

## → Complaints Handling Process

These guidelines outline the process for handling complaints. It was formulated to ensure all complaints are logged and monitored correctly. These guidelines have been developed by the Authority as part of the Authority's Complaints Handling System for people who are considering making a complaint, and for people responsible for responding to a complaint.

It is the policy of the Authority that appropriate actions are taken to effectively resolve customer complaints in a timely manner and to eliminate the associated cause of the problem area. Making a complaint or an allegation is a serious matter, and all parties involved may feel anxious about the process and outcome. The Authority and its employees will strive to ensure all parties fully understand what is involved so that informed decisions can be made along the way.

Any related complaint-handling system, e.g. the IT Help Desk, will be managed by the appropriate employee.

### PURPOSE

This procedure requires complaints to be:-

- Handled within the time frames established in this Procedure;
- Fully and fairly investigated;
- Given respect for confidentiality where appropriate;
- Address all points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress;
- Conveyed to Management so that services can be improved.

### OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of this process to provide a framework in which complaints can be dealt with effectively, in accordance with the relevant standard. This will enable all complaints to be closed out within the specified time frames.

### WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Anybody has the right to express any complaints or grievances they may have with the Authority or the services with which they are provided.

If a complainant cannot personally lodge a complaint, they may authorise a third party to do so on their behalf.

An acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within 3 working days of receipt of the complaint. In most cases the complaint should be resolved within 15 working days of receipt. If this is not possible, an update will be provided to the complainant as soon as possible specifying the likely time frame for resolution.

### LOGGING A COMPLAINT

Any employee can be the recipient of a complaint. The complainant should be asked to submit the complaint in writing for the attention of the Public Affairs Officer. If the complaint can't be made in writing the complainant should be permitted to give it verbally.

The complaint should include:

- name, address and contact details;
- an explanation of the complaint, describing what happened, how it happened and who was involved;
- any correspondence or/and relevant material;
- a suggested desired outcome being sought by the complainant; and,
- if the complaint is being lodged on behalf of another person, that person's name and their relationship to the complainant.

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## RECEIPT

Upon receipt, the complaint will be recorded in Qudos with supporting information. It is given a unique identifier code. If it is recorded by an employee it should be assigned to the PAO who will then assign it to the relevant Officer or Manager.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The PAO will contact the complainant and/or forward a written reply acknowledging the complaint within three business days and detail any responsive action as necessary.

## ASSESSMENT

Each complaint will be initially assessed by the PAO in terms of criteria such as severity, safety implication, complexity, impact, and the need and possibility of immediate action.

## ANALYSIS

The level of investigation will be commensurate with the seriousness, frequency of occurrence and severity of the complaint. In Qudos the complaint will be accorded a high, medium, or low priority. Each complaint will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## INVESTIGATION

The Public Affairs Officer will liaise with the Manager and/or key personnel for the area in question in order to initiate a response. Details of the responsive action are recorded in the database. The decision or any action taken regarding the complaint, which is relevant to the complainant, will be communicated immediately to them.

In some cases it may be that no corrective action can be taken. In these instances, the Public Affairs Officer is to inform the complainant that having reviewed the matter, no further action can be taken by the Authority. The notice is to be in writing setting out the reasons why the Authority believes that no further action will be taken on the matter.

The Public Affairs Officer will ensure that all complaints are investigated promptly, properly and fairly. Every reasonable effort will be made to investigate all the relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint.

The appropriate Manager/Officer conducts the investigation based on the following:-

Complaint Type	Includes	Responsible Officer
Corporate Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Board Processes / Procedures</li><li>Records</li></ul>	Manager Corporate Governance
Shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unavailability of Berths</li><li>Towage</li></ul>	Manager – Marine Services
Small Boat Harbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Charges</li><li>Condition</li><li>Availability</li><li>Parking fines</li></ul>	Manager – Marine Services and Manager Corporate Governance
Property / Leasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Trespassing</li><li>Rental Amounts</li></ul>	Manager Corporate Governance
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Port Charges</li></ul>	Manager Finance

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Complaint Type	Includes	Responsible Officer
Injury to Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Injury alleging negligence by TPA</li> <li>Death on TPA property</li> </ul>	Manager – Finance / Manager Corporate Governance / Chief Executive Officer
Damage to Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage to third party property</li> <li>Damage to TPA property</li> </ul>	Manager – Finance
Human Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee Behaviour</li> <li>Policies</li> <li>Unsuccessful Applicants</li> <li>IR Issues</li> <li>Discrimination/harassment, etc.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive Officer / Manager Corporate Governance/Manager Finance/Employee's immediate Supervisor/Manager (if the Supervisor/Manager is not directly involved).
Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dredging</li> <li>Reclamation</li> <li>Contracts</li> <li>Roads</li> <li>Signage</li> </ul>	Manager – Engineering / Construction Manager / Maintenance Manager
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noise</li> <li>Dust</li> <li>Pollution</li> <li>Vibrations</li> <li>Visual Amenity</li> <li>Light</li> <li>Odour</li> </ul>	Manager – Engineering / Manager Planning and Environment.
Projects		Relevant Project Manager

## CLOSING A COMPLAINT

If the complainant accepts the proposed decision or action, then the decision or action will be carried out and recorded. The complaint can be closed.

## COMPLAINT ESCALATION

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response provided by an employee, the Authority will:-

- Inform the complainant about avenues for internal review of the complaint and decision made;
- Assist the complainant in applying for an internal review.

In the first instance the complaint will be referred to the Senior Management Group for a response.

If the complainant is still unhappy with the management response, the Chief Executive Officer will decide whether a presentation of the complaint will be made to the Board of Directors for final determination.

If, following an internal review, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the Authority's response, the Authority will inform the complainant about avenues for external review of the complaint and decision, which may include (depending on the circumstances) reference to:-

- the Administrative Appeals Tribunal;
- the Queensland Ombudsman;
- the Information Commissioner;
- the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission;
- the Queensland Audit Office;
- Various professional registration boards.

Any complaints not managed in a timely manner will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.

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## RESPONSIBILITY

The Complaints Handling System is a priority of the Chief Executive Officer and Management Group. All complaints are reviewed at fortnightly Management Meetings and also at quarterly management review meetings.

The Chief Executive Officer will:

- ensure that a complaints-handling process and objectives are established;
- ensure that the complaints-handling process is planned, designed, implemented, maintained and continually improved;
- identify and allocate the management resources needed for an effective and efficient complaints-handling process; and,
- appoint a complaints-handling representative (Public Affairs Officer) and clearly define his or her responsibilities and authority.

The Management team will:

- ensure the complaints-handling process is implemented;
- liaise with the Public Affairs Officer;
- ensure the promotion of awareness of the complaints-handling process and of the need for a customer focus;
- ensure that complaints-handling data is available for management review;
- ensure there is a process for rapid and effective notification to senior management of any significant complaints;
- report on actions and decisions with respect to complaints handling; and,
- ensure that action is taken to correct a problem, prevent it happening in the future, and that the event is recorded.

The Public Affairs Officer will:

- oversee the complaints database which is located in the Qudos system;
- ensure that data is available for review at fortnightly senior management meetings;
- ensure that information about the complaints handling process is communicated to employees, customers, complainants, and other interested parties;
- periodically review the complaints handling process;
- monitor, analyse and report on complaints and compliance with the policy and process;
- report to senior management on the complaints-handling process and recommendations for improvement; and,
- maintain the effective and efficient operation of the complaints-handling process.

All personnel in contact with customers and complainants should:

- be trained in complaints handling;
- comply with any complaints-handling reporting requirements determined by the Authority;
- treat customers in a courteous manner and promptly respond to their complaints or direct them to the appropriate individual;
- show good interpersonal and communication skills; and,
- be aware of what procedures to follow and what information to give to complainants.

## MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

All complaints will be classified and then analysed to identify systematic, recurring and single incident problems and trends, and to help eliminate the underlying causes of complaints.

Regular actions will be taken to determine the levels of satisfaction of complainants with the complaints-handling process. This will take the form of feedback forms in rapPORT and the annual report, feedback form and complaints form on the Authority's website, as well as annual customer, community and employee surveys.

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## CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

The Authority will continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process. The Authority will explore, identify and apply best practices in complaints handling, foster a customer-focussed approach within the organisation, encourage innovation in complaints-handling development, and recognise exemplary complaints-handling behaviour.

## PROCESS REVIEW

A review of the complaints process will be undertaken annually, or as appropriate. It will be reviewed in order to:

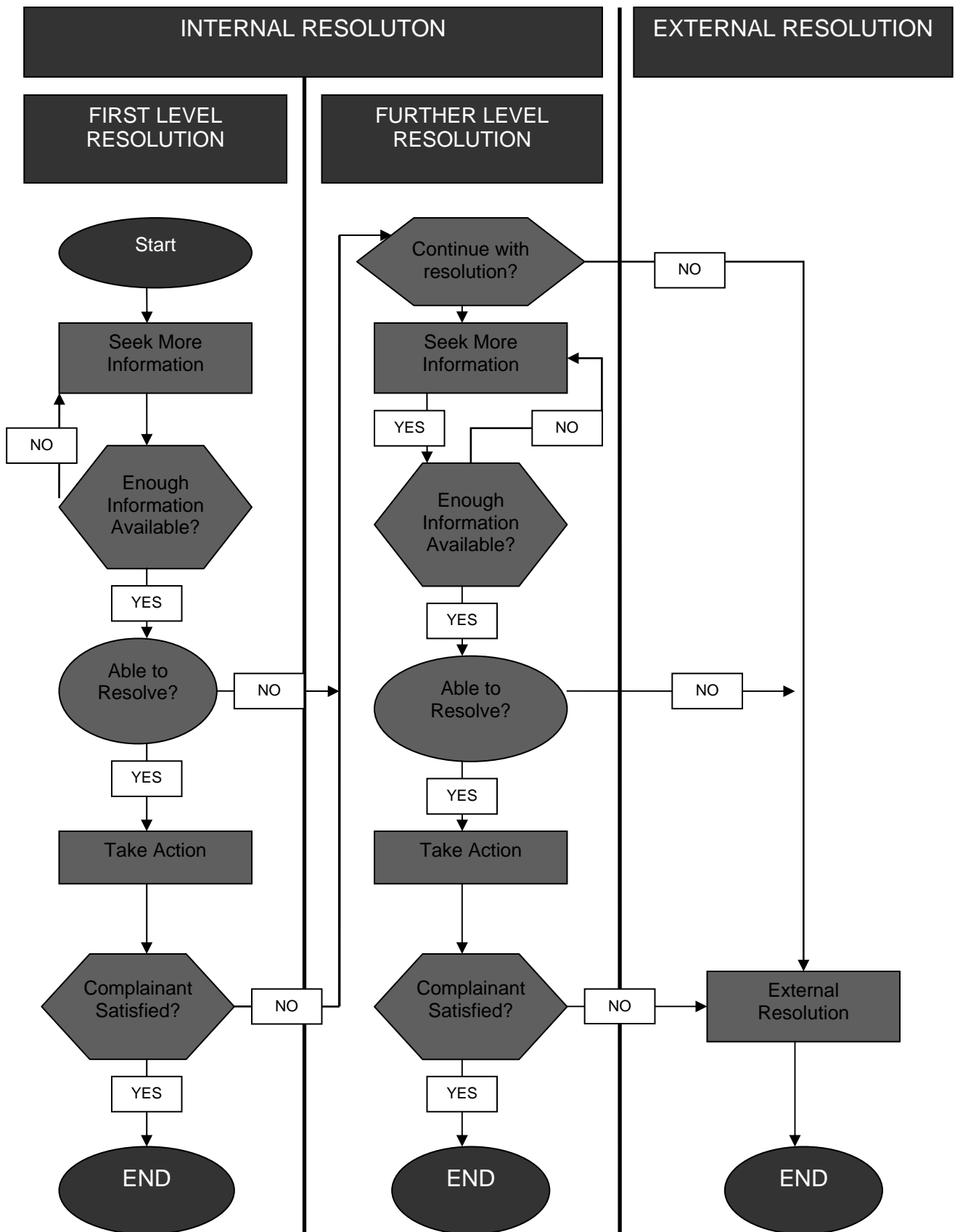
- ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency;
- identify and address instances of nonconformity with health, safety, environmental, customer, regulatory and other legal requirements;
- identify and correct process deficiencies;
- assess opportunities for improvement; and,
- to evaluate potential changes to the complaints-handling policy and process.

The review will also consist of an internal audit of the complaints-handling process.

## PROCESS CHECKLIST

Process	Timeline
<input type="checkbox"/> Complaint made to any employee who then requests that the complaint be made in writing with details as mentioned above included.	1 Day
<input type="checkbox"/> PAO receives written and/or verbal complaint and contacts the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the complaint.	3 Days
<input type="checkbox"/> PAO logs the complaint in the database.	
<input type="checkbox"/> PAO assigns the complaint to the relevant manager who will in turn deal with the issues in the complaint.	1 Day.
<input type="checkbox"/> The relevant manager must investigate the complaint and prepare a response to the complainant.	15 Days.
<input type="checkbox"/> The manager then sends the PAO a copy of the response, or instructs the PAO to formulate a response on their behalf.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Response is sent to the complainant.	
<input type="checkbox"/> If there is no further action required the complaint is then closed out with the relevant date of closure included.	
<input type="checkbox"/> If further action is required, the PAO monitors the complaint until the action has been taken and the complaint is then closed out.	
<input type="checkbox"/> A list of all current complaints will be presented to management in the regular management meetings.	

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## COMPLIANCE AND COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS

<b>Standard</b>	
<i>ISO 10002:2006, MOD, Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations</i>	
<b>Legislation</b>	
<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (part 2). Ombudsman Act 2001 (section 49).</i>	
<b>State Government Policies</b>	
None	
<b>Competence Requirement</b>	<b>How is the necessary knowledge and skills assessed to ensure assigned task is performed satisfactorily</b>
Employees have an understanding of complaints-handling process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual internal audit and process review.</li> </ul>

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