

1. Heads of Power

Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)
Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)
Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld)
Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)
Crime and Corruption Act 2001 (Qld)

2. Intent

This policy establishes a framework for the effective and transparent management of complaints within Aurukun Shire Council (**Council**). It ensures complaints are handled in a fair, consistent, and lawful manner, in accordance with legislative requirements and best practice principles.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to:

- 3.1.1. All administrative action complaints made by a person directly affected by a Council decision, action, or failure to act.
- 3.1.2. All employees, contractors, and agents of Aurukun Shire Council involved in delivering services to the community.
- 3.1.3. Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs) related to wrongdoing within the Council.

3.2. Exclusions:

- 3.2.1. Complaints regarding the conduct of Councillors (managed under the Councillor Conduct Complaints Policy).
- 3.2.2. Complaints related to Public Interest Disclosures (managed in accordance with the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld)*).
- 3.2.3. Matters subject to statutory appeal processes.

4. Policy Statement

Council is committed to:

- Fairness and Objectivity – Ensuring all complaints are assessed impartially, without bias or conflict of interest.
- Accessibility – Providing multiple complaint lodgement channels and ensuring complainants can easily access information on the process.
- Accountability – Maintaining transparent complaint handling processes and regularly reporting complaint trends.
- Confidentiality – Protecting complainant privacy and managing Public Interest Disclosures appropriately.
- Continuous Improvement – Using complaint data to enhance Council service delivery and decision-making.

5. Complaints Management Framework

Aurukun Shire Council's approach to complaints management includes:

5.1. Guiding Principles

- Complaints will be handled in accordance with procedural fairness and natural justice.
- Affected individuals will be provided with clear information on how to lodge a complaint and the expected timeframes.
- Complaints will be resolved in a timely manner, with a focus on efficient and effective outcomes.
- Where appropriate, informal resolution will be encouraged before formal investigation.

5.2. Complaints Handling Process

The detailed complaints management process is documented separately in the Administrative Action Complaints SOP. This process includes:

- Lodging a complaint.
- Acknowledgment and assessment.
- Investigation and resolution.
- Internal and external review options.
- Reporting and monitoring.

5.3. Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs)

The Council recognises its obligations under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* (Qld) and will:

- Ensure appropriate protections for individuals making a PID.
- Investigate and manage disclosures in accordance with legal obligations.
- Maintain strict confidentiality to prevent reprisals.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Responsible for ensuring the effective implementation and oversight of the complaints management framework.
- Director of Corporate Services: Coordinates receipt, acknowledgment, investigation, and resolution of complaints.
- Council Officers: Assist in providing information and responding to complaints in a timely manner.
- Executive Leadership Team: Reviews complaint trends and implements service improvements where needed.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

- Complaints will be logged and tracked in a Complaint Management System (CMS).
- Monthly reports summarising complaint volumes, resolution rates, and trends will be reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team.
- An annual complaints report, including PIDs, will be included in the Council's Annual Report, as required by the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (Qld).

8. Related Documents

- Administrative Action Complaints SOP (outlines step-by-step complaint handling process)
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy
- Public Records Management Policy
- Annual Report Guidelines

9. Document Controls

Council will review this policy every two years or as required by changes in law or best practice.

10. Policy Owner

Director Corporate Services.