

# Complaints Management Policy



## Queensland Government

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### Treasury

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**Portfolio Management Group**

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### Policy Approval

<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>
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## **1 Background**

This complaints management policy aligns with the whole-of-Government priority for responsive government and is in compliance with Directive 13/06 issued by the Office of the Public Service Commissioner on 10 November 2006. The Directive was issued as an outcome of recommendations made from a complaints management project conducted by the Queensland Ombudsman that commenced in 2003, which focussed on encouraging all public sector agencies to implement effective complaints handling systems.

## **2 Scope**

The scope of this policy includes all written or verbal complaints received from all internal or external stakeholders about Treasury's service delivery, products and services.

The Treasury Complaints Management Policy applies to all Treasury staff, as well as contractors and consultants working with the public on behalf of the department.

The Treasury Complaints Management Policy does not replace or interfere with legislation or policy dealing with complaints about privacy, freedom of information, staff grievances, public interest disclosure, official misconduct or mal-administration, criminal conduct or illegality, or matters specifically dealt with through other legislative and/or appeal processes.

## **3 Policy Statement**

Queensland Treasury will ensure that complaints received are dealt with fairly, promptly and in an efficient and confidential manner, and that the complainant is aware of the complaints management process and what to expect when they lodge a complaint.

## **4 Key Principles**

Queensland Treasury's commitment to complaints management is underpinned by the following principles:

- The Under Treasurer supports and promotes a positive and constructive approach to complaints management and acknowledges its value as good business practice.
- The Treasury complaints management framework will satisfy the requirements of the Australian Standard, Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines to Complaints Handling in Organisations (AS ISO 10002-2006).
- All members of the community and Treasury staff will have easy access to information and advice about complaint management within the department, and be provided with information on avenues for review if not satisfied with the department's decision, outcome or remedy.
- Complaints will be dealt with confidentially and complainants respectfully treated having due regard to relevant legislative provisions.
- Complaints will be dealt with fairly, reasonably and in a timely manner.
- Complainants will not suffer any reprisal by the department, or officers of the department, for making a complaint.
- Complaints concerning official misconduct will be referred to the Crime and Misconduct Commission.
- Sufficient and appropriate resources will be made available for complaint management.
- The complaints management policy, and its application, will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and an appropriate tool for business improvement.

## 5 Treasury's Responsibilities

Treasury's responsibilities under the Treasury Complaints Management Policy are:

- To provide a common framework across the department to develop and review service, product, action or decision related complaint handling procedures, including the administrative decision-making processes.
- To add value by using complaints data to identify areas where the department can improve business processes and systems.
- To promote public confidence in the department by ensuring openness and transparency in handling complaints about its services, products, actions and decisions.
- To capture and analyse information on service, product, action or decision related complaints to improve service delivery to the public.
- To provide officers handling complaints with appropriate training in areas such as interviewing skills, problem solving and conflict resolution skills.

## 6 Policy

To ensure a consistent approach to complaints management across the department each portfolio office must adopt the following minimum requirements to manage complaints:

- Advice on how to lodge a complaint with the department must be available to the public at each service delivery outlet and staff work area. In addition, this information must be available on the Internet/Intranet.
- All staff, including contractors and consultants working with the public on behalf of the department, must be made aware of and have access to the complaints management policy and guidelines.
- The AUT/Executive Director of each portfolio office must nominate a designated officer/s who will be responsible for ensuring fair and reasonable management of complaints, including communication with the complainant and all administrative requirements.
- All service delivery staff shall be authorised:
  - to receive complaints about the department's services, products, actions and decisions or any failure by the department to meet its obligations to provide services, products, actions and decisions to the public; and
  - to take steps, where appropriate to do so, to resolve those complaints, or refer complaints to their supervisor for further action or as required based on office procedures.
- Complaints about oneself must be referred to a supervisor without delay.
- Complaints must be assessed on the basis of seriousness and complexity.
- Complaints may be made orally or in writing. Complainants are encouraged to submit their complaint in writing.
- Complainants who have submitted formal complaints should be advised of the outcome of consideration of their complaint and avenues for review of the department's decisions or actions.
- The AUT/Executive Director of each portfolio office should nominate an internal review officer/s who will be responsible for managing the review of outcome, decision and/or action of the department in relation to a complaint when requested by the complainant.
- Complaint files are to be kept separate from other business files and where electronic should have appropriate security measures placed against the documents.
- As part of the risk management agenda of the department, each AUT/Executive Director should consider the application of the complaints management guidelines, complaints received and actions taken, when undertaking their divisional risk management assessment and through the preparation of their business and operational plans.
- Portfolio Offices will use the high level principles and an operating framework in the Treasury Complaints Management Guidelines when developing and reviewing complaints management guidelines.

- Each AUT/Executive Director should report to the Portfolio Management Group quarterly on the application of the complaints management guidelines, complaints received and actions taken.
- Each portfolio office may further develop and/or review its complaints management guidelines to align with the minimum provisions of this whole-of-department approach in respect of front-line or customer service function, internal complaints, consideration of complaints, review and reporting.

## 7 Consequences

The consequences of not following this policy are that we would fail to comply with Directive 13/06 issued by the Office of the Public Service Commissioner. In addition, we would fail as an agency in being responsive to the needs of the public and our own staff in improving business processes.

## 8 Complaints Process

The process for managing complaints covered by this policy is detailed in the Complaints Management Guidelines.

## 9 Definitions and abbreviations

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction, orally or in writing, from a member of the public or departmental officer about a service, product, action or decision provided by the department or its staff'. A complaint may also concern a failure by the department to meet its obligations to provide services, products, actions or decisions to the public or departmental officer.
Formal complaint	A complaint where the aggrieved individual or group requests an investigation and response.
Informal complaint	A complaint where the aggrieved person or group wishes to report dissatisfaction but does not request an investigation or response. It is not necessary to record these types of complaints.
Complainant	A person or organisation making a complaint.
Service delivery staff	A person who provides services directly to the public.
Service delivery outlet	A location where direct personal contact is made with the public.

## 10 References

- Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC), Queensland (2006) [Directive on Complaints Management Systems 13/06](#)
- [Standards Australia \(2006\) AS ISO 10002-2006](#) – Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations
- The [Ombudsman's Complaints Management Fact Sheets](#)
- [Queensland Treasury Code of Conduct](#)
- Treasury Complaints Management Guidelines.