

# Customer complaints

## For the love of the company

# Auckland's Watercare

## OUR MISSION

Reliable,  
safe and  
efficient water  
and wastewater  
services

## OUR VISION

Trusted by our  
communities for  
exceptional performance  
every day

*Better tomorrow than we are today  
Pai ake apōpō atu i tēnei rā*

- Water & wastewater service provider to 1.5m Aucklanders
- 450,000 customers
- 940 staff
- NZ\$10b assets, further NZ\$5b of capital expenditure over the next decade
- Annual revenue NZ\$640m
- Established in 1992 as wholesaler, full retail service provider since 2010



# Utilities Disputes

- Not-for-profit, free, and independent
- Established in 2001
- Complaints about electricity, gas, broadband property access, and water
- 5,528 cases in 2017-18
- We aim to prevent, educate, and resolve
- Support organisations with their relationships



# What our customers expect

- **Make it easy and simple for me to engage and interact with you across my preferred communication channels;**
- **If I'm struggling to pay on time, help me with simple options to pay;**
- **Show empathy with my problems and resolve them as quickly as possible;**
- **When I have to interact with you provide me with effortless experiences;**
- **Tell me how you're helping my community be healthy and prosperous;**
- **I want to trust the quality of the water you provide.**



# How do we know this?

## Because they tell us . . .

- Customer journey co-design
- NPS
- Media analysis
- Call listening
- Complaints



# Why customer complaints are a gift

- 96% of unhappy customers don't complain, however 91% of those will simply leave and never come back
- A dissatisfied customer will tell between 9-15 people about their experience. Around 13% of dissatisfied customers tell more than 20 people.
- Happy customers who get their issue resolved tell about 4-6 people about their experience.
- Dissatisfied customers whose complaints are taken care of are more likely to remain loyal, and even become advocates, as those that are 'just' customers.
- A customer is 4 times more likely to defect to a competitor if the problem is service related than price or product related
- It costs 6 – 7 times more to acquire a new customer than retain an existing one
- A 2% increase in customer retention has the same effect as decreasing costs by 10%.
- Only 1 in 25 unhappy customers complain directly to you.



# The silver lining



Someone cares enough to highlight a problem and give you a chance to fix it.

When handled well, customers who complain can turn into loyal customers  
and even brand advocates.

# Making the best of every complaint





# Stay in tune to pre-empt

- Have any negative comments been made on your blog?
- Has your brand name been mentioned on Twitter?
- Do customers post messages on your Facebook brand page?
- Has anyone left a bad review on your Google My Business page?
- Are the comments made on your YouTube channels positive?
- Is your brand listed in any complaint directories or forums when you search in Google?

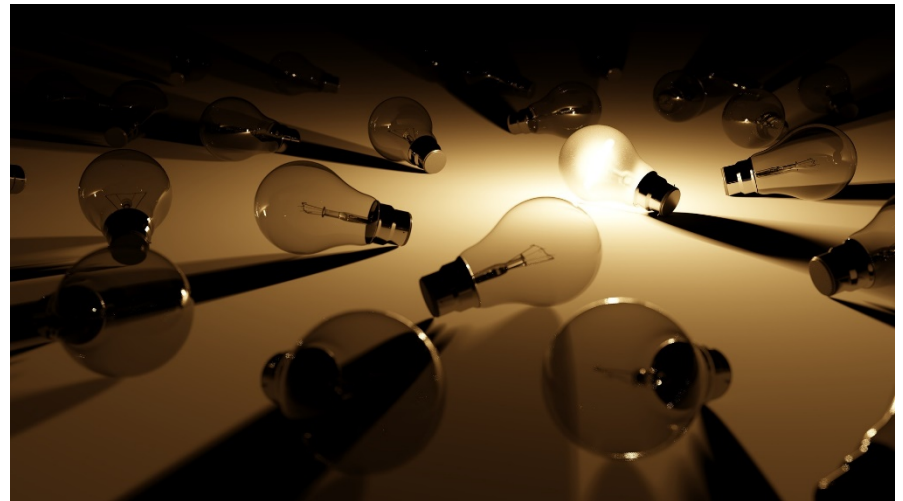


# When complaints become disputes



# An independent referee

- Watercare and Utilities Disputes created the Water Complaints Scheme in 2017
- Water users can refer unresolved complaints to Utilities Disputes for resolution
- Utilities Disputes will mediate, investigate, and make binding decisions to get the problem resolved
- Why would Watercare want a referee?
  - We are tried and tested
  - Demonstrates commitment, genuine intent to resolve problems
  - Industry leadership and self-regulation
  - Access to insights
- We encourage all water providers to join up – please contact us



# A case study



