



**arcenergy**  
GROUP

Dispute resolution

# Complaints handling process

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[www.arcenergygroup.com.au](http://www.arcenergygroup.com.au)

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## 1 - Introduction

This is a summary of our dispute resolution process for customers. It outlines how we handle complaints, and is intended especially for our past, current and prospective customers, our own staff and other interested parties.

## 2 - Our complaints goal

As our customer or former customer, you have the right to make a complaint. Our goal is to keep our customers satisfied, and that means as few complaints as possible, and that any complaints that do arise are dealt with openly, fairly and promptly. To support that goal, our complaints process is approved by our Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent), who is responsible for ensuring its implementation, operation and compliance in accordance with Energy Retail Law and Rules and Regulations. In dealing with you about complaints, we will use everyday language.

## 3 - Contact details

A complete list of contact details referenced in this summary appears at the end of it, in the 'Details Table'.

## 4 - Resolving complaints

A complaint is resolved when it is brought to a conclusion in accordance with AER Laws, Regulations and Guidelines (whether or not in your favour). When we propose a 'resolution' to you, we are suggesting how to solve your complaint. We aren't required to action that proposed resolution unless and until you accept it. If you do accept our proposed resolution, we are allowed a period of time to action it – see below. When your complaint is resolved, we must advise you accordingly.

## 5 - Actioning a resolution

We will action an agreed resolution within ten working days unless:

(a) we agree otherwise with you;

or (b) you have not done something that is necessary for us to do our part.

## 6 - Accessing our complaints process

### 6.1 Customer care

You can call our Customer Care number – see below. This is a free, or low cost, number if you call it using a service we provide to you.

### 6.2 Making a complaint

You can make a complaint by letter, telephone, fax, online or email. The numbers and addresses are in the Details Table. If we sell through stores, you can make a complaint at a store, in person.

### 6.3 If you need assistance

We will assist you to formulate, lodge and progress a complaint if you need help, especially including because of disability, hardship and difficulties with English. Just let our Customer Care staff know you want help and, if you can't tell us in that way:

- write or email your request to an address in the Details Table; or
- contact us through your Authorised Representative or Advocate;
- Authorised Representatives and Advocates

*An 'Authorised Representative' is a person you have appointed and delegated to deal with us, on your behalf, with some authority over your account. An 'Advocate' is a person you have appointed to deal with us, on your behalf, but without any authority over your account. You can make a complaint through an Authorised Representative or an Advocate.*

## 7 - Response times

While we will strive to solve your complaint as soon as practicable, we are committed to certain maximum response times.

### 7.1 Acknowledgment

(a) If you make a complaint in person or by telephone to a 'live' staff member, we will acknowledge it immediately.

(b) If you make a complaint by email, or through our website or another customer service website we approve, or by paper post, or by a telephone message recording system, we will acknowledge it within two working days.

(c) When we acknowledge your complaint, we will give you:

- a unique Case Reference that you can use to identify the complaint in later contacts with us;
- an indicative timeframe to resolve the complaint; and
- Information on how to obtain this Complaint Handling Process summary.

### 7.2 First contact resolution

Whenever possible, we will strive to resolve your complaint on first contact.

### 7.3 Proposing a resolution

If we do not believe we can resolve your complaint within 15 working days (or two working days for an urgent complaint) we will advise you within those periods:

(a) why there is a delay;

(b) the timeframe that will apply; and

(c) if we expect resolution to require more than 9 more working days, of your options for external dispute resolution (except if the delay is because of a declared mass service disruption). Otherwise, we will propose a resolution within 15 working days (or two working days for an urgent complaint).

## 8 Dealing with you and your complaint

### 8.1 Standards

Your complaint must be resolved objectively, efficiently and fairly and our staff must treat you courteously.

### 8.2 Internal investigations

- (a) We may resolve a complaint on goodwill or commercial grounds, without a detailed investigation.
- (b) Otherwise, we will investigate your complaint in a way that is proportionate to its seriousness.

### 8.3 Internal prioritisation

We are flexible in the way we prioritise complaint processing, because special circumstances can apply. But in normal circumstances:

- (a) Urgent complaints have highest priority.
- (b) Complaints involving services to customers with significant health problems, or the care of young children or who are in remote locations or who are aged are prioritised next.
- (c) Complaints that are approaching, or have exceeded maximum response times are prioritised next. We can often only know about these, or other important factors, if you tell us. You can alert us by any of the contact channels through which you can lodge a complaint.

### 8.4 Internal escalation

- (a) We have an internal escalation process, and your complaint will be escalated and managed accordingly if you request it.
- (b) For your information, internal escalation and management may not accelerate resolution if the complaint is not urgent and its processing already meets the applicable standards and is within the permitted maximum response time/s.
- (c) A complaint will be automatically escalated if:
  - a maximum response time has been exceeded;
  - it becomes urgent (see paragraph 9);
  - you notify us of another factor that increases the seriousness of your complaint or the need for expedited resolution.
- (d) You can request escalation through any of the contact channels through which you can lodge a complaint.
- (e) If a Complainant is not satisfied with Arc Energy's response or investigation about a lodged complaint or wishes to seek independent advice about it, the Complainant may contact the relevant Energy Ombudsman at any time for assistance or review of the outcome of the complaint. Refer to Section 14

### 8.5 Appropriate resolution

We will resolve your complaint appropriately and:

- (a) we ensure that our Customer Care staff are trained to understand the potential remedies available to resolve complaints;
- (b) any remedy we offer will be tailored to the root cause of the complaint, and to your circumstances (if you have told us about them);
- (c) our Customer Care staff and management will monitor complaints to assess if they indicate wider issues, and, if so, address the root cause;
- (d) we will resolve billing errors in current bills.

## 8.6 Advising you of resolution

As soon as practicable after we finish investigating your complaint, we will advise you of the resolution.

## 8.7 Credit management action suspended

We will not take credit management action over a disputed amount if you have made a complaint and we know: (a) it has not been resolved to your satisfaction; and (b) it is being investigated by us or the Ombudsman or some other recognised third party.

## 8.8 Legal action delayed

We will not start legal proceedings over a matter that has been subject to a complaint: (a) while we are handling the complaint internally; or (b) within seven working days after we advise you of the outcome of the complaint.

# 9 - Urgent complaints

## 9.1 When we treat a complaint as urgent

A complaint you make is treated as urgent if:

- you have applied for or have been accepted as being in financial hardship under our Financial Hardship Policy and the subject matter of your complaint can reasonably be presumed to directly contribute to or aggravate your financial hardship; or
- disconnection of a service is imminent or has occurred and where due process has not been followed; or
- you are a Priority Assistance Customer (under the Priority Assistance for Life Threatening Medical Conditions Code) and the complaint relates to the service for which you receive Priority Assistance. Our Customer Care staff is trained to watch for these factors and must flag a complaint as urgent if any of them are seen to apply. After that, the complaint will be managed under paragraph 9.2.

## 9.2 How urgent complaints are treated differently

Within two working days of acknowledging your urgent complaint, we will either propose a resolution or advise you why there will be a delay and how long it is likely to be. If you accept a resolution that we propose, we will action the urgent aspects of it within those two working days if possible.

# 10 - Delays

We will advise you of any delays to promised timeframes.

# 11 - Monitoring the progress of your complaint

You can monitor the progress of your complaint by calling Customer Care and quoting your Case Reference.

# 12 - Closing your complaint

We only close a complaint if you agree to.

# 13 - Consumer focus

We strive to keep our Complaints process easy to use and focused on you. Please let us know how we're doing. You can leave feedback:

- with the Customer Care staff who assist you;
- or with their supervisor – just ask to be transferred;
- or by any of the contact numbers and addresses in the Details Table.

## 14 - External dispute resolution

### 14.1 Options

We have an easy and accessible complaints process in place should something go wrong.

Please note that for our NSW customers, you also always have the option to contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) at any time for independent advice and assistance.

*EWON's contact details are below.*

#### **Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW**

**Freecall** 1800 246 545

**Freefax** 1800 812 291

**Post** Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234

**Email** [complaints@ewon.com.au](mailto:complaints@ewon.com.au)

**On-line Complaint** [www.ewon.com.au/complaints](http://www.ewon.com.au/complaints)

**Website** [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)

#### **Energy & Water Ombudsman VIC**

Freecall 1800 500 509

Post Reply Paid 469, Melbourne VIC 8060

Email [ewovinfo@ewov.com.au](mailto:ewovinfo@ewov.com.au)

Website [www.ewov.com.au](http://www.ewov.com.au)

#### **Energy & Water Ombudsman QLD**

Freecall 1800 662 837

Email [complaints@ewoq.com.au](mailto:complaints@ewoq.com.au)

Website [www.ewoq.com.au](http://www.ewoq.com.au)

#### **Energy & Water Ombudsman SA**

Freecall 1800 665 565

Post GPO Box 2947 Adelaide SA 5001

Website [www.ewosa.com.au](http://www.ewosa.com.au)

#### **Australian Capital Territory Civil & Administrative Tribunal**

Call 02 62071740

Email [tribunal@act.gov.au](mailto:tribunal@act.gov.au)

Website [www.acat.act.gov.au](http://www.acat.act.gov.au)

The following external dispute resolution bodies may be able to assist with your complaint, but may require that you first attempt to resolve it directly with us:

- For Australian Consumer Law matters, the **Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC)** – [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au);
- for privacy issues, the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)** – [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

### 14.2 Limit on cancelling service

If:

- you make a complaint; and
- it hasn't been resolved with us; and
- you pursue external dispute resolution – We must not cancel your service for those reasons alone.

Customer Care phone: 1300 025 965 9am – 5pm Mon-Fri

Customer Care email: [info@arcenergygroup.com.au](mailto:info@arcenergygroup.com.au)

Customer Care online: [arcenergygroup.com.au](http://arcenergygroup.com.au)

Customer Care postal :PO Box 91, Flinders Lane, Melbourne VIC 8009



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