

Dealing with disturbance concerns from local residents and businesses



An effective complaints handling process builds good relationships with patrons and the community and can drive business improvements.

This fact sheet gives guidance to licensed venues on resolution of disturbance issues at a local level, before matters progress to the more formal complaints process. It provides guidance for licensed venues on ways to develop an effective complaints handling process to help deal with disturbance complaints locally.

Complaints handling

An effective complaints handling process that is accessible to neighbours and the local community is in everyone's interests. Complaints provide businesses with important feedback and can drive business improvements. It is much easier for everyone involved if issues can be resolved early and at the local level.

Best practice guidelines are available to assist venues to manage complaints effectively and efficiently. The Australian Standard for complaints handling in organisations (AS ISO 10002:2006) identifies the key features of best practice complaints handling.

What can you do?

Following are some suggested actions licensees can take to establish open, accessible communication with their neighbours. The aim is to have clear lines of communication to help resolve any disturbance issues resulting from the operations on the licensed premises.

- Have a dedicated staff member available to talk to residents about any complaints or concerns about disturbance issues
- Setting up a dedicated hotline or provide a dedicated mobile telephone number for the duty manager
- Post information about the complaints process, including contact details, in a prominent place in the venue and on the business website, if one exists
- Initiate community meetings to discuss any disturbance issues
- Actively participate in your local liquor accord – so that you can contribute to broader strategies
- Implement effective techniques to deal with anti-social behaviour from patrons leaving the premises
- Conduct an environmental audit of your venue (including covert noise audits) during peak trading time to identify emerging issues and take remedial measures
- Assess the venue's building design and identify opportunities for modification to future proof and guard against rising patron numbers or residential issues

- Contact your local Council or re-visit your development consent to ensure compliance with all noise conditions imposed.

Industry peak bodies such as ClubsNSW, AHA(NSW) and Restaurant and Catering NSW can assist licensed venues establish best practice complaints handling processes for their business.

Noise complaints

Noise, including loud music, or the behaviour of patrons in the venue or entering or leaving the venue, can adversely impact on the neighbourhood around a licensed venue. 'Sound advice', a fact sheet developed by the Office of Liquor, Gaming & Racing, details a number of strategies that can be implemented by licensed venues to manage the impact of noise on residents and businesses in their neighbourhood (www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/bb_music/sound_advice.pdf)

Information for residents

It is important that residents are also aware of different ways to address disturbance issues. A guide aimed at residents on how to deal with disturbance concerns has been prepared, and is available on the OLGR website (www.olgr.nsw.gov.au). The guide advises residents that the simplest and most straightforward way to deal with a disturbance concern is to contact the venue directly. Mediation and the formal complaints process are also outlined as options where direct contact does not resolve the issue.

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Need more information?

For further information please visit www.olgr.nsw.gov.au, call us on 02 9995 0837 or email us at complaints@olgr.nsw.gov.au

ClubsNSW

Ph: 02 9268 3000 or
email: enquiries@clubsnsw.com.au

AHA (NSW)

Ph: 02 9281 6922 or
email: enquiries@ahansw.com.au

Liquor Stores Association NSW

Ph: 02 8335 3200 or
email: info@lsansw.com.au

Restaurant and Catering NSW

Ph: 1300 722 878 or
email: restncat@restaurantcater.asn.au



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