



ALPA

Submission

NSW Complaints Register Guidelines Review.

Issues Paper

To:

Complaints Register Guidelines Review

NSW Fair Trading

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25/5/18

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ALPA General Introduction

The Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association Ltd (**ALPA**) submission is in response to the review of the NSW Fair Trading Complaints Register Guidelines (the Guidelines) aims to find out how well the Guidelines have governed the operation of the NSW Complaints Register (the Register) since its launch in August 2016. Fair Trading's findings from the review will inform changes to the Guidelines. The review is expected to be completed by 30 June 2018. Neither the publication of the Register itself, nor the section of the Fair Trading Act 1987 that underpins it are being reviewed.

We understand the review will be informed by:

- written submissions from any member of the public
- an online survey • stakeholder roundtables
- meetings with individuals and organisations with an interest in the Register
- internal research and analysis.

Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association (ALPA)

ALPA is the national peak industry body for livestock and property agents.

ALPA represents more than 1,200 agency businesses across Australia. Collectively this group plays an important role in livestock, wool, merchandise and rural property sales and marketing.

ALPA members handle in excess of 97% of rural agency business Australia wide.

ALPA is one of the largest national organisations of small rural business men and women, relied on to protect the interests of agents and producers nationally.

ALPA national membership includes Elders, Landmark, Ruralco and private livestock agencies across Australia.

ALPA appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission to the NSW Commissioner for Fair Trading.



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ALPA membership is a signature of professionalism in the industry

ALPA Comments

ALPA believes that the review is timely and we appreciate the opportunity to participate in the review process.

Information appearing on the Complaints Register

Currently the Register includes the following information:

- the name of the business and its location
- the number of complaints Fair Trading received about that business in a particular calendar month
- the product or service complained about.

1. How relevant is the information published on the Register?

ALPA believes a lot of the information is irrelevant as it relates to a business name, not an individual business.

2. What sort of improvements to the information on the Register would you suggest?

ALPA believes that only individual businesses/locations/branches, should be published and named if they have ten complaints or more, not on a collective company name. For example, a franchise can only be responsible for their own affairs not another franchise office affairs.

3. Should the Complaints Register only include data about complaints received (as opposed to outcomes)?

ALPA believes the Complaints Register should include data about complaints and the outcome.

4. Should any further information about the resolution of those complaints be included? Why?

ALPA believes the Complaints Register should include the resolution of the complaints to give consumers a better understanding of the complaint and the issues.

5. Should Fair Trading change the minimum number of complaints required before a business appears on the Register? If so, what should the number be? Why?

ALPA believes the Complaints Register should stick with the ten complaints on an individual office, not on a collective company name as mentioned earlier.

6. How often should the Register be updated (e.g. monthly, quarterly, six monthly)? Why?

ALPA believes the Complaints Register should be updated monthly so as to give consumers the latest information for them to make an informed decision.

7. How long should each edition of the Register remain published on the NSW Fair Trading website? Is the current 24 months appropriate, or should it be longer or shorter? Why?

ALPA believes that each edition of the Complaints Register should remain published for 12 months. This will give businesses the time to fix any problems and if they have, they should not be named and shamed for 24 months.

8. How well is the current policy on the grouping of franchised businesses working, including the breakdown by location? What changes would you suggest?

ALPA believes the current policy is wrong and unfair on those doing the right thing. Only individual businesses/locations/branches, should be published and named if they have ten complaints or more, not on a collective company name. For example, a franchise can only be responsible for their own affairs not another franchise office affairs, as mentioned earlier.

9. Should the same approach be taken with chains and related companies/corporate groups even if they operate under different brands? Why?

ALPA believes only individual businesses/locations/branches, should be published and named if they have ten complaints or more, not on a collective company name or other brands under a corporate owners name. For example, Coles and Woolworths have a number of different brands operating, why would you lump them all in together? By doing this, Fair Trading could kill a brand that has had no complaints at all.

10. How well has the process of notification to businesses about their imminent appearance on the Register been working? What changes would you suggest?

ALPA do not have any information to comment on this.

11. Is three working days a suitable period of notice? Should it be shorter or longer?

ALPA do not have any information to comment on this.

12. What changes, if any, do you think should be made to the published format of the Register?

ALPA believes that only individual businesses/locations/branches, should be published and named if they have ten complaints or more, not on a collective company name or other brands under a corporate owners name.

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