

Complaints Management



Customer Complaints Annual Report 2020-2021

Complaints Management



Our Complaints Management Framework

Section 219A of the *Public Service Act 2008* requires Queensland Government agencies to implement a system for dealing with customer complaints and publish a range of information by 30 September for the preceding financial year on their website.

The Public Trustee is committed to ensuring that the services we provide are relevant and that our clients are satisfied with that service. Our [Complaints Management Policy](#) provides a framework for managing complaints which ensures that complaints received by the Public Trustee are managed and reported in an accountable, transparent, timely and meaningful way.

We value all complaints and it is important that our complaints process is fair, equitable and easy to understand. Information about complaints management can be found on the Public Trustee's website at www.pt.qld.gov.au/contact/contact-us/how-we-manage-complaints/. The information on our website includes the [Your Complaint's Journey](#) brochure and a [video](#) which help to explain the complaints process in simple, easy to follow formats.

Complaints Data for 2020-2021

Complaints received in the financial year 2020-21	
<i>The total number of complaints recorded in the Complaints Management System</i>	639
Complaints resulting in no further action	
<i>The number of complaints which were resolved in the first instance</i>	546 (85%)
Complaints resulting in further action	
<i>The number of complaints where additional activity was required to resolve the complaint, for example a specific remedy for the client or complainant or a change in policy or procedures</i>	92 (15%)
<i>Note: one complaint received in 2020-21 remains open.</i>	

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In the past year, the Public Trustee has embedded our commitment to our customers through our Customers First Agenda. This has resulted in improvements to reporting and monitoring of complaints, and greater levels of accountability that reflect the customer-centric focus of the Public Trustee, and our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

The Public Trustee has a number of business activities from which complaints are generated. A breakdown of complaints received in 2020-21 by activity area is shown in the following table:

Activity	Number of Complaints	% of Complaints
Financial Management	468	73.2%
Deceased Estates	108	16.9%
Will-making	23	3.5%
Trust Management	9	1.4%
Other	31	5.0%
Total	639	100%

Complaint Issues raised

Complaints received by the Public Trustee are grouped into seven categories. These categories are:

- The Legislation
- The Decision
- Privacy Breach
- PT Policies and Procedures
- Fees and Charges
- Human Rights Breach
- Service Delivery
- Staff Conduct

More than one issue may be raised in a complaint. As a result, the number of issues raised is greater than the total number of complaints received for the year, and is shown in the following table:

Issue	Number
Service Delivery	363
The Decision	245
Staff Conduct	138
Other (issues that do not fall under a specific category)	66
Fees & Charges	65
Policies & procedures	49
The Legislation (PT appointment and other legislated requirements)	12
Privacy breach	7
Total Issues	945

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Complaints resulting in further action

The remedies for those complaints recorded as resulting in further action are listed in the table below:

Remedy	
Explanation of process	40
Apology/Admission/Acknowledgement of fault	21
Explanation of decision	9
Service Improvement	9
Reduction/Reimbursement of Fees and Charges	8
Process change	2
Change of decision	2
Training opportunity	1
Total	92

Human Rights complaints

The Public Trustee has been embedding human rights understanding across our organisation before and since the commencement of the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Human Rights Act) on 1 January 2020.

During 2020-21, the Public Trustee received 20 complaints that were assessed as human rights complaints:

- 13 complaints were identified by the complainant as human rights related
- 7 complaints were assessed by the Public Trustee as being human rights related.

The complaints were resolved by the Public Trustee providing an explanation to the customers or the customers' support network about the decision that was made or the action that was taken.

The Public Trustee found that in four of the cases, it had not acted compatibly with human rights and in line with its obligations under the Human Rights Act.

In these cases, the Public Trustee provided an apology to the customers and their support network and took steps to:

- investigate the cause
- take corrective action including reviewing policies and procedures
- conduct further training with staff.

The Queensland Human Rights Commission has not notified the Public Trustee of any unresolved complaints that it accepted for review in 2020-21.

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Improvements to our Complaints Management System

Our commitment to our Customers First agenda includes ensuring that our complaints management processes are responsive to the needs of our diverse customer groups, which is reflected in our *Strategic Plan 2020-2024*.

In 2020, the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) undertook a Performance Audit on the responsiveness of Queensland's guardianship and administration system to complaints and investigations. In September 2020, QAO released its Report of the audit – *Responding to complaints from people with impaired capacity*. The Report made six recommendations to enhance the accessibility, effectiveness and responsiveness of the Public Trustee's complaints management system.

In response to the recommendations, the Public Trustee has already made a number of changes to enhance the information we provide to stakeholders, particularly those with impaired capacity about complaints management, as well as ensuring that complaints are responded to within expected timeframes.

Improvements to Customer Service Delivery

The Public Trustee is a learning organisation and complaints provide an opportunity to resolve concerns for individual customers and other stakeholders and also improve service delivery for all customers. In the past year, we have progressed a range of initiatives which address some of the issues about which we receive complaints, including:

- Introduction of a Financial Independence Pathway to support financial management customers in building practical skills to take on greater management of their finances. Participating customers are supported by their trust officer to gradually take on greater personal management of their finances over a 12-month period. Participants are also referred to a funded financial literacy and resilience provider to develop practical money management skills
- A new look budget for financial management customers has been launched to assist customers to be better informed about their money. The new look budget, which was co-designed with customers and staff, presents information in an easy-to-read format in line with accessibility standards
- Published information about fees and charges on our website in an easy-to-read format supported by case studies
- Continued to provide specialised technical training to trust officers across our service areas to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of our customers.

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Contact us

For further information on the Public Trustee's complaints management practices, please contact:

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If you need an interpreter call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and request to be transferred to the Public Trustee on 1300 360 044.