



www.complaintline.com.au

NATIONAL COMPLAINTS SITE GIVES CUSTOMERS MORE POWER

An innovative new website gives all Australians quick access to specialist complaints handling bodies and to codes of practice that underpin their customer rights.

Developer of www.complaintline.com.au, Karen Chalmers-Scott, says there are dozens of specialist bodies across Australia which can help customers who haven't been able to resolve a problem with a service provider or trader.

"The hard part, until now, has been knowing who to contact (and how) when you're at the end of your tether and you need help.

"The new website is a free, online, up-to-date directory that puts this important information right at customers' fingertips and in many cases gives them the link to lodge their complaint then and there," Ms Chalmers-Scott said.

"It goes even further and gives customers direct links to the industry codes of practice that set out their rights.

The idea for the website grew out of Ms Chalmers-Scott's practical experience in customer service delivery and policy development in a range of environments, including as General Manager Customer Affairs for Victoria's Office of the Regulator-General and as Customer Advocate for Bank of Melbourne.

Ms Chalmers-Scott said for some years the Federal Government had been encouraging industry and its own departments to develop codes of practice and customer charters, and many had done so.

"For most customers, the problem is not knowing where to find the industry complaints handling information or code of practice when you need it.

"People have no chance of asserting their rights when they can't even easily get their hands on the rules.

"The Complaintline website helps tip the information imbalance by giving customers direct links to documents that contain the rules.

"There is a Code of Banking Practice, for example, but few customers know about it and even fewer know where to find a copy.

"Any business that gives customers credit must comply with the National Consumer Credit Code. Industry codes also apply to direct marketing, electricity, gas and telephone companies, internet service providers, advertising and the list goes on.

"By logging on to www.complaintline.com.au and making a couple of quick selections, customers can get in touch with over 200 dispute resolution agencies in 90 plus categories of complaint. They can also access over 35 codes of practice across a range of industries. More categories, links and codes are planned.

"Early reaction to the site has been excellent, with customers and complaints agencies alike appreciating the ease of using it and the value of the information and links it provides."

For further information:
Karen Chalmers-Scott 0414 485 155
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