



Queensland's complaints landscape

Community organisations





Acknowledgement of traditional owners

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land throughout Queensland
and their continuing connection to land, culture and community.

We pay our respects to elders past and present.



Objectives

1

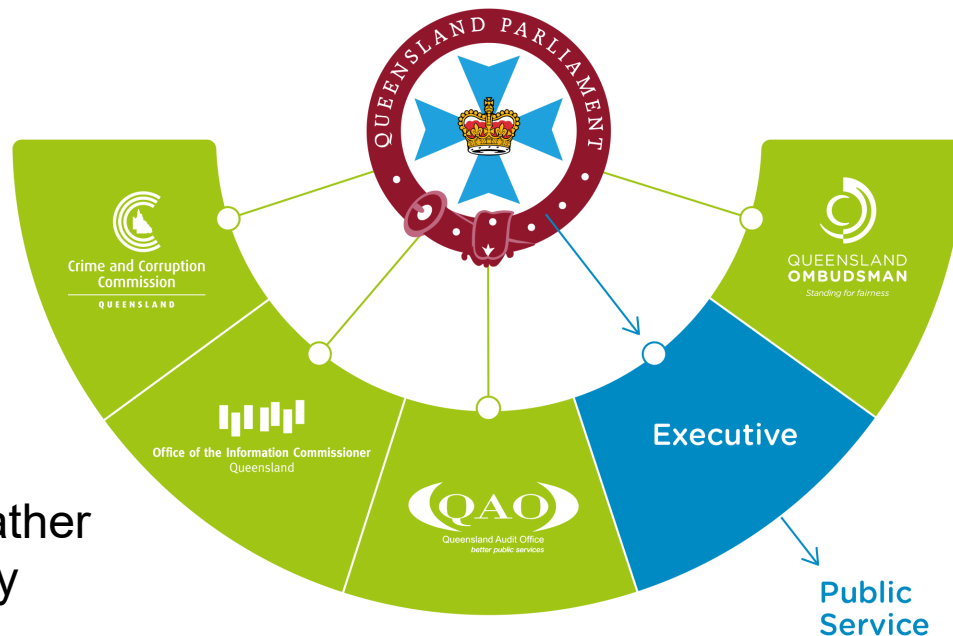
To **help you understand** Queensland's complaints landscape.

2

To give you information and resources that you can use to **help your clients** when they are making complaints.

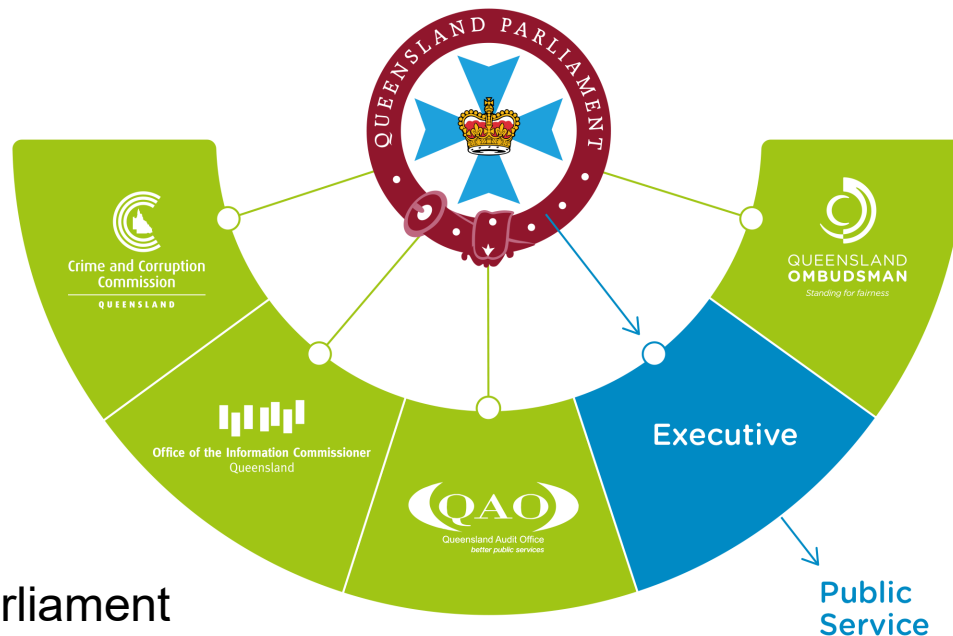
Who are we?

- We are an independent complaints agency
- Anthony Reilly is the current Queensland Ombudsman
- The Queensland Ombudsman is accountable to parliament rather than the government of the day



Who are we?

- No one can direct how our investigations should be conducted, whether we should or should not investigate particular complaints, or the level of priority we give to investigations.
- The only exception is when parliament or a parliamentary committee refers matters to us for investigation.





What do we do?

- The Queensland Ombudsman gives people a **timely**, **effective** and **independent** way to investigate administrative actions of agencies
- Our complaints investigation service is free and confidential.





What do we do?

- Under the *Ombudsman Act 2001*, we investigate complaints about the decisions and actions of:
 - state government departments and agencies (including state schools and TAFE)
 - local councils
 - public universities.
- We can recommend ways to fix unfair decisions, actions and services.







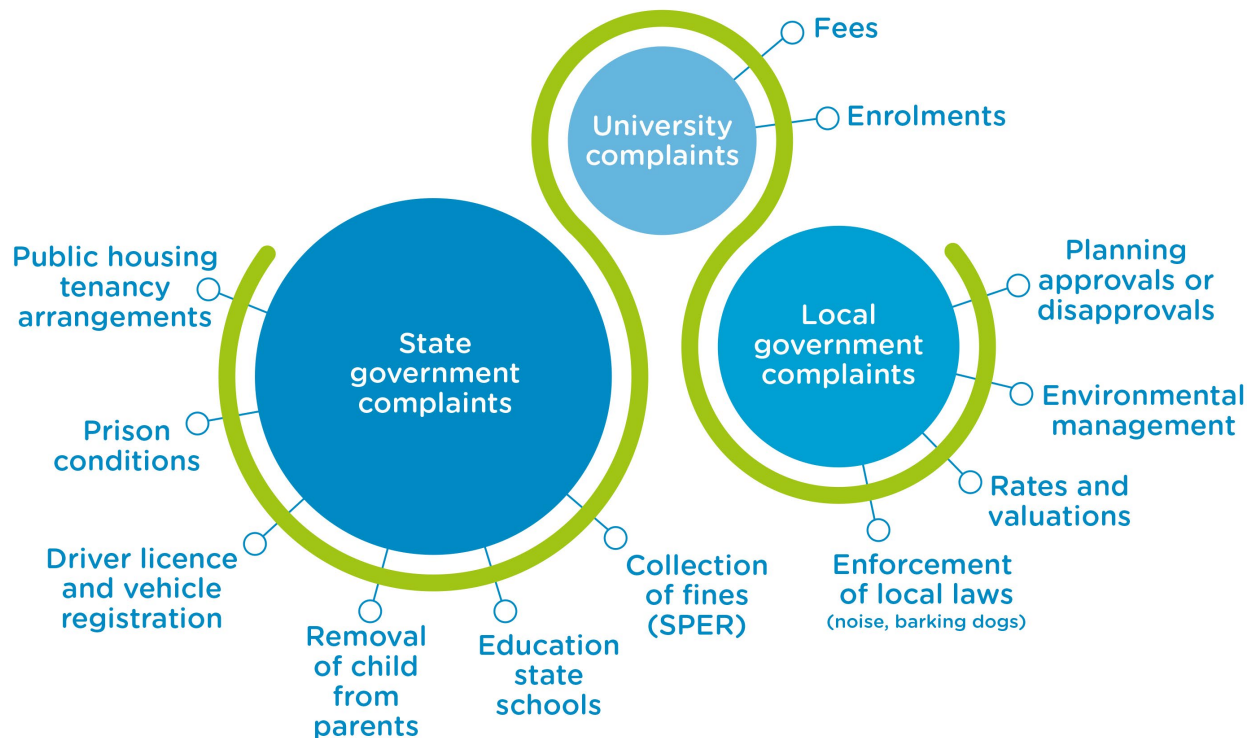
What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined in the current Australian standard *Guidelines for complaint management in organizations* (AS 10002:2022)

‘An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services or staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required’.



Complaint examples

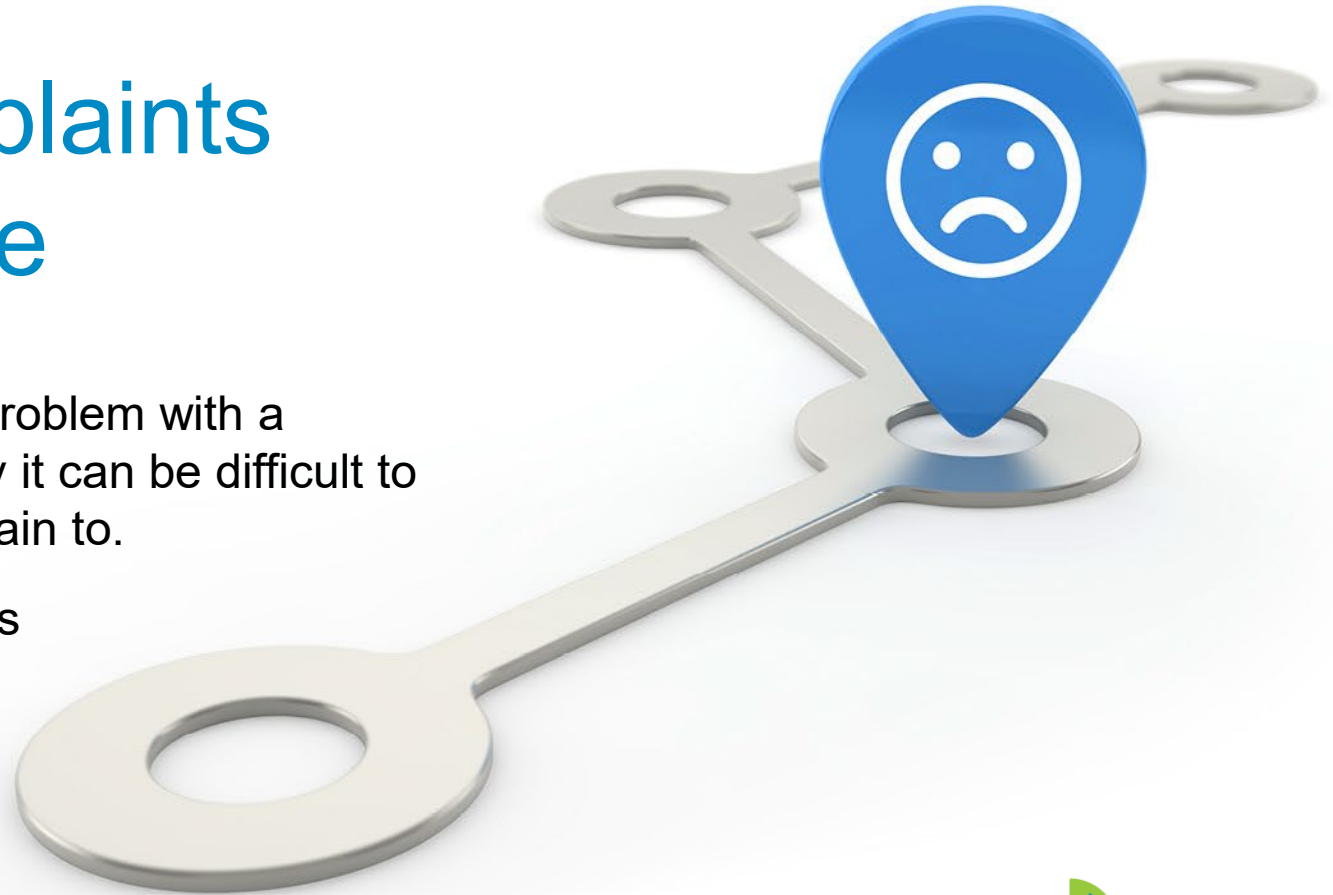




The complaints landscape

When you have a problem with a government agency it can be difficult to know who to complain to.

The following details will guide you.





How to progress a complaint

1

Contact the agency first

The agency won't know there is a problem if you don't tell them. Give them a chance to fix the matter. That is the fastest way to resolve a complaint.

Tell the agency what happened, why it's wrong and how you think it should be resolved.



Contact the agency first

- All Queensland state and local government agencies are required by law to have a Complaints Management System, referred to as a CMS.
- A CMS should be visible on the agency's public website and in the agency's offices.
- Information about the CMS should be provided in a range of languages and the agency should provide a range of ways to make a complaint.
- Agencies should provide reasonable assistance to people making a complaint and also allow people to make anonymous and representative complaints.



Your rights and responsibilities

You should:

- treat the agency with respect and courtesy
- talk about the problem – consider different perspectives and approaches
- work out the complaint issues, supporting information and requested outcomes
- focus on how best to persuade/influence the agency to resolve the complaint
- set out your information in a clear, simple and ordered way
- act as soon as aware of the problem – delayed complaints may not be actioned



Your rights and responsibilities

The agency should:

- treat you with respect and courtesy
- give assistance to make a complaint, if needed
- send a prompt acknowledgement of your complaint
- contact you to clarify and discuss your complaint
- update you on progress
- contact you about any issues or information significant to your complaint so you can respond
- send a decision on your complaint, including the reasons, any actions taken and available review options.



What to include in your complaint

Make sure you:

- clearly describe the complaint, focussing on the major issue/s
- explain the impact of the issue/s on relevant parties
- explain why you think the decision or service is wrong or unfair
- explain what you think needs to be fixed or changed
- use the word 'complaint'
- ask that the complaint is managed under the CMS
- ask the agency to acknowledge the complaint and get in touch with you to discuss
- ask for a written response



How to progress a complaint

2

**Use the agency's
complaints
process**

If you are not satisfied with the agency's initial response, you can ask for a review.



Use the agency's complaints process

The internal review should be conducted by a senior officer with no prior involvement in the matter and with the authority to change the previous decision.

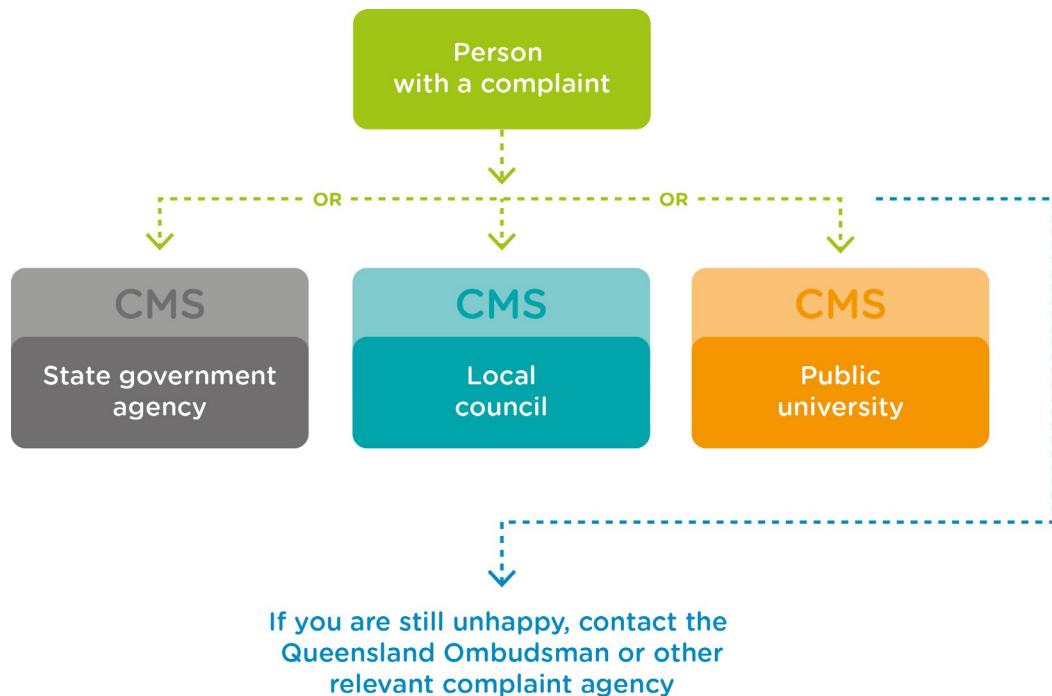
If you remain dissatisfied after receiving the review outcome, you can contact the Queensland Ombudsman or other relevant complaint body.

Receiving a response on the agency's review is a final decision from the agency.



Use the agency's complaints process

In most cases, we will only investigate a complaint if you have already complained to the agency and received a final decision from them on the matter.





How to progress a complaint

3

**If you are still
not satisfied,
seek an
external review**

Finding the correct external complaints body to contact depends on what the complaint is about.

For a current list, search for
'other complaint handling organisations'
at www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au



If you are still not satisfied, seek an external review

This will be the Queensland Ombudsman if your complaint is about the administrative actions and decisions of state government agencies, local councils and public universities.

If we can't help you, we'll try and put you in touch with other external complaint handling bodies.



Some other complaint handling bodies



Energy or water supplied to a home or business

Energy and Water Ombudsman

Banks, credit unions, superannuation, financial services

Australian Financial Complaints Authority

Payment of wages, dismissal and workplace disputes

Fair Work Ombudsman

Products or services bought or rented from a business

Office of Fair Trading

Telephone or internet

Telecommunication Industry Ombudsman

Health services

Office of the Health Ombudsman

Corruption and misconduct

Crime and Corruption Commission

Australian government departments or agencies

Commonwealth Ombudsman



Summary – to progress a complaint:

1

**Contact the
agency first**

2

**Use the agency's
complaints process**
(both initial complaint
and internal review)

3

**If you are still not
satisfied, seek an
external review**



When to contact us

Contact us if you:

- are unsure who to complain to
- have used the agency's CMS and your complaint has not been resolved
- want to make a public interest disclosure
- are a community group and are seeing significant, recurring problems for your clients.





www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au

