

## DPC Complaints Management Policy

### 1. Purpose

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) is committed to responding to feedback. Responding effectively and efficiently to feedback assists us to improve our services and deliver better outcomes.

### 2. Scope

Complaints managed under this policy may be about a:

- product, service or action of DPC
- DPC officer's conduct
- breach of an individual's privacy by DPC
- breach of an individual's human rights by DPC.

Note:

- Complaints which are deemed by the DPC Complaints Coordinator not to be about the above (for example, a comment on a government policy or the actions of another department) are not managed under this policy, **except** as required under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* or the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*
- Complaints received that are not managed under this policy may be referred to another agency (i.e. the relevant department, the Crime and Corruption Commission, the Queensland Ombudsman). In this case, the complainant will be notified of this referral in writing.

### 3. Our guiding principles for managing complaints

| Principles                  | This means we will...   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. People focus             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights</li> <li>• recognise and respect everybody's right to provide feedback</li> <li>• demonstrate a commitment to addressing feedback in a timely manner and without charge</li> <li>• involve the complainant in the process as far as is practicable and appropriate</li> <li>• recognize everyone's right to work in a respectful, safe and healthy workforce free from all forms of violence, harassment and discrimination</li> </ul>  |
| 2. Remedies                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attempt early, informal resolution and compromise wherever possible, at the lowest level possible (i.e. at manager level)</li> <li>• offer remedies that are fair to all parties, minimising the possibility of ongoing dispute</li> </ul>   |
| 3. Visibility and access    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure clear information is available on DPC's website about how and where to make a complaint and how complaints are managed</li> <li>• provide reasonable assistance to complainants with special needs in making complaints</li> <li>• recognise and address complaints provided anonymously, or through an authorized third party in the same manner as any other complaint</li> </ul>   |
| 4. Responsiveness           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• record, track, acknowledge and process complaints in a timely manner, in accordance with the relevant DPC complaint procedure</li> <li>• ensure that the complainant is aware of the process, timeframes, their likely involvement, the possible outcomes of the complaint and any other necessary information</li> </ul>  |
| 5. Objectivity and fairness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage complaints objectively and deal with them fairly, respectfully, consistently, in accordance with the principles of natural justice and without actual, potential or perceived conflicting interests</li> <li>• take all reasonable steps to ensure that a complainant is not adversely affected</li> <li>• protect the rights of officers where they are the subject of a complaint</li> <li>• deal with complaints confidentially to the extent possible and with personal information in accordance with the <i>Information Privacy Act 2009</i></li> <li>• refuse to investigate a complaint if it is considered to be abusive, trivial, or vexatious</li> </ul> |
| 6. Feedback                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide adequate and timely feedback on complaints to all parties</li> <li>• notify complainants of their internal and external review options</li> </ul>  |
| 7. Monitoring and reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• record and report complaints in accordance with legislative and other requirements</li> <li>• commit to using complaints as an essential tool for continuous improvement</li> </ul>  |



| Principles                | This means we will...  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 8. Resources and training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure adequate resources (including training where required) are available</li> <li>empower staff to implement DPC's complaint management system as appropriate</li> </ul> |

#### 4. Responsible Officer

The General Manager, Government Services performs the role of DPC Complaints Coordinator. This role also functions as the DPC Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator. The Deputy Director-General, Corporate and Government Services performs the role of DPC's CCC Liaison Officer. This role has direct access to the Director-General.

#### 5. How to make a complaint to DPC

For more information about how to contact us, and what information should be provided, please visit: [www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/compliments-and-complaints.aspx](http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/compliments-and-complaints.aspx)

#### 6. Our process for dealing with complaints



We will try to resolve your complaint at your first point of contact if possible, for example on the phone or in person (Step 1). Otherwise, your complaint will go through a process of assessment and resolution, and written advice will be provided to you on the outcome of your complaint (Step 2).

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint or how the complaint was handled, you may seek an internal review by a senior DPC officer (Step 3). If you are dissatisfied with the internal review you may seek an external review by an independent external review body (Step 4). The external review bodies available include the:

- Office of the Queensland Ombudsman
- Office of the Information Commissioner (for complaints about breaches of privacy)
- the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC) (for complaints about a breach of human rights under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (HR Act)).

#### 7. Our timeframes

If you make a complaint you can expect:

- your complaint to be acknowledged within 5 working days
- simple complaints (that are not of a serious nature and/or not requiring extensive investigation or consultation) to be resolved within 20 working days
- if there is going to be a delay in responding to your complaint due to complexity or the requirement of extensive investigation, to be informed why and provided regular updates on the progress of the complaint.

If your complaint relates to a breach of human rights by DPC, you can expect your complaint to be finalised within 45 working days.

#### 8. Responding to and closing a complaint

We are committed to:

- encouraging better relationships with our customers through meaningful feedback and resolution wherever possible
- staff development and business improvement, by advising the nature, outcomes and causes of complaints to all officers concerned.

#### 9. Unreasonable complainant conduct

There may be occasions when a customer's conduct could be considered unreasonable. These might include:

- frequent, lengthy, repeated or abusive telephone calls, which occupy significant staff time and resources

- frequent letters, emails, faxes or visits seeking resolution of issues beyond the scope of the original complaint or before the decision due date
- seeking information, advice or resolution from a variety of staff about the same issue
- any contact which involves abusive or threatening language or behaviour
- the customer continues to contact the department after feedback has been provided regarding the complaint and all avenues of review have been exhausted.

DPC will consider the relevant circumstances, including staff welfare and appropriate use of department resources and make a decision regarding limiting the complainant's contact with the department, for example:

- restricting the times for and/or frequency of contact
- designating a single officer with whom the complainant may have contact, such as a manager
- nominating the acceptable form of contact, for example written communication only.

Decisions regarding limiting contact with the department will be communicated to the complainant in writing. Conduct which involves violence or aggression will be also be managed in accordance with relevant human resources policies and/or procedures.

#### 10. Different procedures may apply to some complaints

DPC is required to address certain types of complaints in specific manners. The DPC Complaints Coordinator will assess and address an incoming complaint as per the below table.

| Type of complaint  | The complaint is governed by this policy and...   |
|--|---|
| Complaints about DPC products, services and employees.   | DPC Complaint Management Procedure.<br><i>Australian Standard ISO 10002:2014 for Complaint Management</i>   |
| A complaint which is an allegation about 'corrupt conduct' as defined under s.15 of the <i>Crime and Corruption Commission Act 2001</i> (CC Act) | DPC Corrupt Conduct Procedure.<br>Note: the complaint <b>may</b> be referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) for investigation or investigated by DPC and reported to the CCC if required under the CC Act   |
| A complaint assessed as a public interest disclosure (PID) in accordance with the <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</i> (PID Act)           | DPC Public Interest Disclosure Procedure and the PID Act.<br>Note: a complaint that may constitute a PID relating to another public sector entity may, with the agreement of the discloser and following a risk of reprisal assessment be referred to the other entity for consideration. |
| Complaint that DPC has breached an individual's privacy  | <i>Information Privacy Act 2009</i> and the DPC Complaint Management Procedure  |
| A complaint alleging a breach of an individual's human rights  | The HR Act, the DPC Human Rights Policy and the DPC Complaints Management Procedure.<br>Note: a complaint that another government entity has breached an individual's human rights will be referred to the relevant government entity for consideration.                                  |
| A complaint about a CEO.   | Complaints about a CEO are referred to the Deputy Director-General, Corporate and Government Services and managed under the DPC Complaint Management Procedure  |

#### 11. Approval and effective date

This policy was last updated on 23 July 2020 following approval by the DPC Corporate Governance Group.