

# COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Date	Custodian
October 2015	General Manager Corporate Services
November 2017	General Manager Corporate Services
September 2018	General Manager Corporate Services

## 1. PURPOSE

These guidelines outline the process for handling complaints as part of Ports North's complaint management system and have been developed for people who are considering making a complaint and for people responsible for responding to a complaint.

Complaints are recognised as a valuable source of feedback. Diligent and prompt attention to complaints can help the organisation to identify the needs of our clients and stakeholders, understand business shortcomings, increase client satisfaction and improve Ports North performance.

## 2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Directors, employees and contractors.

This procedure does not cover:

- **Staff grievances** – see Ports North Enterprise Agreements.
- **Privacy complaints** – complaints concerning breaches of privacy are to be referred to General Manager Corporate Services, who will manage the complaint in accordance with the Right to Information / Information Privacy Policy and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.
- **Public interest disclosures** – see Ports North Public Interest Disclosure Management Program and Public Interest Disclosure Policy

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Complaint** – an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about Ports North, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

**Complaints Management System** – encompasses all aspects of the policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by Ports North, for the management of complaints.

**Complaints Officer** – the Legal Compliance and Governance Manager and/or such other persons within Corporate Services having responsibility for management of the complaints handling system as directed by the General Manager Corporate Services.

**Corporate Services** – the Corporate Services business unit area as identified in the Ports North organisational structure.

**Enquiries Officer** – the Communications Adviser and/or such other persons within Corporate Services having responsibility for monitoring enquiries emails and social media as directed by the General Manager Corporate Services.

**Feedback** – Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly to or about Ports North, its products, services, staff or its handling of a complaint.

**Feedback Register** – a register maintained by Corporate Services for the recording of all complaints, parking infringement appeals and other feedback received by Ports North.

**Investigating Officer** – the person responsible for carrying out an investigation of a complaint as directed by the Responsible Officer.

**Parking Appeals Officer** – Corporate Services Coordinator and/or such other persons within Corporate Services having responsibility for management of parking infringement appeals as directed by the General Manager Corporate Services.

**Parking Infringement Appeals** – appeals lodged in relation to a Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN) for Failure to comply with a Port Notice in relation to Parking/Stopping of Vehicles.

**Responsible Officer** – the manager of the business unit area responsible for the matter that is the subject of the complaint.

**Social Media** – Online social networks used to disseminate information through online social interaction.

#### 4. LODGING A COMPLAINT/PARKING INFRINGEMENT APPEAL

All complaints must be received in writing (including by hand delivered form or letter, mail and email) so that all aspects of the complaint can be accurately investigated. The Complaint Registration Form (Attachment 1) provides an outline of the type of information that is required when lodging a complaint.

The Appeal of Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN) for Parking/Stopping of Vehicles Form (Attachment 2 for parking infringement appeals only) provides an outline of the type of information that is required when lodging an appeal against a parking infringement.

Customer complaints in relation to **electricity** should be submitted in writing addressed to:

Electricity Account Enquiries  
Ports North  
PO Box 594  
CAIRNS QLD 4870

Or via email to: [accounts.receivable@portsnorth.com.au](mailto:accounts.receivable@portsnorth.com.au)

The following information must be provided:

- a copy of the electricity invoice; and
- a clear explanation of the complaint.

Parking infringement appeals and **general complaints** including complaints relating to Ports North personnel or services, noise, dust, odour, pollution etc. should be addressed to:

General Manager Corporate Services  
Ports North  
PO Box 594  
CAIRNS QLD 4870

Or via email to: [enquiries@portsnorth.com.au](mailto:enquiries@portsnorth.com.au).

All complaints must include:

- the complainant's name and contact details;
- full details of the event, date and place concerning the complaint;

and where possible should include:

- the names of others who may have witnessed or have information relating to the complaint;
- any other evidence supporting the complaint;
- the desired outcome.

While anonymous complaints are not encouraged, they are accepted. Complainants are encouraged to provide as much information as possible which may be of assistance when investigating the complaint. It should be noted however, that anonymous complaints may be more difficult to investigate and a resolution to the complaint might be difficult to obtain.

If a complainant has limited capacity, they may authorise a third party to lodge a written complaint on their behalf.

No fee will be charged to lodge a complaint.

## **5. REGISTRATION, ALLOCATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMPLAINT**

### **Electricity Charges**

Complaints relating to electricity charges will be acknowledged upon receipt by Accounts Receivable and a copy forwarded to the Complaints Officer for registration and follow up.

### **Other Complaints**

All other complaints will be acknowledged upon receipt by the Enquiries Officer and will be immediately forwarded to the Complaints Officer, for allocation to the business unit area responsible for the matter that is the subject of the complaint. A copy of the acknowledgement by the Enquiries Officer will be forwarded to the Complaints Officer for record keeping purposes.

### **Parking Infringement Appeals**

All parking infringement appeals will be immediately forwarded to the Parking Complaints Officer, for processing. Where an appellant provides an email address, such appeals will be acknowledged by the Enquiries Officer upon receipt.

### **Feedback Register**

All complaints, parking infringement appeals and other feedback received by Ports North will be recorded in the Feedback Register held by the Parking Complaints Officer, who will be responsible for maintaining the register and all reporting requirements.

## **6. INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINT**

The Complaints Officer will forward all complaints to the Responsible Officer in the business unit area responsible for the matter that is the subject of the complaint, for investigation. The Responsible Officer will investigate the matter or allocate the matter to an Investigation Officer within the relevant business unit area.

Complaints should be investigated as efficiently as possible.

In most cases the complaint should be resolved within 15 working days of receipt. If this is not possible, the extended time for resolving the complaint will be communicated to the complainant, who will be kept informed on a regular basis as to the progress of the complaint.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will report the outcomes to the Responsible Officer who will provide to the Complaints Officer a recommended response to the complainant outlining the findings and/or recommendations made concerning the complaint.

The response is to be approved by the General Manager Corporate Services before forwarding to the complainant and a copy forwarded to the Complaints Officer for record keeping purposes.

## **7. COMMUNICATION**

The Complaints Management Policy and Procedure will be communicated to employees following review and will be available at all times to employees on the Ports North intranet. The Policy and Procedure will also be discussed at Management meetings following any reviews.

This Policy and Procedure will be available at all times to members of the public on Ports North's website at [www.portsnorth.com.au](http://www.portsnorth.com.au) and will be drawn to the attention of complainants in the email acknowledgement, following lodgement of a complaint.

Ports North encourages feedback from staff and the public and recognises that this can be a valuable source of insight into the problems with the organisation, its products, services or the complaint management system.

Where a complaint involves multiple organisations or multiple areas within the organisation, responsibility for communicating with the complainant should be coordinated by the Complaints Officer between the organisation and/or areas involved.

## **8. RECORD KEEPING**

The Investigating Officer and Responsible Officer will be accountable for ensuring complete and accurate recording of all material relating to an investigation into a complaint and upon finalisation of the complaint shall forward the complete complaint file to the Complaints Officer to complete entry in the Feedback Register and filing.

To maintain confidentiality, access to the feedback register and associated documentation will be restricted to relevant Corporate Services personnel and other personnel approved by the General Manager Corporate Services.

## **9. CONDUCT OF THE PARTIES**

All complaints and appeals will be treated in the strictest confidence. Personally identifiable information about an individual should only be disclosed or used in compliance with relevant privacy laws and ethical obligations. This includes the protection of the identity of staff members involved in complaint management, if required.

Ports North will take all reasonable steps to ensure that complainants are not adversely affected because of a complaint made by them or on their behalf.

Each complaint should be managed in an objective and unbiased manner by all officers involved in complaints management.

Complainants will be treated with respect.

Where Ports North staff are the subject matter of a complaint, they will be treated respectfully, objectively and fairly by:-

- Ensuring confidentiality;
- Informing them of any complaint about their performance;
- Giving them the opportunity to explain the circumstances and allowing them appropriate support; and
- Keeping them informed of the progress of the investigation and the outcome.

## 10. REPORTING

Responding to and learning from complaints is an essential part of Ports North's commitment to continual quality improvement.

The General Manager Corporate Services will review the feedback register annually to establish:-

- if there are any trends or obvious changes Ports North could make to reduce or stop complaints occurring, or improve the services we provide; and
- whether complaints have been handled in accordance with this procedure.

## 11. INTERNAL REVIEW

If the nature of the complaint is serious or a complainant is dissatisfied with how the matter has been dealt with by Ports North staff, the complaint may be dealt with at a more senior level. If either of these scenarios apply, a complainant may request that a more senior member of staff review the decision or the outcome of the investigation of the complaint.

## 12. EXTERNAL REVIEW

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint and response by Ports North, they may request a review of the complaint to be undertaken by:

General Complaints:

The Queensland Ombudsman:

GPO Box 3314, BRISBANE QLD 4001

Telephone: (07) 3005 7000 – Toll Free: 1800 068 908

Fax: (07) 3005 7067

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au)

Complaints relating to electricity charges:

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

PO Box 3640, SOUTH BRISBANE BC QLD 4101

Telephone: 1800 662 837

Fax: (07) 3087 9477

Email: [complaints@ewoq.com.au](mailto:complaints@ewoq.com.au)

Online: [www.ewoq.cpm.au](http://www.ewoq.cpm.au)

## Attachment 1

### Complaint Registration Form

#### Your Details:

First Name:	Surname:
Address:	
Email:	Mobile/Phone:

**Type of Complaint:** Noise ☐ Waste ☐ Dust ☐ Odour ☐ Pollution ☐ Electricity ☐ Personnel ☐ Services ☐

*Other (please specify) (for parking infringements appeals see attachment 2):*

#### Details of Complaint:

Location:	Date:	Time:

This complaint must be lodged in writing by forwarding it:

By mail: General Manager Corporate Services, Ports North, PO Box 594, CAIRNS QLD 4870

By email: [enquiries@portsnorth.com.au](mailto:enquiries@portsnorth.com.au)

#### Ports North Office Use Only:

Responsible Officer:	Date completed:
Outcome:	
Further action taken:	
Comments:	

#### Date/Details

Complaint Made	Acknowledgement letter sent	Issue Resolved	Entered on Feedback Register	Further Action?

*The information contained in this form is to be used for the purpose of administration. Information may be disclosed to government agencies or other parties if required by law or necessary for the purpose of continued port operations or administration. Ports North ensures that your personal information is collected, stored, accessed, altered, used and disclosed in accordance with the Right to Information / Information Privacy Policy and the Information Privacy Act 2009.*

**Attachment 2**

## **Appeal of Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN) for Parking/Stopping of Vehicles**

**Applicant Details:**

First Name:	Surname:
Address:	
Email:	Mobile/Phone:

**Details of Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN):**

PIN No:	Date of Offence:	Time of Offence:
---------	------------------	------------------

**Details of Vehicle:**

Registration No:	State:	Make:	Model:
------------------	--------	-------	--------

**Grounds of Appeal:**

I hereby appeal the above PIN on the following grounds:


**Declaration**

I hereby declare that the information provided by me on this form is true and correct in every respect and I hereby request the withdrawal of the above PIN.

Signature:	Date:
------------	-------

**Lodging this appeal:**

Your appeal must be lodged **within 28 days of the infringement date:**

By mail: General Manager Corporate Services, Ports North, PO Box 594, CAIRNS QLD 4870

By email: [enquiries@portsnorth.com.au](mailto:enquiries@portsnorth.com.au)

Please provide any relevant supporting documentation when submitting this form (e.g. Statutory Declarations/Ticket/Police Report)

For further information, refer to Ports North Complaints Management Procedure on our website at [www.portsnorth.com.au](http://www.portsnorth.com.au).

*The information contained in this form is to be used for the purpose of administration. Information may be disclosed to government agencies or other parties if required by law or necessary for the purpose of continued port operations or administration. Ports North ensures that your personal information is collected, stored, accessed, altered, used and disclosed in accordance with the Right to Information / Information Privacy Policy and the Information Privacy Act 2009.*