

<b>Owner</b>	Director Passenger Transport		
<b>Contact</b>	Manager Customer Experience		
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of State Growth contracts public transport services, including bus and ferry services, under the *Passenger Transport Services Act 2011* (Tas). As part of managing these contracts, the department regularly receives feedback from members of the public.

This policy applies to all feedback received by State Growth in relation to public transport services. It does not apply to feedback received by the Regulations and Concessions team. It outlines the principles for respectful and transparent feedback handling.

State Growth is committed to building a culture of customer service excellence through a proactive, customer-first approach to feedback management. State Growth acknowledge the right of community members and users of public transport to provide feedback and raise a complaint, and to receive a timely and appropriate response. Feedback assists in understanding customers' experiences and provides insight for continuous improvement.

## 2. COMMITMENT

We will listen to, respond to, and address feedback that we receive.

We will ensure people understand:

- where and how to provide feedback
- how we manage feedback
- timeframes for managing feedback
- the process for review of a decision or response.

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define and guide an open and transparent feedback management process
- ensure members of the public receive fair, consistent, professional, and timely assistance that meets their needs
- outline the escalation process and review mechanisms if they are required
- ensure feedback is used to continuously improve State Growth processes and inform public transport service reviews.

## **4. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all feedback received by State Growth that relates to public transport in Tasmania, including public bus and ferry services and school bus services.

It does not apply to feedback received as part of a dedicated public consultation process. Public consultation commonly occurs as part of a specific project and may invite feedback on specific proposed changes. Feedback received as part of a consultation process is managed in accordance with the project plan.

## **5. PRINCIPLES**

This policy is based on seven principles:

### **5.1 Commitment**

We are committed to resolving complaints and maintaining a culture that recognises an individual's right to provide feedback. We value all feedback and recognise it as being part of our business of serving our community and improving service design.

### **5.2 Inclusiveness**

People from all backgrounds have equal rights to provide feedback and will be treated with respect.

### **5.3 Accessibility**

It will be clear how and where to provide feedback, and how it will be handled.

### **5.4 Objectivity and fairness**

All feedback is treated fairly, with integrity and in an objective and impartial manner.

### **5.5 Responsiveness**

We acknowledge and resolve all feedback in a timely manner.

### **5.6 Accountability**

We are accountable internally and externally for decision making and feedback handling performance. We will provide explanations and reasons for decisions and ensure that decisions are subject to appropriate review processes.

### **5.7 Continuous improvement**

Feedback helps us to learn and identify improvements. Where possible, we will action improvements informed by feedback.

## **6. DEFINITIONS**

### **6.1 Customer**

A person, organisation or its representative providing feedback.

### **6.2 Feedback**

Compliments, complaints, information, insights, or issues people directly share about experiences with products or services provided by State Growth or our contracted operators.

### **6.3 Frivolous complaint**

A matter that is trivial, without grounds, without substantial merit, or clearly intended merely to harass, waste time, delay or embarrass.

### **6.4 Operator**

An individual, partnership or business that holds a contract for goods or services with us, typically a bus or ferry service.

### **6.5 Responsible officer**

The State Growth employee assigned to manage the feedback.

### **6.6 Vexatious complaint**

A matter we determine to be frivolous, a repeated abuse of the process and where it is found the motive and intent is to harass, annoy, cause delay or achieve another wrongful purpose.

### **6.7 We/us**

The Department of State Growth.

## **7. HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK**

Feedback can be submitted via the Feedback Form on the Transport Tasmania website.

We acknowledge that there may be instances in which a customer is unable to complete the form. In these circumstances, we can be contacted for assistance by:

Email: [ptfeedback@stategrowth.tas.gov.au](mailto:ptfeedback@stategrowth.tas.gov.au)

Telephone: (03) 6166 3343 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Mail: Department of State Growth, GPO Box 536, Hobart Tasmania 7001

## **8. INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED**

To effectively record, investigate and respond to feedback, customers must supply relevant information when submitting feedback.

This may include the:

- time and date
- location, including bus stop location
- service operator
- service route or bus number.

## **9. ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK**

We accept and respond to anonymous feedback, provided it includes sufficient information to do so. Anonymous complaints that do not meet this standard will be recorded and referred to the appropriate business area for noting only.

## **10. COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE**

We take a four-tiered approach to complaint handling:

### **10.1 Frontline resolution**

- We aim to acknowledge receipt of all complaints within five working days.
- Where possible, the complaint will be resolved immediately.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, it will be referred to the appropriate business area for investigation.
- If State Growth is not the right organisation to respond to the complaint, the customer will be redirected to the appropriate authority.

### **10.2 Investigation**

- We will refer complaints that cannot be resolved immediately to the appropriate business area for investigation.
- We will keep the customer informed of this process and timeframes.
- We aim to resolve all complaints within 28 working days.
- If it takes longer than 28 working days to resolve a complaint, we will contact the customer to explain the reason for the delay and provide an estimated timeframe for response.
- We will write to the customer to advise them of the outcome of their complaint. This correspondence will contain reasons for any decision(s) made and the contact information for the responsible officer.
- The responsible officer may contact the customer to discuss the outcome of their complaint prior to sending them any correspondence relating to the outcome.

### **10.3 Internal review**

- If the customer is not satisfied with the process or outcome of the complaint, the customer can request an internal review by writing to the Manager Customer Experience (using the same contact details as listed above under 'How to Provide Feedback').
- An internal review is not a re-investigation of a complaint. An internal review will consider whether the original decision-maker:
  - identified and addressed all the relevant issues
  - sought and considered appropriate evidence
  - complied with any legislative requirements and internal policies and procedures
  - made the correct decision if a decision was required
  - adequately explained the decision or our position regarding the customer's complaint.
- We aim to acknowledge receipt of a request for review within five working days and will aim to complete a review within 28 working days.
- The internal review will be conducted by a reviewer who has had no substantial dealings with the complaint, and who is of equal or greater seniority to the original decision-maker.
- If it takes longer than 28 working days to complete the review, the responsible officer will contact the customer to explain the reason for the delay and provide an estimated timeframe for response if possible.
- An outcome letter signed by the reviewer will be provided to the customer at the conclusion of the internal review.

#### **10.4 External review**

- If the customer remains dissatisfied with the process or outcome of the review, the customer can request an external review by writing to the Ombudsman Tasmania.

### **11. CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS**

An allegation of potentially serious criminal behaviour will be escalated immediately within State Growth to the Assistant Director, Public Transport Operations.

Behaviour of this type may trigger other statutory reporting obligations and may require us to formally notify other organisations such as Tasmania Police of the complaint. If this occurs, we may be required to cease our internal investigations until any other investigations have concluded.

### **12. ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR AND FRIVOLOUS OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS**

Customers will always be treated with courtesy and respect. Customers are also expected to display courtesy and respect when dealing with us. Abusive language, discriminatory remarks and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in communication with the customer ceasing.

Complaints may not be dealt with if we reasonably believe that the complaint is frivolous or vexatious in nature or is being pursued for improper purposes. In making this determination, we will consider past dealings with the customer and the circumstances of the complaint, including whether the complaint:

- is trifling or characterised by lack of seriousness or sense
- lacks sufficient grounds
- serves only to cause annoyance or embarrassment to State Growth, its operators or operator's personnel
- has been made for a collateral purpose and not solely for the purpose of reporting an issue.

We will not continue to manage a complaint if the customer:

- does not provide sufficient information to assist us to resolve it (unless there is reasonable cause)
- is misleading or deceptive
- is deemed to be offensive or defamatory
- fails to accept an offer to resolve the issue and we are satisfied that:
  - the offer of resolution is reasonable
  - the customer's failure to accept the offer of resolution appears to be for an otherwise collateral purpose
  - in failing to accept the offer of resolution, the customer is exerting or is attempting to exert or use unfair pressure or undue influence.

Customers will be advised of the decision not to proceed with a complaint in these circumstances.

### 13. COMPLAINTS REGARDING SERVICE DELIVERY

We can receive and manage complaints relating to service design. We cannot manage complaints regarding service delivery and operator employees.

Feedback regarding service delivery and operator employees should be directed to the operator. Operators are required to “*have a system for responding to passenger complaints which is consistent with the provision of a high standard of customer service*”. In the event that a customer is dissatisfied with an operator’s response to their complaint, at this point it becomes a matter which may be referred to State Growth.

The ‘Complaint Categories’ table below provides an overview of complaints and whether these complaints should be directed to the operator or to State Growth:

Complaint category	Example	Point of Contact
Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Bus/ferry was late/didn’t arrive</li><li>▪ Passenger behaviour</li><li>▪ Driver or crew behaviour</li><li>▪ Bus/ferry is not fit for purpose</li><li>▪ Access to printed timetables</li><li>▪ Lost/stolen property</li></ul>	Operator
Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Dissatisfaction with an operator’s response to a request/complaint</li></ul>	Department of State Growth
Service Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Bus/ferry routes</li><li>▪ Service frequency and timetables</li><li>▪ Bus/ferry stops, signage and shelters</li><li>▪ Fare policy</li><li>▪ General safety concerns, including capacity concerns</li></ul>	Department of State Growth

### 14. COMPLIMENTS

We will acknowledge and respond to all complimentary feedback. Where possible, we will inform customers how their feedback will be used, recorded, or communicated.

### 15. REMEDIES

Where an error has been made or an action has been taken that negatively impacts a customer without proper explanation, we will take steps to remedy the situation.

Possible remedies include, but are not limited to:

- an explanation of why the error occurred and the steps taken to prevent it happening again
- an explanation of why an action was taken and the policy underlying that action
- the reversal of a decision

- providing the specific means of redress requested by the customer if possible and reasonable.

## 16. RECORDING FEEDBACK

All feedback is recorded in the form of the completed *Feedback Form*, a file-noted telephone discussion or a copy of correspondence between the customer and State Growth. We also keep a record of collateral information or a reference to collateral information that informs the feedback, such as operator information, route or timetable information, or discussions with internal or external stakeholders regarding the details of the feedback.

All records are stored in accordance with our Information Management Policy and with the *Archives Act 1983*.

## 17. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Personal information is protected in accordance with all relevant privacy laws, principles and policies, including the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* (Tas).

When collecting personal information to respond to a complaint, we will only:

- use it to deal with the complaint or address systemic issues arising from the complaint
- disclose it in a de-identified format when disclosing data to the public
- share it with employees on a need-to-know basis.

## 18. NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

As an agency that provides services for children and young people, we have considered the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023* (the Act) when preparing this document. The Act established the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework that sets out clear expectations for:

- how the department prioritises and promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people; and
- how the department responds when there are concerns about a worker's behaviour towards children and young people.

## 19. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly cycle, or as a result of any relevant Departmental or Divisional decisions and is subject to review at the request of any State Growth employee.

## 20. OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- [Passenger Transport Operational Guidelines](#)
  - Interchanges
  - Passengers requiring assistance
  - Informal pick up and drop off points
  - Public holidays
  - Network disruptions

- [School Bus Service Eligibility Guidelines](#)
- [Passenger Conduct Code for School Bus Services](#)
- Public Transport – Feedback Management Work Instruction (for internal use only).
- Department of State Growth – Information Management Policy (for internal use only).
- Department of State Growth – Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing Policy (for internal use only).
- Department of State Growth – Reporting and Investigating Reportable Conduct Policy and Procedure (for internal use only).