Last updated: 03/09/2026

Policy Document

Complaints Management

This Policy sets out the process that the Independent Planning Commission will take in response to any complaints received from members of the public

POLICY OVERVIEW

This Complaints Management Policy aims to ensure complaints are managed fairly, efficiently, and transparently. The Policy's objectives are to:

- provide guidance to complainants on complaint making and obligations
- encourage timely, efficient responses recognising legitimate expectations of the complainant
- enhance public confidence in our administrative processes, by contributing to a transparent, responsive environment
- outline complaint management processes in a fair, accessible, equitable manner
- outline dealing with unreasonable complainant conduct
- support staff members when responding to complaints
- use information received through complaints to improve our operations

Policy principles

Complaints are a legitimate, valued part of our relationship with the public. They also provide opportunities for us to identify operational improvements.

Unlike the Commission's *Public Interest Disclosures Policy*, which applies only to 'public officials' (as defined in the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022*), our complaints management process is accessible to everyone.

Complaints are addressed promptly and in a sensitive, objective, consistent, professional, unbiased manner. Issues identified during complaint management are considered in relation to potential Commission service improvement.

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

Complaints are expressions of dissatisfaction made to, or about, the Commission. They may relate to:

- quality of operations
- conduct of Commission members and staff of the Office of the Independent Planning Commission (OIPC)
- suspected breaches of the Commission's policies or the Code of Conduct
- the handling of a complaint

Any allegations of corrupt conduct should be made to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (**ICAC**). Any allegations of serious public money wastage should be made to the NSW Auditor General.

WHAT IS NOT A COMPLAINT?

Our Policy does not cover dissatisfaction with:

- determinations made or advice given by the Commission (including the content of Statements of Reasons, Advice Reports or conditions of consent)
- the conduct of other participants in Commission processes (for example, applicants or objectors)
- Government decisions
- Government policy
- other Government agencies
- legislated powers or procedures

If you have issues relevant to these matters, we recommend you seek independent legal advice and/or contact the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure at:

https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/contact-us

MAKING & MANAGING COMPLAINTS

Complainant obligations

To assist us in managing complaints properly, complainants are asked to:

- refrain from making frivolous, aggravating, or trivial complaints
- refrain from engaging in unreasonable behaviour
- allow sufficient time for a complaint to be addressed
- follow this Policy's procedural steps when making a complaint
- cooperate with the person managing the complaint

In return, complainants can expect respect, courtesy, and sensitivity at all times.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Step 1: make contact

Please write to or email the Commission to formalise complaint details and provide any supporting information. You can find the Commission's contact details at the end of this Policy.

We may accept an anonymous complaint and will follow the procedure in relation to this circumstance – but only where sufficient information is provided.

Upon receipt of your formal complaint, the Commission will:

- acknowledge receipt promptly
- keep your personal details in accordance with our Privacy Statement
- ensure your complaint is understood (we will seek clarification from you if necessary)

Step 2: review

The staff member responsible for managing your complaint will:

- determine whether the complaint can be dealt with under this Policy and if not, endeavour to provide information and alternative options
- consider the seriousness, complexity, and urgency of the complaint
- consider the impact of the issue on you including risks involved in delayed resolution, and potential organisational consultation
- gather information needed to resolve the complaint

When considering a complaint made against an individual, we:

- may inform the individual the subject of the complaint and give them a right to be heard
- will take steps to ensure people considering the complaint do not have a personal interest in the

outcome
- will act only on the basis of rational evidence

Step 3: outcome

After complaint consideration and any investigation into issues raised, you'll be contacted and advised of:

- the outcome of our complaint consideration and actions taken
- the reasons for decisions made
- proposed remedies or resolutions
- potential review options

Resolution of a complaint may include:

- an apology
- a general review of the matter or a particular discussion
- provision of further information
- no further action, if appropriate
- referral to a relevant agency or integrity body

If adverse findings are made about an individual during the course of investigation, obligations under relevant privacy laws will be considered before findings are shared.

DISSATISFACTION WITH COMMISSION RESPONSE

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our complaint management process, you may request for your complaint to be referred to the Executive Director of the OIPC or the Chair of the Commission. You can also refer your complaint to the NSW Ombudsman.

RECORDING COMPLAINTS

When recording complaints, the Commission will comply with our obligations under the State Records Act 1998 and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. Personal information will only be disclosed or used as permitted under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act, our Privacy Statement, and any other confidentiality obligations.

UNREASONABLE CONDUCT

Unreasonable complainant conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our response to complaints.

We are committed to managing unreasonable conduct proactively and decisively and supporting staff that may be exposed to it.

Conduct is deemed 'unreasonable' when its nature or frequency raises health, safety, resource or equity issues for the Commission, Office staff, other service users, or the complainant themselves. Unreasonable conduct includes behaviour that is:

- harmful, humiliating, or abusive
- threatening, discriminatory or comprises bullying
- excessively persistent, demanding, or uncooperative, resulting in a disproportionate, unreasonable impact on services, time or resources

Office staff are encouraged to notify their immediate supervisor of any conduct considered to be unreasonable, concerning or distressing.

GENERAL ENQUIRIES & SUGGESTIONS

The procedures in this Policy do not apply to general enquiries, feedback, or suggestions. However, we do welcome constructive comments, suggestions for improvement, and information requests on our functions and procedures.