

# Policy

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## Management of Complaints

### Statement

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is committed to effectively managing complaints and resolving them in an accountable, transparent, timely and fair manner. This commitment is in line with the [Public Service Act 2008](#) and with Australian/New Zealand Standard [AS/NZS 10002:2018](#) - Guidelines for complaint handling in organizations.

Our management of complaints is based on the following principles:

1. We will facilitate complaints through a process which is accessible, visible and transparent.
2. We will work to ensure no detriment to complainants.
3. We will be responsive; we will acknowledge complaints and deal with them promptly and efficiently, and as close to the source as possible.
  - Where possible and appropriate, QFES staff, volunteers and contractors should make reasonable attempts to resolve workplace issues locally and informally, prior to lodging a complaint.
  - QFES staff, volunteers or contractors who wish to make a complaint should do so as soon as reasonably possible after the issue has occurred.
  - Complaints will be dealt with at the lowest possible level, and via the least intrusive and most efficient method possible in the circumstances. Formal investigations will be undertaken only where lower level methods of resolution are considered unsuitable.
4. We will provide support to people affected by complaints and keep them informed about the process.
  - Complainants and QFES staff, volunteers and/or contractors who are the subject of a complaint will be supported and provided with regular progress updates throughout the complaint management process. They will be provided with outcome advice in relation to how the complaint was dealt with and any findings or actions that may affect them.
  - QFES staff, volunteers and contractors (including complainants, subject officers, or other staff who may have information relevant to a complaint) will participate/cooperate fully and in good faith, in any action taken to deal with a complaint.
  - In its communications with both complainants and subject officers, QFES will provide explanations for significant decisions made during the complaint resolution process.

Complaints management will be objective, fair, and confidential.

- Complaints will be dealt with fairly, objectively, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- All parties to a complaint will maintain appropriate confidentiality, ensuring compliance with privacy laws and ethical obligations around privacy and disclosure.
- QFES will put in place appropriate strategies for managing unreasonable conduct by complainants, protecting the health and safety of all involved, while still addressing valid issues and concerns through fair, ethical and reasonable processes.

Complaints data will be used to support a culture of continuous improvement.

- Complaints data will be analysed to identify systemic issues.
- Any patterns or trends identified will be addressed.

## Scope

This policy applies where a member of the community, a stakeholder, customer or a departmental staff member (paid and volunteer) expresses dissatisfaction about the department's products, services or staff that requires a response or resolution.

This policy applies to the following complaint types:

- Customer complaints including service delivery complaints
  - All complaints from customers of QFES, who are directly affected by any service, action, or decision of the department. Please refer to the [QFES Procedure PR3034 – Customer Complaints](#) for more information.
- Breach of privacy complaints
  - All complaints arising from alleged breaches of the [Information Privacy Act 2009](#). Please refer to the [QFES Policy 4.6 – Information Privacy](#) for more information.
- Conduct complaints including allegations of corrupt conduct
  - All complaints about the conduct of QFES staff, volunteers and contractors, including complaints about conduct that may amount to suspected corrupt conduct as defined in section 15 of the [Crime and Corruption Act 2001](#). Please refer to [QFES Procedure PR3026 – Management of Complaints about Staff, Volunteers and Contractors](#) for more information.
- Grievances about administrative decisions
  - All complaints about decisions made by QFES staff, volunteers or contractors that directly affect the rights or interests of a person. Please refer to [QFES Procedure PR3026 – Management of Complaints about Staff, Volunteers and Contractors](#) for more information.
- Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer
  - Complaints that allege the Commissioner of QFES may have engaged in corrupt conduct. Please refer to the [QFES Complaints about the Commissioner Policy](#) for more information.

Complaints related to unsatisfactory work performance will be managed under QFES Procedure PR3035 – Managing Unsatisfactory Performance and Conduct and not under this policy.

## Implementation

The key QFES governance body responsible for overseeing the ongoing management of complaints is the Board of Management. The Chairperson of this committee is responsible for reporting on the effectiveness of the complaints management system, current and emerging risks and mitigation strategies.

The Assistant Commissioner, Human Capital Management Directorate is accountable for:

- coordinating the implementation of, and compliance with, this policy and all associated procedures
- establishing and embedding a consistent, equitable and transparent approach for managing complaints
- monitoring the adherence to standard, best practice, timeframes for the resolution of complaints
- directing complaints recording, analysis and reporting, through the maintenance of appropriate records across the different categories of complaints, and analysis of complaints data to identify patterns, trends and areas for improvement and
- reporting significant issues to the People and Culture Committee.

The Executive Director, Strategic Services Directorate is responsible for:

- Engaging with auditors to establish an effective process for monitoring internal controls and
- Reporting associated risks from complaints to the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, via a standing agenda item.

All QFES staff, volunteers, and contractors are responsible for ensuring the complaints policy and processes are followed in conjunction with the [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#).

## Quality Outcome

A capable, safe, healthy and inclusive workplace which supports QFES' service delivery to Queensland communities.

## Policy Owner

Assistant Commissioner, Human Capital Management



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### 3.0 Human Resources

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***The provisions of the Human Rights Act 2019 (QLD) have been considered during the development of this document***

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