

Address public complaints to improve service delivery

ALMOST every week we read in the media views, comments or complaints from the public on services provided by government ministries, departments, agencies or local authorities.

These are the views from the grassroots, who represent the people's voice. That is why it is imperative the government and its agencies look at such complaints seriously.

Many of the views and comments are ignored or not given enough attention. These comments, complaints or suggestions do not get proper response from the relevant authorities. This should not be the case as public service includes attending to

complaints and comments.

Civil servants are the bridge between the government and the rakyat. Any weakness or shortcoming in the service delivery will give rise to negative perception towards public service.

Government agencies and authorities should not view public complaints negatively or perceive the complaints would put them in hot soup.

All ministries, government departments and agencies should look at complaints that appear in the media positively and treat them as a benchmark to gauge their service delivery.

Instead of being defensive, the authorities and agencies should consider public comments and complaints as opportunities to improve their service by reviewing their existing modus operandi.

The time has come for the authorities to genuinely accept and reply any comments and views on their services. If the complaint

is on technical aspects, correct it; if it is on the attitudes of civil servants, improve it.

Every government department should establish a dedicated unit to monitor complaints from the public that appear in the media. Pay attention to the comments, opinions and complaints expressed by the public and respond to them appropriately.

If the complaints are not genuine, explain to the public about it. If they are genuine, address the matter and let the complainant know it is being or has been resolved. This would make the rakyat feel appreciated and heard by the government.

To make the unit in charge of addressing public complaints more effective, their KPI can be linked to the frequency of response to public complaints. This is in line with the new assessment system, the "Exit Policy for Poor Performance" to be implemented on Jan 1.

By attending to public views, the accountability of the civil service will be

enhanced. What we need now — at a time when most Malaysians are well-informed, educated and capable of critical thinking — is for a transparent government and its delivery system.

In today's world, civil service can be likened to a company. If the company's customer service division is receptive and responsive towards complaints from customers and try its best to resolve any issues, the company will have a positive reputation which will help it attract more customers and increase sales.

On the other hand, if the customer service division is indifferent or hostile towards customers, the company will get bad press. Imagine the impact on the company's sales if it loses customers and worse, if the bad publicity is spread via social media.

TAN SRI LEE LAM THYE
ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER
PUBLIC COMPLAINTS BUREAU



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak talks to customers waiting for service at the National Registration Department in the Urban Transformation Centre, Pudu Sentral, on Nov 26. The writer says government departments and agencies should not view public complaints negatively. — Picture by Bernama