

## Complaints and Appeals Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain how Venture Housing Company ("Venture") handles complaints and appeals from customers.

We value your feedback, including complaints and compliments, as it helps us improve our services.

You have the right to complain or appeal a decision without being treated unfairly.

### Scope

This policy applies to

- All current and past customers, including tenants and applicants
- People acting for a customer, such as a guardian, advocate or support person (with written consent)
- Agencies or members of the public with a legitimate connection to Venture

### Definitions

- **Complaint:** Telling us you are unhappy with a service or action we've taken and would like us to do something differently
- **Appeal:** Asking us to review a decision we've made because you think it was wrong or unfair

### Making a Complaint or Appeal

You can make a complaint or appeal:

- By phone: (08) 8981 9804
- By email: [feedback@venturehousing.org.au](mailto:feedback@venturehousing.org.au)
- By mail: PO Box 1468, Nightcliff NT 0810
- Online: [www.venturehousing.org.au](http://www.venturehousing.org.au) via the 'Contact Us' tab

We encourage you to first raise your concern with the staff member involved. If that doesn't help or you're not comfortable doing so, you can lodge a formal complaint or appeal in writing.

You should make your complaint or appeal within three (3) months of the issue or decision. Appeals can only be made by someone directly affected or authorised to act on the affected person's behalf.

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## What Can Be Complained About

Examples include:

- A service wasn't provided (e.g. a repair wasn't done)
- A staff member was rude or unhelpful
- A service was handled poorly (e.g. incorrect information, poor communication)

## The right to reasonable peace and privacy of another person

Under the *Residential Tenancy Act (Northern Territory) (Act)*, people living in the Territory have the right to the 'reasonable peace and privacy of another person'.

Venture accepts complaints in circumstances where Venture is the landlord and where there are behaviors that constitute a 'nuisance' or 'repeated interference' with the 'reasonable peace and privacy of another person'. This includes neighbors and people who live close to tenants.

Venture will only accept these complaints in the form requested by Venture. These forms are available by contacting Venture.

Where a tenant breaches the Residential Tenancy Act (Act), Venture can act by way of notice of formal breaches and steps towards seeking an order of the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT).

Under the Act, an interested person who has been adversely affected by the conduct described can also apply to NTCAT. This may include neighbors and people living close to tenants. This means the complainant who submits a complaint to Venture can also apply to NTCAT directly as an interested person.

Due to privacy obligations, Venture will not disclose what steps it takes in relation to complaints made under this section. Venture commits to take action consistent with our obligations and responsibilities under the Act for all complaints made in the requested form.

## What Can't Be Complained About

- Rent charges, eligibility decisions, or allocation of housing
- Legal decisions made by the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT)

## What Can Be Appealed

If you are not happy with how your complaint was handled or the outcome, you can ask Venture to review the outcome or how the decision was made. This review is also called an appeal.

Examples include:

- A decision that didn't follow policy or consider all your circumstances
- A decision you believe was unfair, biased, or incorrect

- Specific tenancy decisions (e.g. ending a lease, refusing a property modification)

## What Can't Be Appealed

- Most decisions over 3 months old
- Rent increases or decreases
- Property sales or leasing decisions
- Legal decisions or those made by NTCAT

## How We Handle Complaints and Appeals

1. **Acknowledgement:** We will confirm we received your complaint or appeal within 2 business days
2. **Investigation:** The relevant Manager will review your concern. If your complaint or appeal involves a Manager or Executive, it will be handled by the CEO.
3. **Response:** We'll aim to send you a written response within 21 days. If more time is needed, we'll let you know why and when you can expect an outcome
4. **Outcome:** We'll explain what we found and what we'll do. You might receive:
  - An apology
  - An explanation
  - An assurance about further actions
  - Information about a change to our service

## Escalation

If you're not satisfied with the result:

- The complaint or appeal will be reviewed by someone in a more senior position at Venture
- You can contact external bodies. These include:
  - NTCAT – 1800 604 622
  - NT Registrar for Community Housing – [www.nrsch.gov.au](http://www.nrsch.gov.au)
  - Darwin Community Legal Services (for tenant advice)
  - North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)

## Unreasonable or Vexatious Conduct

We understand complaints can come from stress and frustration but some behaviors can be harmful or disruptive. These include:

- Constantly repeating the same issue
- Demanding unreasonable outcomes
- Refusing to cooperate with the process
- Aggressive, threatening or abusive behaviour

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If this happens, we may:

- Limit who you speak to or how often you contact us
- Set specific times or formats for communication
- In serious cases, restrict your contact with us or involve police

## Privacy and Support

We handle all complaints and appeals confidentially.

You can bring a support person or advocate at any stage.

## Authorization

The CEO is authorized to approve the forms for the 'right to reasonable peace and privacy of another person'.

## Endorsement

Board Chair

*Fran Kilgariff*

## Version Control

Approved by	Fran Kilgariff
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