

# Integrity Reform Taskforce

## Complaints Clearinghouse

15 August 2022

TRIM: DOC/22/146075



# The core recommendation

*'Consideration be given to the **establishment of a technologically-enabled clearinghouse** which will:*

- *Act as a first point of contact for complainants to report concerns and complaints, including complaints about alleged corruption, administrative decisions, and customer complaints.*
- *Assess each complaint and determine whether:*
  - *the complaint should be referred to an integrity body;*
  - *the complaint should be referred to an agency complaints-handling process or for departmental investigation; or*
  - *no further action be taken (for vexatious or trivial complaints).*
- *Operate through the creation and use of a central reporting portal, accessible to integrity agencies, ethical standards units and complainants, the purpose of which would be to rationalise and streamline reporting and compliance administration to enable agencies to focus on their core business in a timely manner and reduce administrative burden.'*

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Coaldrakes's recommendation is to establish a complaints clearinghouse that will be the first point of contact for complainants and will assess and refer complaints to the appropriate body. He is recommending that there is a central reporting portal that will be accessible to entities and complainants to help with visibility and reduce administrative burden.

Coupled with Coaldrakes recommendation, the Fitzgerald inquiry into the CCC was released last week which supports the Clearinghouse as it would reduce the incidence of complaints being rebuffed as "out of jurisdiction" effectively allowing the CCC to be left to focus on more serious matters and encouraging agencies to manage the less serious ones.

Whilst Coaldrake provided a recommendation, he also commented in his narrative on other matters such as

Its role in assessing and referring matters, based on the nature of the complaint, to agencies and the model with a suggestion it operates as a 'shared service' supported by a 'practice and management oversight group'.

Central reporting system should be able to display details about the complaint lodgment, where the complaint currently sits, how long it has been in the system, etc.

A separate interface for complainants should be developed which is a dashboard which records information about the complaint (for example, how long the complaint has been in the system).

Consideration of how the clearinghouse may work with the public interest disclosure process.

Released under RTI - DPC

# Policy intent

## Coaldrake highlighted concerns of:

- Widespread confusion about how integrity bodies fit together and the limits of their respective jurisdictions.
- Complaints being passed from one agency or integrity body to another and consequent timeliness issues.
- Tracking and visibility for both a user and operator's perspective.
- The policies, directives and reporting obligations enlivened when a complaint is lodged.

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It should be noted that the recommendation and sub-recommendations provide scope for consideration of Coaldrake's recommendation. As a result, the Steering Committee has identified the following four areas that highlight Coaldrake's intent and concerns about complaints handling.

An options paper is being developed to allow the Steering Committee and the CEO Leadership Board the opportunity to consider how this Complaints Clearinghouse recommendation will be best addressed.

## Key outcomes – addressing the policy intent

### The proposed outcomes for the options paper are:

1. Deliver against the concerns raised in the Coaldrake Report.
2. Improve visibility of tracking of a complaint
3. Improve experience for complainants to lodge complaints when they are unsure of where to lodge a complaint
4. Improve policy to expedite outcome focused complaints handling including appropriate closure

## Project scope – in and out of scope



- Complaints about government services and products or public servants conduct; and complaints made by public servants in terms of crime and misconduct (that may or may not have been dealt with at a local level), incorporating human rights complaints and privacy complaints



- The investigation and management of the complaint by the in scope agencies
- Complaints by individuals against private businesses that are not providing services on behalf of government
- The reporting or recording of a public interest disclosure
- Employee complaints and grievances



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Using the definition of a complaint under section 219A of the Public Service Act, in scope complaints would be for complaints about government services and products or public servant conduct and would include human rights complaints and privacy complaints relating to government services, products or public servants conduct.

Out of scope is the investigation and management of the complaint – we will leave the government agency to provide the subject matter expertise on each complaint.

Public interest disclosures

Employee complaints and grievances that are under the PSC directive “Individual employee grievances directive 11/20”

## Project scope – in and out of scope



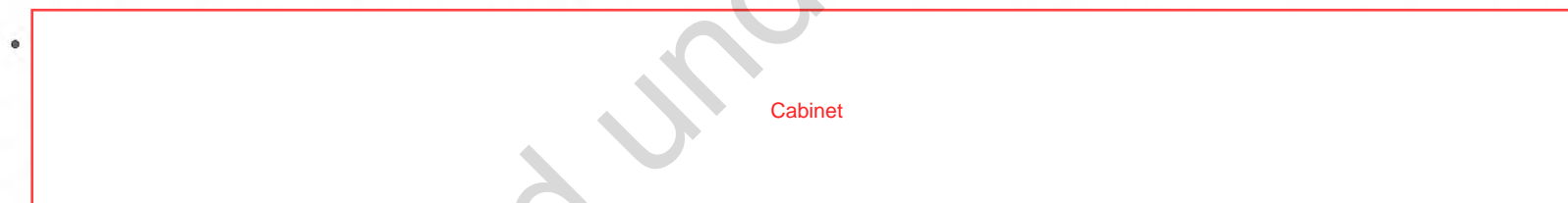
- Departments
- Core Integrity bodies e.g. Crime and Corruption Commission, Queensland Ombudsman, Queensland Audit Office



- Government owned corporations
- Statutory authorities
- Distributed integrity bodies e.g. Electoral Commission, Office Independent Assessor, Racing Integrity Commission, Health Ombudsman, Qld Civil & Administrative Tribunal

## Next steps

- Queensland Government Customer and Digital Group (QGCDG) and the Integrity Reform Taskforce are completing a detailed analysis of all options and the financial considerations and risks and issues of each option. All options to be underpinned by customer experience design.
- Proposed to provide an *options paper* to the IRSC for comment by **late August/early September 2022**.



- Subject to the IRSC's approval of a preferred option, a conceptual design for the preferred option will be developed.