

## 1. WHAT IS THE FEEDBACK SCHEME?

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LEADR values people having the opportunity to give feedback and to receive a constructive, timely and sensitive response. LEADR also values feedback as a method for improving the organisation's practices, policies and procedures.

For these reasons, LEADR has developed a *Feedback Scheme* that is accessible, fair and efficient. LEADR uses the *Feedback Scheme* to manage and respond to positive and negative feedback, and includes its complaints handling process.

Feedback is an expression of satisfaction, praise, dissatisfaction, complaint or concern about any aspect of LEADR service, its staff, its members or any ADR practitioner accredited by LEADR. Feedback may be given verbally or in writing, on the phone or in person, or in a feedback survey.

Feedback can be about:

- A mediator accredited by LEADR or a LEADR member
- LEADR's mediator referral service
- LEADR's training, registration process, trainers, adjudicators or any contracted person
- Other specific services, such as *Update*
- Administrative processes or errors
- Contact with LEADR staff.

The feedback can be positive or negative and can include complaints about such matters as managing a relationship inappropriately, behaving dishonestly, behaving unprofessionally, giving misleading information on costs or charges, or failing to provide certificates or reports.

## 2. SIX BENCHMARK AREAS

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LEADR's *Feedback Scheme* including the complaints handling process meets the six benchmarks for complaints handling and their underlying principles<sup>1</sup>:

### 1. ACCESSIBILITY

The scheme is readily available, promoted, easy to use and provides no cost barriers to anyone wishing to submit feedback.

### 2. INDEPENDENCE

The decision-making process and administration of the scheme are independent of those who are the subject of a complaint.

### 3. FAIRNESS

The scheme observes the principles of procedural fairness, makes decisions based on the information submitted to it and makes its decisions using specific criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> *Benchmarks for Industry-Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes* (the Benchmarks) have been developed by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Tourism. 2002

#### 4. ACCOUNTABILITY

LEADR publicly accounts for its operations by publishing de-identified information about complaints, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

#### 5. EFFICIENCY

LEADR tracks feedback and uses it to review its performance regularly.

#### 6. EFFECTIVENESS

The scheme has appropriate and comprehensive terms of reference (listed in the previous section) and periodic independent reviews of its performance.

### 3. PRINCIPLES OF LEADR'S FEEDBACK SCHEME

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- The scheme provides unique information about the needs of clients of LEADR or LEADR's members and the quality of services they receive.
- The scheme fosters a positive attitude towards the users of LEADR's services, and takes feedback seriously.
- Feedback processes are versatile, accessible and easy to use to prevent escalation and restore trust.
- When the feedback takes the form of a complaint, the scheme aims to resolve it at, or as close as possible, to the point of service.
- Responses to feedback are prompt and sensitive, and when appropriate keep the person informed of action being taken in response to the feedback.
- In cases where a concern or a complaint has been raised, the scheme's processes emphasise joint problem solving and communication. This enables issues to be resolved as early as possible, and improve the satisfaction of those giving feedback. This can also save staff time and cost.
- All parties have the opportunity to tell their version of events and all feedback and complaints are treated fairly and impartially.
- Information is managed so that relevant facts and decisions are communicated and recorded with appropriate confidentiality and to ensure personal privacy is protected.
- Staff members are trained, skilled and supported in handling feedback and complaints.
- Feedback and complaints are evaluated to gain insights and improve services; the feedback system is evaluated to improve its performance too.

### 4. PROCESS FOR RECEIVING AND RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

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If the feedback is a complaint, LEADR will ensure that the complaint is handled independently and not by the person who is the subject of that complaint.

1. LEADR receives feedback by phone, in person, in writing, by email, or in a survey.
2. LEADR staff member:
  - Identifies him/herself and receives the feedback.

- Appropriately thanks the person giving the feedback (within two working days for those received in writing or by email).
  - Is attentive, courteous, and open to hearing the feedback.
  - If the matter is a complaint, the staff member:
    - Records the name and other information about the person giving the feedback which is relevant to the complaint (eg member, service user, mediator), and the type of matter being raised.
    - Ensures that, if the complaint relates to mediation, facilitation, adjudication or other ADR process, confidentiality relevant to that process will be maintained.
    - Explains that LEADR will deal with the complaint in line with its *Feedback Scheme*.
    - Offers to send the person a copy of the *LEADR Feedback Scheme*.
    - Finds out from the person what range of action and/or outcome s/he is seeking.
    - Offers immediate remedial action if appropriate. This may include showing empathy, correcting an error, offering an apology, providing reassurance or undertaking to ensure that a systemic issue will be reviewed.
    - If immediate remedial action is not appropriate, adopts a cooperative problem solving approach to settle on the appropriate next steps. This could include encouraging the person to raise the matter directly with the individual concerned, asking for the complaint to be put in writing, or other initial step to help clarify the matter further.
    - Informs the person of how the matter will be managed further. This may include documenting the feedback, waiting for further input from the person raising the complaint, or passing on information to the CEO.
    - Informs the person of future contact /or feedback, if any, that LEADR will provide.
    - Reassures the person about the confidentiality and fairness of the process if appropriate.
    - Checks if the matter is resolved to their satisfaction.
3. If the issue is resolved to the person's satisfaction, or the person chooses alternative action, the staff member records this appropriately. Otherwise, the staff member:
- Clarifies with the person what will happen now to progress the feedback/complaint.
  - Informs and passes the feedback to the staff member designated to handle complaints (the complaints handler).
4. The complaints handler:
- Discusses with the person their issues and the options for resolution. (If the feedback came by phone, ensures this is within 48 hours of initial contact.)
  - Keeps appropriate case notes.
  - Adopts a cooperative problem solving approach to settle on the appropriate next steps.
  - Decides on the next steps, informs the consumer and describes the level of confidentiality that will be applied. Next steps could include:
    - Sensitively informing the other person/persons involved in the issue
    - Seeking the perspective of this person or people
    - Setting up the appropriate resolution process such as assisted negotiation, mediation, conciliation, neutral evaluation, investigation or external referral.
    - Informing the CEO or the Chair of LEADR (and if appropriate engaging his/her assistance in resolving the issue).
    - If the complaint is against LEADR, then the complaint will be referred to an independent dispute resolver being one of a panel of senior experienced dispute resolvers appointed by the Board from time to time.

- If the process is to begin more than 10 days after the last contact, contacts the consumer and informs him/her of the time frames and process.
  - Makes contact regularly, at least once a fortnight or as otherwise agreed.
5. The complaints handler:
- Monitors the implementation of the resolution process to ensure that it is proceeding within appropriate timeframes.
  - Makes contact regularly, at least fortnightly or otherwise as agreed.
6. The complaints handler (after the resolution process is complete, and within 10 days):
- Speaks with the person who made the complaint and to any individual who was the subject of the complaint to discuss the outcomes
  - If the issue is resolved to the person's satisfaction, then the complaints handler records that the matter is closed. If not, proceed to step 7.
7. The complaints handler:
- Discusses LEADR's perspective with the person.
  - Checks with the person about his/her perspective.
  - Informs the person of the options as LEADR sees them.
  - Inquires what further options the person is considering.
  - To the extent that s/he is able, informs the person of other available options (such as an industry based complaints handling body likely to be established under the National Mediator Accreditation System.)
  - Informs the person, within the limits of confidentiality, of further steps, if any, that LEADR will take eg completing documentation, improving procedures, publishing the outcome.
8. The CEO
- Regularly assess the complaints made for any improvements needed in LEADR practices, policies and procedures.
  - Regularly assesses the *Feedback Scheme* for improvements.

To provide feedback to LEADR about any aspect of its services, please use the following contact information:

LEADR  
[leadr@leadr.com.au](mailto:leadr@leadr.com.au)  
Freecall: 1800 651 650  
Level 1 13-15 Bridge Street  
Sydney NSW 2000