

Complaints Management



Customer Complaints Annual Report 2021-22

Complaints Management



Our Complaints Management Framework

Section 219A of the *Public Service Act 2008* requires each Queensland Government agency 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 2021-22

Complaints received in the financial year 2021-22	
<i>The total number of complaints recorded in the Complaints Management System</i>	699
Complaints resulting in no further action	
<i>The number of complaints which were resolved in the first instance</i>	660 (94%)
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>	39 (6%)

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The Public Trustee has continued to build 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 provides essential support, services, and education to Queenslanders in financial administration, life planning, trusts, and deceased estate management.

In 2021-22, we provided services to a diverse range of customers including:

- 10,661 financial management customers
- 1,905 new deceased estates accepted for administration
- 4,126 trusts administered
- 2,578 claims processed for unclaimed money
- 15,878 Wills and 933 Enduring Powers of Attorney made
- 112 Probate and Letters of Administration applications.

A breakdown of complaints received in 2021-22 by activity area is shown in the following table:

Activity	Number of Complaints
Financial Management	479
Deceased Estates	159
Will-making	22
Trust Management	18
Other	21
Total	699

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	20
Apology/Admission/Acknowledgement of fault	14
Explanation of decision	1
Service Improvement	3
Training opportunity	1
Total	39

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.

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The Public Trustee's Complaints Management Framework ensures that:

- human rights complaints are identified at the point of receipt
- the complaints process is compatible with human rights, the principles of natural justice and incorporates the complaints resolution process available under the Human Rights Act.

During 2021-22, the Public Trustee received 28 complaints that were assessed as human rights complaints:

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

Most of 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 11 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 took steps to:

- investigate the cause
- take corrective action including:
 - offering an apology
 - changing its decision
 - reviewing its policies and procedures
 - undertaking 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 2021-22.

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 continued to make 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.

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In 2022-23, we will review our Complaints Management Policy and Procedures to ensure it reflects best practice for complaints management systems and complies with the revised Australian Standard AS10002:2022 *Guidelines for complaint management in organisations*.

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:

- continued to implement the industry-leading Structured Decision-Making Framework to support Public Trust officers make decisions in accordance with the Public Trustee's obligations under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000*, and considering the views, wishes, preferences and human rights of customers.
- continued success delivering the 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.
- delivered a fees and charges review report to government providing the most comprehensive review of fees and charges in more than two decades. The report is the culmination of work that commenced in 2020 and includes benchmarking against comparable service providers and targeted and public consultation.
- removed the family home from calculations for eligibility for a Community Service Obligation (provided as fee rebates).
- ceased charges to customers for expert financial advice where that advice recommends investing in Public Trustee products only.
- reviewed policy and procedures around small value deceased estates to identify options to improve estate administration timeframes and distribute these estates within six months of the date of death, with a family provision waiver. Changes are underway with a view to implementation in 2022-2023.
- 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.