



HQPlantations

Corporate Standard

Complaints and Disputes

**Complaints and Disputes
Procedures**



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Summary	This standard communicates HQPlantations procedures for responding to and resolving complaints and disputes quickly, fairly, efficiently and courteously to continue to meet its Stewardship Policy objectives.		
Related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HQPlantations Stewardship Policy HQPlantations Stakeholder Engagement Standard 		
Commencement date	21/01/2021	Next revision	21/01/2024
Approved by	David West	Author	Stephanie Hunt
SharePoint reference	HQPREC-7-8633		
Revision history			
Revision date	Revision number	Description	
01/03/2020	1.0	Initial document	
21/01/2021	2.0	Standard application clarification and amendments to resolution processes	



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1. Policy

HQPlantations (HQP) through its Stewardship Policy is committed to:

- Consult with and consider the needs of our stakeholders, and openly communicate commercial forest management activities and outcomes both internally and externally.
- Gain public recognition as a socially and environmentally responsible commercial forest plantation manager including compliance with the Responsible Wood and Forest Stewardship Council certification requirements.

2. Purpose

Complaints relating to groups, individuals, processes, practices and principles may arise during the course of HQPlantations operations.

The purpose of this standard is to communicate the procedures by which we will respond to and aim to resolve complaints and disputes quickly, fairly, efficiently and courteously to continue to meet its Stewardship Policy objectives.

3. Scope

This standard will be followed for external stakeholder complaints and disputes against HQPlantations, our operations, staff or contractors including, but not limited to, neighbours, local businesses, community groups, environmental and heritage groups, Traditional Owners, local government, emergency services, recreational users, road users, non PLA permittees and/or lessees impacted by our operations on Plantation Licence Area, corporate holdings and haul routes.

This standard does not apply to complaints or disputes arising from:

- Unlawful and/or unauthorised activity committed by a complainant.
- Employees, contractors, suppliers, customers or commercial permittees who have specific channels for dispute resolution outlined in their contracts.
- State Government, where the process for dispute resolution is documented in HQPlantations agreement with the State.

4. Complaint handling principles

We value feedback, both positive and negative, as a means of strengthening and improving relationships and interactions with our stakeholders and adopt the following principles to support a good outcome.

Confidential – all complaints and disputes dealt with under this procedure will be treated as commercial-in-confidence and managed in accordance with relevant privacy legislation.

Accessible – there are a variety of ways someone can make a formal complaint and this standard is displayed on HQPlantations website and intranet, and copies are available to be downloaded, emailed, posted or collected.

Fair – each complaint is approached with a view to understanding the concerns or needs of the complainant, and to respond in a way which is fair, effective and appropriate. Every complaint is treated with courtesy and respect and complaints are not investigated by anyone directly subject to the complaint.

Responsive – complaints are acknowledged when they are received and investigated in a timely manner with a view to resolution. Where complaints cannot be resolved immediately, complainants will be kept informed intermittently of progress.

Integrated – issues raised through this process may be integrated into opportunities for stakeholder engagement and where complaints indicate systemic issues in HQPlantations processes, practices or principles, this will be taken into consideration in future planning.

5. Making a complaint

A number of methods are available to formally notify HQPlantations of a complaint. These include using the contact form for any office at www.hqplantations.com.au/contact or emailing information@hqplantations.com.au or using any of the methods in the table below.

However, to clarify the issues raised and assist in a timely response, we recommend that complaints are made in writing, with the following supporting information:

- Name, address, telephone number and email address of the complainant
- Nature and details of the complaint, including dates, times, places and people involved, or any other helpful information
- Copies of relevant photos, videos, statements or documents
- How you would like the complaint resolved.

Office	Phone call	In person Mon-Fri 8am-4pm	Letter
Head Office (North Lakes)	07 3883 8282	Lakes Vista Office Park First Floor Building 3 2 Flinders Parade North Lakes	PO Box 785 North Lakes QLD 4509
Beerburrum	07 5438 6666	Red Road Beerburrum	C/- Post Office Beerburrum QLD 4517
Blackbutt	07 4170 2800	2 Pine Street Blackbutt	PO Box 235 Blackbutt QLD 4306
Byfield	07 4837 4100	1683 Byfield Road Byfield	1683 Byfield Road Byfield via Yeppoon QLD 4703
Imbil	07 5484 4200	371 Yabba Creek Road Imbil	PO Box 37 Imbil QLD 4570
Ingham	07 4776 2777	Enterprise Street Ingham	PO Box 1322 Ingham QLD 4850
Toolara	07 5488 2112	2747 Tin Can Bay Road Toolara	2747 Tin Can Bay Road Gympie QLD 4570

While every effort will be made to accommodate other methods of notification, calling or emailing an employee directly or talking to an employee out of the office, does not constitute formal notification of a complaint. However, we will take cultural and accessibility needs into consideration when making this determination.

6. Process

There are six stages we follow when handling a complaint. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, some or all of these may be necessary. We will keep the complainant advised throughout the process.

1. Receipt and acknowledgement
2. Assessment
3. Investigation
4. Response
5. Review
6. Consideration of systemic issues

Once a complaint is received, we will record and action it through our stakeholder database. An acknowledgement will be provided to the complainant by an agreed means within five business days. Where possible, we will try to resolve the complaint at the time of contact or within days. Where that is not possible, we will attempt to resolve all complaints within 45 business days.

Complaints requiring assessment, investigation and response will be referred to the local operations manager or relevant team manager. It is our aim to achieve resolution at this first stage.

7. Escalating complaints

Every effort will be made to resolve a complaint at the lowest possible level. The table below shows the process and timeframe for escalating a complaint if satisfactory steps for resolving the complaint cannot be agreed upon at each first level. Adequate time should be allowed to implement the agreed steps before escalating the complaint, which may stretch these timeframes, noting that is desirable that all complaints be resolved in 45 business days.

Escalation	Process	Indicative timeframe
Contact resolution	The complaint is resolved at the time of contact or within days	45 days
First level resolution	Complaint referred to relevant Operations Manager or Team Manager for assessment, investigation and response	
Second level resolution	Complaint referred to Regional Manager and/or Group Manager for review	
Third level resolution	Complaint referred to Chief Executive Officer for resolution	

Complex complaints

Some complaints are complex and take time to resolve even when all parties are working diligently towards resolution. Adequate time should be allowed for the resolution process to reach a conclusion.

8. Managing unresolved complaints or disputes

In the event our endeavours to negotiate a resolution to a dispute prove unsuccessful, HQPlantations will co-operate with external dispute resolution bodies and processes, where the apply.

9. Mitigating actions while a complaint or dispute is being resolved

Where possible, dispute resolution should not interfere with the continued operation of the business, subject to reasonable concerns about health and safety.

HQPlantations will make reasonable endeavours to resolve complaints or disputes in a timely and acceptable manner. However, there may be instances where a timely resolution cannot be achieved and we may need to take mitigating action until a long term resolution can be reached.

Operations will only cease work immediately where it can be demonstrated that it does not meet our health, safety and environmental expectations, does not comply with relevant laws and/or is of substantial magnitude. These operations may recommence when they can be modified to meet these requirements as determined by HQPlantations in its absolute discretion.

Outside these parameters, we will make reasonable endeavours to mitigate the cause of a complaint where it has an objectively measurable impact on the complainant that can be directly attributed to HQPlantations business activities when it takes longer than 45 business days to resolve, to the extent this does not affect our contractual obligations under our customer supply agreements, Plantation Licence or other legal requirements.

Mitigation will not apply if the complainant is not making reasonable efforts to participate in the resolution process in a timely manner.

10. Record Management

Complaints are recorded in HQPlantations stakeholder database and record management systems in accordance with privacy legislation. Recorded information includes:

- Complainant contact details
- The nature of the complaint
- All correspondence, including letters, emails and notes of phone conversations or meetings, photos and videos
- How the complaint will be/was resolved
- Steps taken to resolve the complaint
- Outcome and any other relevant information.

11. Review

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we will periodically review the effectiveness and efficiency of this procedure to identify and implement improvements. This may also involve reviewing:

- The volume and nature of complaints
- Stakeholder complaint behaviour
- Our complaint handling skills
- Approaches to resolution.

Appendix 1: Terms

Term	Definition
Complainant	Any person, group or entity making a complaint.
Party/parties	Refers to anyone involved in the complaint, eg. HQPlantations and/or the complainant.
Complaint	Notification made to the HQPlantations that a complainant has suffered some form of offence, detriment, impairment or loss as a result of business activity and/or employee or contractor behaviour where a response or resolution is expected.
Dispute	A complaint that has not been accepted as valid by one party or the other and has escalated into disagreement between the parties.
Substantial magnitude	A complaint or dispute that involves one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The negative impact of management activities is of such a scale that it cannot be reversed or mitigated • It affects legal or customary rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities • Acts of intimidation, physical violence, and/or destruction of property against forest workers and/or stakeholders.