

A. Entity responses

As mandated in Section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, the Queensland Audit Office gave a copy of this report with a request for comments to the Office of the Public Guardian.

We also provided a copy of this report to the Premier and Minister for Trade; Treasurer and Minister for Investment; Under Treasurer, Queensland Treasury; Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet; Director-General, Department of Justice and Attorney-General; and Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence with an invitation to respond.

This appendix contains the responses to our audit recommendations that we received.

The heads of the entities are responsible for the accuracy, fairness, and balance of their comments.



Comments received from Acting Public Guardian, Office of the Public Guardian



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Reference: #5443593

22 January 2021

Mr Brendan Worrall
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
PO Box 15396
CITY EAST QLD 4002

By email: gao@gao.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Worrall

Thank you for your email received on 1 December 2020, regarding the proposed Queensland Audit Office's Performance Audit Report titled *Responding to complaints from people with impaired capacity—Part 2: The Office of the Public Guardian* (Report).

I acknowledge the Report's findings and would like to thank you for taking the time to audit the Office of the Public Guardian's (OPG) complaints management system. I have reviewed the recommendations and I enclose the OPG's response. The purpose of the OPG is to promote and protect our clients' rights, interests and wellbeing and I am confident that the recommendations will further this purpose by strengthening the quality of the OPG's services.

I have taken steps to prioritise implementation of the recommendations. The Report will greatly assist in enhancing the complaints management system within the OPG, to provide a more responsive and accessible system that reflects best practice complaints handling processes.

Yours sincerely

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Shayna Smith
Acting Public Guardian

Enc.

Responses to recommendations



Office of the Public Guardian

Responding to complaints from people with impaired capacity— Part 2: The Office of the Public Guardian

Response to recommendations provided by the Acting Public Guardian on 22 January 2021.

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Office of the Public Guardian</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> measures and monitors complaint response times and reports regularly on how many complaints are finalised within target time frames 	Agree	Q4 2020–21	<p>The Office of the Public Guardian increased the monitoring of its complaints management system, including response times, in Q4 2019–20 by adding it as a standing agenda item to be considered at fortnightly meetings of its Senior Leadership Group. Additional governance processes will be incorporated to track any recommendations and actions arising from these discussions.</p> <p>The biannual complaints focus report developed in 2020 will instead be delivered quarterly in 2021, to coincide with departmental complaints reporting timeframes. The quarterly complaints focus report will provide the Senior Leadership Group with an analysis of trend data for continuous improvement and provide data on how many complaints are finalised within target time frames.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> makes its complaints management system easier to use, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> making information clear and easy to understand with alternative language or using video, audio, or graphics offering an online complaint form 	Agree	Q3 2021–22	<p>The Office of the Public Guardian will commence a review of its communication materials, including website content and make any necessary improvements to ensure complaints material is designed with accessibility in mind. We will do this by making it easy to read and understand the information and we will provide it in alternative formats to support clients to navigate the system and lodge a complaint.</p> <p>In addition to the online contact form currently available on the Office of the Public Guardian's website and 1300 phone line, the development of an online complaints form will offer an alternative mechanism to encourage people to make a complaint.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> makes the Complaints Management Policy and Procedure easier to understand 	Agree	Q2 2021–22	<p>The Office of the Public Guardian will commence a review of its Complaints Management Policy and Procedure with the view to making it easier to understand and follow.</p>



Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and year)	Additional comments
			<p>As the Office of the Public Guardian wants clients to understand their rights and options throughout the complaints process, scripting will be developed to support staff in their communication and ensure that clear and consistent information is made available to all clients and their networks and key stakeholders.</p>
<p>4. ensures all complaints received are recorded accurately and on time, including complaints received and resolved at a local level.</p> <p>To do this, OPG should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly define all data fields in the complaints management system so that staff understand their use and purpose provide staff with specific guidance and training on recognising and assessing complaints, and recording them in the system carry out quality assurance checks and record the results, to make sure staff manage complaints appropriately and record the complaint accurately 	Agree	Q2 2021–22	<p>The Office of the Public Guardian will enhance complaints management processes and practices by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing the IT complaints management system data fields so they are clearly defined providing on-the-job complaints training and a supporting checklist establishing a complaints management quality assurance process, and building a review of complaints and quality assurance results into staff supervision frameworks.
<p>5. improve complaints management training and support for staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeted training in handling complaints from clients with impaired decision-making capacity finalising and implementing its internal complaints management procedure to provide staff with better guidance and support reviewing training effectiveness to ensure it meets both organisational and staff needs 	Agree	Q1 2021–22	<p>The Office of the Public Guardian has enhanced learning objectives for staff under its recently released <i>Learning and Development Framework 2020–23</i>, which identifies complaints training as a core learning and development competency. The Framework will be reviewed to include training that has targeted information for handling complaints from clients with impaired decision-making capacity. Effectiveness of any training will be reviewed through staff supervision frameworks to ensure it meets both organisational and staff needs.</p> <p>The Office of the Public Guardian’s Complaints Management Policy and Procedure will be finalised to support staff to recognise and respond to all complaints through to resolution and will be complemented by the internal complaints management procedure.</p>

Comments received from Acting Director-General, Department of Justice and Attorney-General



Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Office of the Director-General

In reply please quote: 521367/8, 5443875

14 Jan 2021

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Dear Mr Worrall

Thank you for your email dated 1 December 2020 regarding the report titled Responding to complaints from people with impaired capacity – Part 2: The Office of the Public Guardian.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General has no comments regarding the proposed report. I understand the proposed report has also been provided to the Office of the Public Guardian and Public Trustee for their response direct.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Thomson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Victoria Thomson
Acting Director-General

Comments received from Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet



Department of the
Premier and Cabinet

For reply please quote: *SocPo/TP – TF20/32364 – DOJ 21/8746*
Your reference: 9190P

Mr Brendan Worrall
Auditor-General
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Dear Mr Worrall

I am responding to an email of 1 December 2020 from your office, regarding the Queensland Audit Office's (QAO) performance audit on how effectively the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) manages complaints regarding people with impaired decision-making capacity.

I appreciate the provision of an advance copy of the OPG report for information purposes. I note and support the QAO's recommendations for improving the OPG'S complaints management processes.

Again, thank you for providing a copy of the OPG report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Stewart".

Dave Stewart
Director-General

21/01/2021

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