

Federation of Master Builders

Dispute Resolution Service – Report to CTSI

Schedule 5: 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025

Schedule 5

(a) the number of domestic disputes the ADR entity has received;

No. disputes received (domestic)	No. disputes accepted (continued to case) (domestic)
430	430

FMB staff and our website provide clear guidance on submitting disputes, helping ensure they are correctly classified as either Mediation or Membership Monitoring cases. The website offers detailed instructions and conditions to assist consumers in selecting the most appropriate route for their particular dispute. Not all disputes will meet the requirements to proceed to mediation; these will remain on file as a complaint under Membership Monitoring.

(b) the types of complaints to which the domestic disputes relate;

The disputes we handle involve building projects where the client is a domestic consumer. We accept a range of disputes, including those related to workmanship, conduct and behaviour, financial matters, health and safety, or often a combination of these issues.

(c) a description of any systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders of which the ADR entity has become aware due to its operations as an ADR entity;

Through its role as an ADR entity, the FMB has identified that the most frequent causes of disputes between consumers and traders include workmanship issues, project delays, unclear contractual terms, payment disagreements, and communication breakdowns. These problems often arise from unclear expectations or a lack of mutual understanding at the start of a project. In some cases, disputes may also result from consumers having unrealistic expectations.

- (d) any recommendations the ADR entity may have as to how the problems referred to in paragraph (c) could be avoided or resolved in future, in order to raise traders' standards and to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices;

To address these recurring issues, the FMB recommends the following steps to improve standards and reduce disputes:

- **Use of Clear Contracts:** FMB Members should ensure all agreements are detailed, covering project scope, timelines, payments, and how disputes will be resolved. The FMB provides over 700 documents in our library, in addition to FMB building contracts, free of charge to members. A dedicated Business/Legal helpline is also available for further support.
- **Better Communication:** Members should prioritise clear and consistent communication to manage expectations and address issues promptly.
- **Focus on Quality:** The FMB Code of Conduct and Rules sets out the standards members are expected to follow when dealing with clients and delivering work. Members agree to adhere to the Code on joining and renewing their membership. Members who fail to comply may be referred to the FMB Standards Committee. Ongoing training, business coaching, and e-learning are also available to help members maintain high workmanship standards.
- **Consumer Awareness:** Providing guidance to consumers on selecting builders and understanding project processes can help prevent misunderstandings.
- **Sharing Best Practice:** Creating forums for members to learn from each other and adopt proven methods supports continuous improvement across the industry.

These measures aim to raise standards, reduce disputes, and support FMB Members in delivering quality service.

- (e) the number of disputes which the ADR entity has refused to deal with, and the percentage share of the grounds set in paragraph 13 of Schedule 3 on which the ADR entity has declined to consider such disputes;

The FMB accepts all disputes for initial consideration. Each dispute is carefully assessed based on the information provided, and further details may be requested to determine how we can assist. Disputes are only declined from mediation after this assessment if they fall outside the services we can offer, such as disputes involving compensation claims, legal action, debt recovery, or matters that are purely financial. In such cases, the dispute will continue via an alternative route, either under our Membership Monitoring process or through signposting to an appropriate third party.

- (f) the percentage of alternative dispute resolution procedures which were discontinued for operational reasons and, if known, the reasons for discontinuation;

	No. discontinued	Percentage of discontinued
Discontinued for operational reasons	0	0

- (g) the average time taken to resolve domestic disputes and cross-border disputes;

	Days
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from receipt of complaint)	56
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from 'complete complaint file')	30.5

These figures highlight the efficiency and effectiveness of the FMB's dispute resolution process. They reflect our commitment to resolving disputes promptly, supporting consumers, and enabling members to maintain the highest standards. Through our structured approach, disputes are managed fairly, consistently, and with clear guidance at every stage, giving consumers and members confidence in the service we provide.