

AP185 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

OVERVIEW

To manage customer feedback and ensure complaints are dealt with in the most effective and efficient manner, Council has developed processes for dealing with complaints in key areas, which form Council's Complaints Management System. Council will deal with complaints at the local level and, in some cases, provide an avenue of independent review.

Council's Complaints Management Policy does not preclude a customer approaching any of Council's political representatives directly with a complaint or with any other kind of feedback.

Council's customers may, at any time, refer their matter of concern to an external agency, e.g. Queensland Ombudsman or the Crime and Corruption Commission.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Brisbane City Council employees including permanent, temporary, casual or part-time employees, contractors or volunteers. It covers all employees, regardless of their employment status, role or position.

Other Council policies and procedures must also be taken into consideration when carrying out duties and when applying this policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council acknowledges the right of customers to provide feedback, both positive and negative, about its services.

Council is committed to addressing complaints fairly, promptly and professionally and ensuring complainants are treated equally. This policy ensures:

- accessible, comprehensive and clear complaints procedures are in place;
- complaints are managed in a clear and transparent way;
- natural justice and procedural fairness are followed at all times;
- specific complaints are resolved in accordance with legislative requirements;
- employees are empowered to resolve complaints at the local level;
- data collection and analysis occurs to allow for continuous improvement in customer service.

Complaints will be managed in accordance with the appropriate procedure for the type of complaint made. For example, administrative action complaints will be managed in accordance with *AP186 Administrative Action Complaints Procedure* while complaints about officer behaviour will be dealt with under *HRP040 Code of Conduct*.

SCOPE

Council's Complaints Management Policy applies to its various complaints processes but does not apply to complaints already covered by other statutory review mechanisms or under corrupt conduct that should be directed to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with Council's activities in governing the City of Brisbane.



HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

A complaint may be made in any of the following ways:

- telephone the contact centre on (07) 3403 8888
- visit a Customer Service Centre
- write to Council at GPO Box 1434, Brisbane, Qld, 4001
- go online to www.brisbane.qld.gov.au and use Council's email form
- use social media, such as Facebook or X
- contact the local Councillor.

Complaints may be made anonymously. However sufficient detail will be required so that Council may deal with the complaint.

COMPLAINTS BY THIRD PARTIES

Council will accept complaints by a person (an agent) on another person's behalf if the person wishing to complain has authorised the action on their behalf. Council will respond directly to the person wishing to complain and not to the agent, unless a letter of authority directing a response to the agent is provided to Council.

If a complaint is lodged on another person's behalf by a professional advisor, e.g. a solicitor or accountant, Council will respond directly to that advisor.

PRINCIPLES OF INVESTIGATION

1. Council will investigate complaints in a fair, objective and timely manner. The following natural justice principles will apply in all cases:
 - an absence of bias
 - decisions based on evidence
 - proper examination of all issues.
2. A complaint made to Council and dealt with under Council's Complaints Management Policy does not generally stop the operation of the decision or action under investigation.
3. In some instances, complaints may not be investigated or the investigation may be discontinued if:
 - a complaint is made frivolously, without grounds, lacking in substance, or with the intent to harass
 - the complainant seeks to revisit the same issue after an initial investigation when no new evidence or material is provided
 - the complainant displays aggressive or abusive behaviour, or threatens or uses physical violence against themselves, a Council employee, another person or property.

TIMEFRAME

Council is committed to resolving complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible and in a timely manner. The length of time taken to deal with a complaint will depend on the circumstances of each complaint, such as the complexity of issues in the complaint, the time required to obtain necessary information, the time taken to hold a hearing, if required, and the availability of the parties.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of complaints, including the identity of the customer, will be maintained where requested and in accordance with relevant legislation and Council policies.

REPORTING

Council will report publicly on complaints in accordance with legislative requirements.

WHEN PRINTED, NOT A CONTROLLED COPY