation are treated as confidential unless it is required or authorised to be disclosed by law or if the complainant consents to the disclosure.

When lodging a complaint, it is the right of the individual to remain anonymous if they chose to do so. Complaints received that are anonymous are sometimes harder to investigate. It is therefore important that when an individual chooses to remain anonymous they include as much details as possible in the complaint to ensure the matter is able to be investigated.

How to lodge a complaint:

To lodge a complaint with Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation you will need to do one of the following:

- Complete the complaints form (located on the website or local office)
- In writing
- Via phone
- Via email

What if my complaint relates to a staff member or contractor:

If a complaint relates to a staff member or contractor of Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation, the complaint will be directed to the General Housing Manager for investigation. Matters are dealt with in a confidential manner. Any matters of fraud or corruption are dealt with high priority. Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation has zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour or misconduct.

The Chairperson of the Board of Directors will investigate any complaints relating to the General Housing Manager or a Director. These complaints will be monitored in Board Meetings and handled in a private and sensitive manner. If the complaint relates to a Director or Board Member, the General Housing Manager will delegate the matter to be investigated by a senior staff member to ensure transparency.

Complaints Process:

To ensure the privacy of the complainant and to uphold the integrity of the organisation, all complaints received will be handled in the following manner:

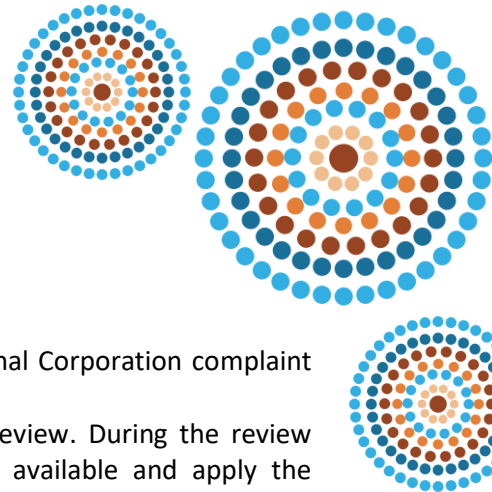
- Upon receipt of the complaint, Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation will send an acknowledgement letter to the complainant within 5 working days. If the complaint falls under the jurisdiction of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the complainant will be advised immediately to avoid any delays or any time limits that may apply.

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- The complaint will be recorded on the Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation complaint register
- The complaint will be delegated to a senior staff member for review. During the review process, the senior staff member will consider all information available and apply the principles of transparency and objectivity.
- The complainant will be contacted either via phone or requested to attend an office interview to discuss their concerns in detail, providing they have not elected to remain anonymous. This will occur within 15 working days of the complaint being received.
- The senior officer will undertake a full assessment of all the information and provide a written submission for the General Housing Manager. Once the complaint has been signed off by the General Housing Manager, the complainant will be advised of the outcome accordingly. The complainant needs to be aware that not in all cases will they receive the response they may be expecting due to privacy laws.

Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation aims to resolve all complaints received within 30 working day of receipt. If the complaint is likely to be delayed, the senior officer will contact the complainant and advise why and the expected timeframe.

Managing unreasonable complaints:

Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation has the right to restrict or limit contact with a complainant where their behaviour has been identified as unreasonable or vexatious.

Unreasonable contact includes but is not limited to:

- Consistent phone calls, visits, letters and emails while the complaint is being reviewed
- Demands for service that are not realistic
- Demand for priority treatment or the assistance of a certain staff member
- Constantly raising the same concern with no substance or evidence to support their concerns
- Refusal to cooperate with staff

In the first instance, Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation staff will request the complainant cease with the above behaviours. If the complainant continues to behave in the same manner or the behaviour escalates to abusive, threatening or intimidating, Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation will take one of the following actions:

- The complaint will be designated to a senior staff member with whom they can talk to only.
- The complainant may only be able to communicate in writing.
- Contact may be restricted to only a particular subject and timeframe.

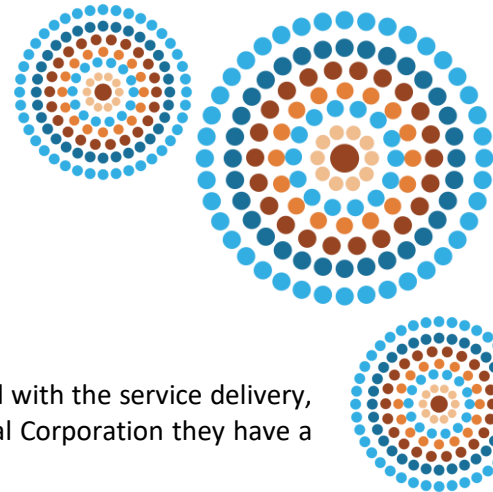
Restriction may be placed on the complainant for a period of 3, 6 or 12 months. The General Housing Manager will advise the complainant in writing of any restrictions placed on them. At the end of the restriction period the General Housing Manager will review the situation and advise the complainant of any changes.

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External Avenues:

If a tenant, applicant, stakeholder or a member of the public is dissatisfied with the service delivery, products or management of social housing by Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation they have a right to follow any other avenues of complaint. These may include:

- **NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal** is able to make decision that relate to tenancy breaches in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*. The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal has no jurisdiction over policy related matters. If a tenant believes Tharawal Housing Aboriginal Corporation has not adhered to their obligations as a landlord or has breached the tenancy agreement, tenants are able to lodge an application to have their matter heard. - <http://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au/>
- **Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services** is able to provide tenants with information relating to their rights and obligations of social housing providers in accordance with *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* - <https://www.tenants.org.au/>
- **The Local Member of Parliament** is able to provide support.
- **The Community Housing Industry Association NSW** can address complaints against community housing providers who are signed up to the Code of Practice, providing the complainant has attempted to address the complaint with the provider. The complaint needs to relate to a breach of the Code of Practice. - <http://communityhousing.org.au/>
- **The Registrar of Community Housing** is a government body that oversees the compliance of community housing provider that are approved and registered under the *Housing Act 2001*. The Registrar is able to investigate complaints about a community housing provider's performance against the regulatory Code. - <http://www.rch.nsw.gov.au/>

Relevant FACTSHEETS:

Applicant of Community Housing – Complaints and Appeals

https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/333047/Applicantofcommunityhousingcomplaints.pdf

Tenant of Community Housing – Complaints and Appeals

https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/333046/Tenantofcommunityhousingcomplaints.pdf

Roles and Responsibilities Community Housing -

https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/333045/RolesandResponsibilities_CommHousing.pdf

Complaints, Issues and Appeals Management Referral Map

https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/333044/ManagementReferralMap.pdf

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