

Standard complaint and dispute resolution procedure



About Ausgrid

Ausgrid is one of the largest electricity networks in the country with more than 100 years experience in providing a safe and reliable supply of electricity in Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter Region of New South Wales.

What is this Procedure?

This procedure is Ausgrid's Standard Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedure. It has been prepared to be consistent with Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014 'Quality management – customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling'.

Who should use this procedure?

This is the procedure to be followed by customers who wish to complain, raise a dispute or seek a review in relation to Ausgrid's provision of customer connection services and its related activities under the energy laws. Complaints and Disputes are handled by Ausgrid in accordance with this procedure at no cost to customers.

Small Customers

This procedure applies to any dispute or complaint by a small customer. A small customer is a residential customer or a business customer consuming less than 100MWh per annum. All other customers are large customers.

Large Customers

This procedure also applies to large customers following the electrification of their connection when they are provided with ongoing customer connection services under Ausgrid's Deemed Standard Customer Connection Contract.

Note: Disputes by large customers regarding the establishment of a new connection or the alteration of an existing connection to Ausgrid's network, which cannot be resolved through the connection process under Chapter 5 of the National Electricity Rules, can be referred to the Australian Energy Regulator in accordance with the dispute resolution provisions in Part G of Chapter 5A .

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction.

Ausgrid values customer feedback. We are grateful if you take the time to let us know how you are feeling as a customer of Ausgrid. We take pride in our customer service and welcome feedback and the chance to improve. We know that things go wrong and we won't always get it right, but if you take the time to contact us, our aim is to restore your faith in us by managing and resolving your concerns efficiently, effectively and with respect.

Electricity Emergencies

If your concern relates to reporting or inquiring about loss of supply, fallen wires and other emergencies, there is no need to use this procedure, please call the Ausgrid emergency number 13 13 88.

How to make a complaint or raise a dispute with Ausgrid

You can lodge an enquiry or complaint:

- electronically via our website at www.ausgrid.com.au/customercomplaints
- by telephone on 13 13 65
- in writing to GPO Box 4009, Sydney 2001.

Special Assistance

Ausgrid offers a language interpreter assistance service to cater for customers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and the use of a TTY (teletypewriter) service for hearing impaired customers.

- Telephone Interpreter Services: 131 450
- TTY enquiries: 1800 000 567

This complaints procedure can be translated or provided in Braille or audiotape upon request.

What types of complaints does this procedure apply to?

A complaint can be raised by a customer to whom this procedure applies about any aspect of Ausgrids' customer connection services and its related activities under the energy laws.

Complaints relating to the sale of electricity by your retailer eg. electricity bill complaints, should be directed to your Retailer. Ausgrid can provide the contact details for your Retailer and we will assist your Retailer in investigating your complaint by providing any requested and relevant Ausgrid documentation within 10 business days of receiving the request.

Acknowledging and recording your complaint

Telephone complaints

If you raise a complaint by telephoning the Ausgrid Contact Centre, you will be asked to provide your contact details including your name, telephone number and address. If your property or business is located within the Ausgrid network supply area, there will be a connection contract with Ausgrid. You will need to provide Ausgrid with your address or your National Market Identifier (NMI) (located on your electricity invoice), and using these details we can access your connection contract and record your complaint. Each complaint is allocated with a unique identifier code and is stored under your individual NMI details. Whilst we will try to resolve every issue you raise during your first telephone call, for more complex problems your matter may be referred to the operational area responsible for resolving your concerns.

If you do not have a connection with Ausgrid, or where you wish to register a complaint anonymously, Ausgrid will record the details of your complaint and provide you with the unique identifier code so that you can remain informed of the progress of your complaint. Your privacy is protected at all times throughout the investigation.

Electronic complaints

If you submit an electronic complaint you will receive an automated acknowledgement. Your matter will be referred to the appropriate operational area and an Ausgrid representative

will contact you to discuss your matter within 5 business days.

Written complaints

If you post your complaint to us please include your telephone details to allow for expeditious contact, and any documentation supporting your complaint. We will process your complaint through our mail delivery systems to the relevant operational area within 3 business days. We will then telephone you to acknowledge your complaint within a further 2 business days. If you do not have a telephone number we will post an acknowledgement to you within 2 business days. The details of your complaint will be recorded under your NMI details.

Investigating your complaint

Ausgrid's Customer Contact System allows us to record enquiries, complaints and disputes under your NMI details. Upon receiving your complaint, Ausgrid will conduct an initial assessment of criteria including:

- severity,
- safety implications,
- complexity and
- urgency for immediate action.

Information for you to provide

It is important that you identify if you believe that your complaint meets any of the above criteria, and include any documentation including receipts that support your complaint – particularly if you believe that you are entitled to compensation. Our Customer Contact System tracks the progress of a complaint and allows us to scan and save any supporting documentation in the system. We will make a copy of any relevant original documentation that you provide and arrange for the original documents to be sent back to you. It is important that you bring any complaint to Ausgrid as soon after the event as possible. Any complaint relating to an event over 12 months old will be difficult to investigate and resolve.

The process of handling complaints

Ausgrid strictly adheres to the privacy laws and our Privacy Policy and since the details of your complaint are stored under your connection

contract, only the account holder can ring Ausgrid at any time to get a progress update.

Our system also records the Ausgrid officer who is investigating your complaint and as our investigation progresses, we will keep you informed by either telephoning you or writing to you every 10 business days. We will make every endeavour to resolve your complaint within 28 business days of receiving it, however for more complex complaints we will contact you to explain why the investigation requires more time to be resolved. We will record the investigation into the relevant circumstances and information surrounding your complaint.

At the conclusion of our investigation we will contact you by telephone or in writing to explain our findings and any actions we have or intend to take. If we contact you by telephone, you may request a written summary of our investigation and our findings during that discussion. If you are satisfied with the outcome of our investigation we will record your complaint as being resolved and close it in our system.

Escalating a complaint and asking for an internal review

If you are not satisfied at the conclusion of your complaint investigation, you can ask Ausgrid to conduct an internal review. Your complaint will be upgraded to a dispute and escalated to a specialised dispute review team. They will conduct a review of Ausgrid's investigation and contact you to discuss their findings. If you are still not happy with Ausgrid's findings, the Ausgrid investigations officer will be able to advise you of which external agencies have the jurisdiction to independently investigate your dispute.

Accessing complaint investigation information

You can request a copy of any information Ausgrid has referred to during the investigation of your complaint. With the exception of commercially sensitive, legally privileged information or where onerous amounts of information is requested, Ausgrid will provide you with copies of any relevant information within 28 business days of your request. Where the amount

of information requested is onerous or where there are difficulties in providing you with the requested information, Ausgrid will provide you with a written response and may advise you to submit a formal request for the information.

Analysis and Continual Improvement

We are required to report on de-identified complaint statistics and we use our enquiry and complaint information to review and improve our connection and customer services.

Ausgrid's complaints management team consists of senior representatives from each operational area responsible for complaint resolution. Through monthly reporting, they track the progress of the complaints within their responsible area with particular focus on systemic trends, underlying causes of complaints, the time taken to resolve complaints, and the outcomes of complaints. These results are then submitted to Ausgrid's top management for review.

Ausgrid conducts regular reviews of its complaint handling processes with the evaluation focusing on:

- continual improvement to the process in terms of investigation timings, resolution outcomes, volumes of escalations, volumes of external investigations and overall customer feedback to achieve industry best practice;
- identifying and addressing systemic complaint trending to improve our customer experience;
- compliance with Australian and International complaint handling standards and customer satisfaction AS/NZS 10002:2014

Training

Ausgrid is committed to training staff in the area of complaints and enquiry handling. We recognise a customer's right to complain and the value to Ausgrid in using that feedback to continuously improve our customer services.

Our staff receive an extensive induction program with training in our systems, policies and procedures. Customer feedback and complaint trending is used to identify further opportunities for training and skill development across the organisation.

We will act with courtesy and respect at all times and offer a customer service that is timely, efficient, accurate and understandable.

Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON)

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) is the government approved independent dispute resolution scheme for New South Wales electricity customers. Customers can contact EWON at any point to get independent advice and information.

Ausgrid takes customer concerns and complaints seriously and will endeavour to resolve complaints directly with our customers. If you are not completely satisfied with our response, you may contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON).

Your complaint must relate to Ausgrid's electricity distribution, connection or supply services and must fall within EWON's jurisdiction. EWON can be contacted on FREECALL 1800246545, by writing to Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234 or electronically at www.ewon.com.au.

Australian Energy Regulator (AER) Access Dispute

If you are establishing a new or altered connection to Ausgrid's network and you have a dispute regarding any of the following matters then the matter may be referred to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) for determination as an access dispute under the National Electricity Rules:

- (1) The terms and conditions upon which Ausgrid has offered to provide a basic or standard connection service;
- (2) The terms and conditions of a negotiated connection contract;
- (3) The connection charges payable by a customer in relation to the new or altered connection.

The AER can be contacted on 1300 585 165 or via email AERInquiry@aer.gov.au.

NSW Fair Trading

If your dispute concerns contestable connection services that Ausgrid has performed, your dispute can be investigated by the Office of Fair Trading. They can be contacted on 133 220 or visit their website at www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au.

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