



## DPS Feedback Policy

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### Introduction

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) supports the functions of the Australian Parliament and the work of parliamentarians through the provision of professional services, advice and facilities, and the ongoing maintenance of Australian Parliament House; and makes the building, and the important activity that takes place within it, accessible.

Working in collaboration with the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives, DPS provides, or facilitates the following:

- library and research services
- information and communication technology services
- security services
- building, grounds and heritage management services
- audio visual and Hansard services
- art services
- visitor services
- food and beverage, retail, health, banking, and childcare services

- corporate, administrative and strategic services for DPS.

In providing these services DPS acts in accordance with the *Parliamentary Service Values* and other requirements of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, the *Parliamentary Library's Statement of Client Services* and the *ICT Strategic Plan 2013-2018*.

Feedback enables DPS to recognise and cater to the changing needs of its clients, and continually to improve its services. Through listening to and acting on feedback, DPS strives to make things right for clients whose needs have not been met.

Feedback also provides the opportunity to recognise staff members who are providing excellent service.

To enable continued improvement and to respond to changing needs, DPS welcomes client feedback on any aspect of DPS services and products, including those provided by third parties under contract.

### **Background**

The policy has been informed by the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling (2009). The Guide lays down five elements of effective complaint handling:

- a client-focussed culture
- a process modelled on fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and integration
- skilled and professional complaint handling staff
- a seven stage complaint handling process (acknowledgement, assessment, planning, investigation, response, review and consideration of systemic issues), and
- analysis of complaints as part of continuous organisational review.

### **Application of this policy**

'Feedback' received in relation to DPS services or products include:

- compliments – an expression of praise, admiration or congratulation in relation to a DPS service
- complaints – an expression of dissatisfaction or unmet expectation, or
- suggestions – a comment about our services or facilities.

Feedback will not include day-to-day internal DPS interaction on operational issues such as a broken web links, signage relocation or drafting of documents. Feedback is also distinct from normal incident and service management processes, for example, ICT service desk and progress recording (which is logged into HP Service 7 [SM7] system).

The DPS Feedback policy is designed to complement the existing Parliamentary Library feedback policy and the drafting of this policy has been informed by the Parliamentary Library's policy. Library staff follow the Parliamentary Library feedback policy.

This policy does not apply to feedback from DPS staff on employment-related issues or to disclosures under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (PID Act). DPS staff with feedback on employment-related issues should refer to HR Services for further assistance. Public officials (including current and former DPS staff and current and former contractors) who wish to make a disclosure about suspected wrongdoing in DPS under the PID Act may send disclosures to [dps.pid@aph.gov.au](mailto:dps.pid@aph.gov.au).

### **Purpose**

This policy identifies the principles and process that DPS has developed for the management of feedback.

For the purposes of this policy, DPS 'clients' are parliamentarians and their staff, staff of the Department of the Senate, the Department of the House of Representatives, the Parliamentary Budget Office, visitors, and other building occupants.

DPS' internal audiences include:

- the Presiding Officers
- parliamentarians and their staff
- parliamentary department heads and their staff.

DPS' external audiences include:

- the public
- other government departments
- the diplomatic corps
- tourism authorities
- media.

### **DPS feedback principles**

DPS staff are dedicated to providing a high level of service delivery and are focused on continually improving the services offered. DPS commits to the following principles:

- DPS values feedback and will use it to help us improve the way that we provide services to clients.
- We will regularly provide clients with information on how to give feedback.
- We will recognise and address all complaints as soon as possible, using the process and timelines set out below at page 6.
- We will report on our feedback management performance in our annual report.
- DPS will treat all feedback in accordance with the way DPS collects and manages personal information. (see collection notice – Attachment A).

### **Forms of feedback**

Feedback will be gathered in two ways – through formal systematic methods such as surveys and 'comment cards', and through informal, unsolicited feedback.

Informal feedback may be received:

- in person (face-to-face)
- by email
- by letter
- by telephone
- via social media.

DPS can draw on a range of formal feedback mechanisms including:

- Visitor Services comment cards
- website online feedback pop-ups
- Building Occupant Satisfaction Surveys
- The Parliamentary Library's annual client service evaluation
- APH Website Virtual Visitor Surveys
- @dps newsletter reader surveys
- The DPS/APS employee census
- DPS communication focus groups.

DPS commits to promoting formal and informal feedback mechanisms to ensure all clients have the opportunity to comment on DPS client service.

### **DPS roles responsibilities and accountabilities**

All DPS staff have an important role to play in managing client feedback. DPS is committed to supporting its staff to resolve client concerns as close as possible to the point at which they were delivered.

#### *DPS executive management*

DPS executive management will create an environment where feedback is valued through:

- making management of client feedback a priority for DPS
- establishing and managing an effective, professional feedback management system
- assigning accountability for client service policy to a member of DPS senior executive (Assistant Secretary, People, Strategy & Governance), and allocating resources to that function
- identifying high-performing teams as models of good practice
- identifying feedback champions within business areas
- including feedback handling standards in business plans and service standards
- regular internal reports on the quality and timeliness of feedback management through the designated Assistant Secretary, and reporting publicly on feedback handling in annual reports and other high-level corporate documents
- using feedback information to inform program review and service delivery.

*The Assistant Secretary, People, Strategy and Governance will:*

- promote and review the client service policy
- ensure all staff responsible for feedback monitoring and response have appropriate training to fulfil their role
- co-ordinate systems supporting the intra-departmental collection, analysis and reporting of client feedback
- report quarterly to DPS branches on feedback and its management
- report annually on feedback and its management in the DPS Annual Report.

*Feedback management representatives in each business area will:*

- work with staff to promote the value of client feedback
- ensure that feedback to their business area is appropriately recorded
- contribute to the development and analysis of quarterly feedback reports for the DPS Executive.

*All DPS employees will:*

- be familiar with and responsive to the requirements of the feedback policy
- help clients provide feedback
- thank clients for bringing matters to the department's attention
- respond to systemic issues that become apparent as a result of investigation and respond to issues raised by individual complaints or feedback, and contribute to their resolution.

## Clients' responsibilities

DPS asks that clients:

- follow signs and comply with directions to ensure their safety and the comfort of visitors and building occupants
- adhere to DPS policies relating to the services provided
- respect DPS staff and all other people at Parliament House, the Parliament House environment and its treasures
- give feedback to help DPS improve its services.

## Managing client feedback

A three-tier approach is to be used, where the feedback is not a compliment:

- **First contact response:** feedback may be provided to a DPS staff member who can respond immediately.
- **Second level review and response** by a senior officer: If the issue **cannot** easily be resolved through the first contact or a review is requested, the feedback is passed to a senior officer, either a Director or Assistant Secretary for review and response.
- **Additional review and response:** If the issue cannot be easily resolved or there are policy implications, the Division Head will be responsible for communication with the individual providing feedback.

All DPS staff members are responsible for accepting feedback. Where they can, they should acknowledge it and if possible resolve any client's issue. Staff should forward details of feedback, whether or not the client's issue has been resolved, to the relevant feedback management representative within the branch.

The representative will record details of feedback, and whether or not the client's issue has been resolved, in a central register. The central register will be maintained by the Assistant Secretary, People, Strategy and Governance. The branch receiving the feedback will be accountable for investigating the issue (with the input of other business areas as required), resolving any immediate concerns, advising the client of the outcome, and addressing any systemic issues.

Clients will be provided with confirmation of receipt of their feedback within two working days and a response within 10 working days. DPS will keep parties informed of the progress and outcome of feedback (where their contact details are available and the client has elected to be contacted about outcomes).

Divisions will be responsible for monitoring the timeliness and quality of feedback management in their business area.

Feedback may be received anonymously, and as far as possible, will be treated in the same manner as other feedback, with the exception of any response being required.

## Feedback management tree

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Commitment</i>
<b>Staff</b>	Accept and record feedback; resolve client concern if possible	Report to feedback representative
<b>Branch feedback representative</b>	Investigate issue; involve other branches as required	Ensure confirmation of receipt/response. Record issue on central register

<b>Division</b>	Oversight business area feedback management	Monitor timeliness and quality of feedback management
<b>AS, PS &amp; G</b>	Maintain central feedback register; oversee feedback management	Issue quarterly reports on feedback management; report through the DPS annual report

### **Performance reporting**

Quarterly reports will be developed through the centralised feedback register and provided to the DPS Executive. Performance data will include:

- number and type of feedback received (compliment, complaint or suggestion)
- how feedback was received (written, in person, via telephone or online)
- source of feedback (visitor, parliamentarian or other building occupant)
- reason for feedback (individual and systemic)
- timeliness of acknowledgement
- timeliness of resolution (including outcome).

DPS feedback management performance will be reported in DPS's annual report.

### **Escalation of feedback**

If front line or feedback management representative staff members within a business area have been unable to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the client, the client may ask to escalate the matter to the DPS Executive.

### **Quality assurance**

DPS is committed to ensuring regular monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the feedback management process. Through this process DPS will ensure that feedback becomes part of the continuous improvement program for the services delivered.

DPS will undertake review through:

- surveying both clients and staff to gauge satisfaction levels with the feedback and complaints handling systems; and
- review data captured and report quarterly to the Executive Committee with a view to identifying any trends or problem areas.

The central register of feedback, maintained by the Assistant Secretary People, Strategy and Governance, is the key analytical tool. Reviewing major issues, and the type and frequency of feedback, will assist in improving both process and customer service – and minimising the likelihood of such issues recurring.

Approved



Rob Stefanic  
Secretary

11 April 2016

## Attachment A – Collecting and Managing Personal Information

This collection notice describes how DPS collects and manages personal information.

DPS may collect your personal information where it is reasonably necessary for or directly related to performing our functions. In particular, DPS may collect your name, email address, phone number and other contact details if you phone us, email us, submit/send an online feedback form to us or send us your information by mail or fax. In particular we may collect your personal information when you make a comment, complaint or suggestion by:

- letter
- email
- social media
- face-to-face
- online feedback form
- Australian Parliament House (APH) Website Virtual Visitor Surveys

You have the option of remaining anonymous or adopting a pseudonym, for example when using the online feedback form or the APH Website Virtual Visitor Survey. However, this may limit our ability to respond to or assist you.

The information that you provide will be used to respond to any comments, complaints or suggestions and to assist DPS in the improvement and maintenance of our services. DPS will not disclose your personal information to another person, body or agency unless:

- DPS has your consent, or
- DPS is authorised or required to do so by law, or
- it meets one of the other exceptions described in the Australian Privacy Principles.

DPS is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information and will take reasonable steps to ensure appropriate security measures are in place for the protection of any confidential personal information.

DPS also takes reasonable steps to ensure that all personal information provided to DPS is protected from misuse, loss or unauthorised access. While DPS provides a secure environment for collecting and storing personal information, persons should be aware that there are inherent risks associated with the transmission of information via email and the Internet and there is a possibility that this information could be accessed by a third party while in transit.

Further information may be found in the [disclaimer statement](#) located on the Australian Parliament House website.