

Complaints Handling Policy

1 Purpose

To ensure that Northern and Yorke Landscape Board (board) complaints are recorded, investigated, corrected (where possible) and that every action is taken to ensure that the issue is addressed in a reasonable manner.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all board employees, board, and committee members.

This policy does not apply to complaints concerned with workforce conduct, public interest disclosures (whistleblowing) or matters for the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, Office for Public Integrity, or the Ombudsman South Australia (SA) – separate processes apply.

3 Context

In 2014 the Ombudsman SA conducted an audit of complaint handling practices across the South Australian government. This led to the development of the Premier and Cabinet Circular *Complaint Management in the South Australian Public Sector* (PC039). PC039 requires an effective complaint management system to be established and maintained that conforms to principles in the Australian/New Zealand Standard: *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations* (AS/NZ 10002:2014).

4 Policy Principles

The board acknowledges the right of the public to complain when dissatisfied with its services. Complaints are an important part of continuous improvement in service delivery. The opportunity for the public to provide feedback assists to improve our performance and interactions with the public.

Commitment

The board commits to taking all complaints seriously and handling them in a professional, efficient and respectful manner. In doing so, the board is committed to ensuring that the rights of the complainant are protected, as are those of the employee who receive complaints, or who may be the subject of a complaint. The board acknowledges that some complaints may not be resolved to the full satisfaction of all parties involved.

The board will be particularly alerted to complaints that indicate a high risk to people and landscapes, poor customer service or misconduct and take appropriate action.

Making a Complaint

The board requires that all complaints are submitted in writing.

Complaints are encouraged to be lodged electronically via a feedback form at <https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ny/contact-us>, however complaints may also be lodged:

- in writing to 318 Main North Road, Clare SA 5453;
- via email at ny.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au; or
- in person.

The board will provide access to an interpreter or translator if required – refer to: <http://www.translate.sa.gov.au/home>.

The National Relay Service provides a phone service for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment – refer to: <http://relayservice.gov.au>.

A complaint should contain the following details:

- a clear description of the matter
- when and where the matter occurred
- the names and/or positions of anyone involved
- any relevant documentation
- the outcome(s) being sought
- contact information or contact information of a representative.

In order for the complaint to progress, the board may contact the complainant for further details or clarification.

Anonymous complaints will be recorded. However, anonymous complaints are more difficult to assess and investigate because the board will not have the option to follow up if further information is required, nor will the board be able to advise the outcome of the complaint.

Responsiveness and Timeframes

When complaints are received, they will be assessed and prioritised. Complaints will be promptly acknowledged, and complainants will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint.

Timeframes for the management of complaints must be reasonable and will not be excessively drawn out. The following timeframes will apply:

- Written acknowledgment of complaints will be sent within five business days of receipt of the complaint.
- Complaints must be addressed, and the complainant advised of the outcome, as soon as possible, ideally within 30 business days of receipt of the complaint.

Complaints Register

All complaints received must be recorded on a Complaints Register. Note that an issue that has been resolved informally by frontline staff is not required to be recorded or reported by staff unless it is reoccurring or systemic.

The Complaints Register must contain sufficient details of each complaint to enable meaningful analysis of complaints and so that reports can be generated.

Monitoring Complaints

Complaints data must be analysed to identify systemic issues that need to be addressed to improve system, procedures and performance.

The board's Governance and Finance Committee and management will monitor:

- the quality and effectiveness of the board's complaints management system and will make changes where needed; and
- the time taken to resolve complaints.

Reporting

Information relating to complaints received from members of the public is required to be reported in the board's annual report, as per Premier and Cabinet Circular *Annual Reporting Requirements* (PC013).

5 Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval and adherence of this policy
General Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall implementation of this policy Approval of relevant procedures to support the implementation of this policy Ensuring that managers and employees comply with this policy Management of breaches of this policy Review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints
Manager, Business and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that employees are familiar with this policy and procedure Development and implementation of relevant procedures to support the implementation of this policy Monitoring compliance with the policy and associated procedures Ensuring that the General Manager is provided with information when breaches of this policy or discrepancies are identified Providing advice and assistance to key staff responsible for handling complaints
Administration and Governance Services Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document complaints in the complaints register, liaise with the relevant employee on issues within their area of expertise and file all relevant documents on iShare Collecting and reporting complaints data via 6-monthly reports to the Regional Leadership Team and board's Governance and Finance Committee
Performance and Reporting Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report publicly on the complaint handling of the board via the annual report
Managers and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that employees are familiar with the policy and procedure Monitoring compliance of this policy and procedure within their teams and/or areas of responsibility Review complaints related to their area of responsibility with the objective of ensuring recurrence of the complaint is prevented and/or the complaint is satisfactorily resolved Support employees to respond to complaints
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarising themselves with this policy and associated procedures Comply with requirements of the policy Ensuring that this policy is understood and applied

6 Definitions

Business Day - a day when the board is normally open for business.

Complaint - for the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the board, related to its products, services, employees or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.


7 Associated Documents and References

[Audit of state government agencies' complaint handling](#) – November 2014 [Ombudsman SA]
[Audit survey report: assessment of state agencies complaints management systems](#) – June 2018 [Ombudsman SA]
 Australian/New Zealand Standard: *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations* (AS/NZ 10002:2014)
[Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#) [Office for the Public Sector]
[Complaint Management Framework](#) – March 2016 [Ombudsman SA]
 Complaints Handling Procedure (iShare)
[Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012](#)
[Ombudsman Act 1972](#)
 Premier and Cabinet Circular [Annual Reporting Requirements](#) (PC013)
 Premier and Cabinet Circular [Complaint Management in the South Australian Public Sector](#) (PC039)
[Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018](#)
[Public Sector Act 2009](#)

8 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of first being adopted and then three yearly thereafter (unless there is a change in circumstances which requires an earlier review).

9 Policy Approval

Approved by	Northern and Yorke Landscape Board 	Date Approved	22 May 2025
Responsible Officer	Manager, Business and Planning	Review Date	22 May 2028
Policy Author	Michelle Simes, Administration and Governance Coordinator, NY Landscape Board		

EO Use Only *Date registered in Policy Directory and next review date recorded: 30/05/2025*
Date recorded in Board Decision Register: 28/05/2025
Date distributed to Board personnel: 30/05/2025

QUALITY CONTROL

Version #	Approval Date	Meeting #	Amendments
1	14/12/23	29	New policy
2	22/05/25	40	Full review of policy – inclusions: informing board of high-risk complaints, seeking further information from complainant and email address provided for lodging complaints