

Fact sheet FS3003

# Dealing with disturbance complaints: guide for venues

Managing complaints effectively is important to building good relationships between a licensed venue, its patrons and the community. Complaints can provide useful feedback, and help you improve your business.

This fact sheet gives some guidance on how to establish open, accessible communication with your neighbours. If you can resolve disturbance issues early, at a local level, you may be able to avoid them escalating to mediation or a formal complaints process.

## Establish your own complaint-handling process

- ▲ Have a dedicated staff member available to talk to residents about their complaints or disturbance concerns.
- ▲ Set up a dedicated hotline, or provide a dedicated mobile phone number for your duty manager.
- ▲ Prominently display information about the complaints process – including contact details – in the venue and on your venue’s website.
- ▲ Initiate community meetings to discuss any disturbance issues.

## Be proactive

- ▲ Actively participate in your [local liquor accord](#) so you can contribute to broader strategies.
- ▲ Implement effective techniques to deal with antisocial behaviour from patrons leaving the premises.
- ▲ Assess your venue’s building design, and identify opportunities for modification that will future-proof against residential complaints.
- ▲ Contact your local Council or revisit your development consent to make sure you’re complying with all noise conditions imposed.

## Follow best practice

- ▲ Industry peak bodies such as ClubsNSW, AHA (NSW), and Restaurant and Catering NSW can assist licensed venues establish best-practice complaints-handling processes for their business.
- ▲ You can also refer to the [Australian/New Zealand Standard – Guidelines for complaint management in organisations \(AS/NZS 10002:2014\)](#), which identifies the key features of best-practice complaints handling.

## Be considerate

Noise – including loud music, or how patrons behave in your venue and as they enter or leave your venue – can have a big effect on the neighbourhood and seriously damage goodwill towards your venue. Small changes can make a difference.

- ▲ Self-assess – observe noise levels at your venue both inside and outside, and consider what your neighbours have to deal with.
- ▲ Turn down the amplified music on your PA system.
- ▲ Close the doors or windows facing residential areas.
- ▲ Obtain an acoustic test.


## Let your neighbours know there’s information for them at L&GNSW

It’s important that residents and businesses are aware of different ways they can address disturbance issues. We have also developed a fact sheet, FS3005 ‘Resolving neighbourhood disturbance concerns: guide for residents’ available at [liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au](#), to let them know how to deal with their disturbance concerns, including letting them know that the simplest and most straightforward way to deal with a disturbance concern is to contact the venue directly. The formal complaints process is also available to them if they can’t resolve the issue with you through direct contact.

### For further information


#### Liquor & Gaming NSW

 [liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au](https://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au)

 1300 024 720


 [complaints.lgnsw@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:complaints.lgnsw@justice.nsw.gov.au)

#### ClubsNSW

 02 9268 3000

 [enquiries@clubsnsw.com.au](mailto:enquiries@clubsnsw.com.au)

#### AHA (NSW)

 02 9281 6922


 [enquiries@ahansw.com.au](mailto:enquiries@ahansw.com.au)

#### Liquor Stores Association NSW

 02 8335 3200

 [info@lsansw.com.au](mailto:info@lsansw.com.au)

#### Restaurant Catering NSW

 1300 722 878

 [restncat@restaurantcater.asn.au](mailto:restncat@restaurantcater.asn.au)