



Australian Government
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Complaint Handling Policy

June 2021



Introduction

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) provides high-quality and timely advice to the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and our portfolio ministers.

We are accountable for the services we provide and the conduct of our staff. All PM&C staff must follow the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct, which emphasises personal integrity, honesty, respect and accountability.

Your feedback can help us understand how well PM&C interacts with the broader community. We welcome your feedback as a way to improve the way we work and engage with the public.

What matters can PM&C consider?

The Department is able to consider and resolve complaints about:

- The behaviour and conduct of **our** staff in their dealings with members of the public.
- The services we provide and are responsible for.
- Procurement processes that do not comply with the [Government Procurement \(Judicial Review\) Act 2018](#)¹

Public Interest Disclosures

Public officials are able to submit a Public Interest Disclosure if they suspect serious wrongdoing within PM&C. Visit our [Public Interest Disclosure](#) page for more information.

What matters is PM&C unable to consider?

PM&C can only consider issues that involve PM&C staff and services.

If you have a complaint about services provided by another federal, state or territory government, contact the responsible agency or Minister in the first instance.

If you are still unhappy with the outcome, contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#).

How can I share my feedback with the Prime Minister?

Use the '[Contact your PM](#)' web form to contact the Prime Minister.

Can I submit an anonymous complaint?

The Department accepts anonymous complaints. However, if we can't contact you for additional information it may make it difficult to resolve your complaint.

¹ Complaints relating to the Government Procurement Judicial Review Act 2018 (2018) are dealt with through a separate process – see document Complaint Handling related to the GPJR Act 2018

If you wish to remain anonymous, please let us know if you would like PM&C to notify you of the outcome, and the best way to contact you.

What can I expect from PM&C?

If you make a complaint about a PM&C staff member or service, the PM&C Complaints team will:

- keep the matter confidential and only share information with those who need to know,
- treat you with courtesy, respect and impartiality,
- give you an opportunity to provide supporting information,
- keep you informed of progress made,
- take all practicable steps to resolve your complaint
- outline the process to seek a review of the Department's response to your complaint.

What do we need from you?

To assess your complaint about a PM&C staff member or service, we ask you to:

- clearly state what the issue is and provide any supporting information,
- outline what outcome/resolution you are seeking,
- cooperate with and treat our staff with courtesy and respect.

How can I submit a complaint?

The Department has two channels through which you can submit a complaint – either in writing or via the [online form](#).

Post:

Complaints
Ministerial Support Division
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6500
Canberra ACT 2600

How long will it take?

The Department aims to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

Complaints that are simple and easily resolved, will be:

- acknowledged within two working days, and
- responded to within 7 working days – from the day you submitted your complaint.

Complaints that are complex and serious in nature, will be:

- acknowledged within two working days, and
- responded to within 28 days – from the day you submitted your complaint.

The Complaints team will notify you if we will be unable to meet these timeframes.

Threatening messages or language

The Department takes threats of violence very seriously. Complaints that threaten violence or harm will be immediately referred to the police. Complaints that are abusive, obscene, or discriminatory will not be addressed.

Can I request a review of the Department's response?

You may request a review of the outcome of your complaint or the process used to address your complaint. To take up this option you will need to specify in writing:

- what you would like reviewed, and
- why you disagree with the response/decision provided by the Department.

Once the Department sends its initial response, you have 28 days to request a review.

After the Department receives your written request for review, we will:

- assign a different or more senior staff member to review the Department's original decision against your concerns, and
- provide a written response outlining the outcome of the review.

If you are still dissatisfied with the Department's response, you can take the matter to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can be contact on 1300 362 072 or via this [website](#)

How is my personal information protected?

Your personal information is protected under the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth), which includes the [Australian Privacy Principles \(APPs\)](#).

The investigation of your complaint may involve sharing your personal (including sensitive) information with other relevant areas within the Department, to achieve a resolution. We may also share your information with another government agency if, for example, we think that they can better assist you in relation to your complaint or we require information from that agency to consider and resolve your complaint.

The Department also collects and uses a range of personal information for monitoring, evaluating, reporting on and improving its services and functions, and for meeting statutory timeframes. The Department removes identifying details about your personal and sensitive information, unless it is reasonably necessary to use and disclose for these purposes.

Our [Privacy Policy](#) provides more information about how we protect your personal information and who to contact if you have a privacy-related enquiry or complaint.