

Complaint Handling Policy – Western Plains App

The Western Plains App commits to the right of our readers to make complaints about our news and sports stories, opinion pieces (blogs) or any photo/images published in our mobile news app and associated website.

We want to deal with your complaints in a positive, respectful and constructive manner that will ensure your complaint is heard and acknowledged with a suitable outcome.

We value your feedback and are fully committed to adhering to our [Editorial Guideline Policies](#) outlined on this website.

We aim to resolve complaints in a fair, timely and efficient manner.

What can be complained about

Complaints may relate to news reports, articles, editorials, letters, cartoons, images, advertising and other published material.

What is the complaint process?

When a complaint is received, the Western Plains App will seek to deal with it as quickly as possible. We aim to respond within 07 days of receipt of the complaint and to resolve the matters as swiftly as practicable, although some complex matters may take longer to resolve.

Response to complaints will be determined by the seriousness of the matter, the likelihood of harm to a person or persons, the potential to mislead, the degree of risk to the public and the genuine risk to reputation.

To meet the requirement of fairness to all parties in complaint handling, any staff who may be adversely affected by the outcome of the investigation must have the opportunity to be heard during the investigation and appropriately informed of the outcome.

The Western Plains App reserves the right to determine, implement and record any remedy arising from a complaint investigation.

The Western Plains App may choose not to continue dealing with a complaint when the complaint does not refer to a specific item of content from our newspaper or website; when the complaint concerns content which is or becomes the subject of legal proceedings; where the complainant does not have a sufficient interest in the subject matter of the complaint, or where the complaint is frivolous or vexatious or not made in good faith. In such cases, the Western Plains App reserves the right to terminate all correspondence. The complainant will be advised of this decision in writing.

A complaint is resolved when the Western Plains App has taken all fair and reasonable steps to address the cause of the complaint. Responses to a complaint of substance will be finalised with the complainant in written form.

Fundamental principles

The Western Plains App complaint handling policy observes five fundamental principles:

1. Fairness
2. Accessibility
3. Responsiveness
4. Efficiency
5. Integration

1. Fairness:

A complainant must be treated fairly, which will be achieved through impartiality, confidentiality and transparency.

1.1 Complaint handling staff should not be defensive when dealing with complainants.

1.2 A complainant should not be obliged to prove they are right or the Western Plains App is wrong.

1.3 A complaint should be treated on its merits, with an open mind and without prejudice arising from any previous contact between the complainant and the Western Plains App.

1.4 Clients have a right to expect that their privacy will be respected and their complaint will be investigated in private.

1.5 A complainant is entitled to know how a complaint will be handled and the outcome of the investigation.

2. Accessibility:

The complaint handling system should be accessible to the public.

2.1 The Western Plains App will publicise how the public may lodge a complaint.

2.2 Readers and subscribers should be given a range of contact options. At a minimum, this means a telephone number, an email address and a postal address.

3. Responsiveness:

The complaint handling system must be responsive to the needs of all complainants.

This requires proper training of staff and adequate resources. Some complainants can be difficult to deal with. Among the common problems are rude or aggressive conduct, obstinacy in communicating with complaint handling staff, exaggeration or dishonesty in explaining a complaint, unreasonable persistence with a complaint that has been

investigated or closed; and demands that are unrealistic or disproportionate. It is the responsibility of the Western Plains App to act professionally when dealing with such problems. Staff must be given clear guidance and training in dealing with unreasonable complainant behaviour.

4. Efficiency:

The complaint handling system should be efficient. Our guiding principle is that complaints should be handled in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the matter being complained about. All complaints, simple or complex, should receive continuing attention and be resolved as quickly as possible. This will help ensure that clients are satisfied and have confidence in the Western Plains App.

5. Integration:

Complaint handling must be integrated within the Western Plains App' core business activities. This can result in the following business benefits:

5.1 Information from complaints can be used to identify weaknesses and lead to improvements.

5.2 If Managers keep informed about complaints and how they are resolved, they will be able to keep an eye on all aspects of operations.

6. Lodging a complaint

6.1 All complaints should be addressed to and directed to the Editor in the first instance.

The Western Plains App print edition incorporates contact details and the website features a Contact Us button.

People may submit a complaint about published content in the following ways:

- Via email to the Editor: editor@WesternPlainsApp.com.au
- In writing to the Western Plains App postal address:
 - PO Box 18, COONAMBLE, NSW, 2829.
- Via the Contact Us button on www.westernplainsapp.com.au