



Queensland Corrective Services

2017-18 Annual Client Complaints Report



Queensland
Government

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Introduction

What is a Complaint?

The *Public Service Act 2008*, section 219A requires all public sector agencies to maintain a complaints management system for their customers.

For Queensland Corrective Services (QCS), customer complaints include complaints received from prisoners, their families and friends, non-government service providers, other visitors to correctional centres or members of the public who may have had contact with the Department. It also includes complaints received anonymously and those received via Ministerial or Commissioner correspondence.

A customer complaint is defined as:

A complaint about the service or action of a department, or its staff, by a person who is apparently directly affected by the service or action; and includes, for example, a complaint about any of the following —

- *a decision made, or a failure to make a decision, by a public service employee of the department;*
- *an act, or failure to act, of the department;*
- *the formulation of a proposal or intention by the department;*
- *the making of a recommendation by the department; and*
- *the customer service provided by a public service employee of the department.*

Complaint Reporting

QCS uses Resolve as its Complaints Management System. Each correctional centre, probation and parole location and central office business units are required to identify, record and assess complaints through Resolve.

QCS aims to finalise the majority of complaints within a 30 working day timeframe.

Complaints pertaining to allegations of fraud, corruption or official misconduct are referred to the Ethical Standards Unit and are not recorded on Resolve.

Similarly, complaints which are considered to be employee grievances are referred to Human Resources and are not recorded on Resolve.

Matters which are subject to statutory rights of review are excluded from the complaints process.

Complaints logged on Resolve are assigned an issue/issues which then allows for the identification of trends/systemic issues across the Department. The Complaints issues identified in Resolve reflect key areas of operational service.

Official Visitors

The *Corrective Services Act 2006* (CSA), Part 6, Chapter 6 establishes the role of the Official Visitor as independent members of the community tasked with visiting corrective services facilities at least monthly to receive and investigate complaints made by prisoners about their treatment while in custody. Official Visitors work initially with the correctional centre to try and resolve the issue raised by the prisoner. Official Visitors report through the Office of the Chief Inspector, another appointed position under the CSA.

Official Visitors provide reports on the matters investigated through a database managed by the Office of the Chief Inspector. This report does not include data on complaints received by Official Visitors.

Annual Complaints Report

Pursuant to section 219A(3) of the *Public Service Act 2008*, public sector agencies are required to publish an annual complaints report by 30 September each year.

At a minimum, reporting must include: the number of customer complaints received by the department during the financial year, the number of those complaints resulting in further action and the number of those complaints resulting in no further action.

This report satisfies these requirements.

Complaint Numbers

During 2017-18, Queensland Corrective Services has received 922 complaints, averaging 77 complaints per month.

The overwhelming majority of complaints received during 2017-18 were from correctional centres.

Figure 1 – Number of Complaints Received Statewide by Month

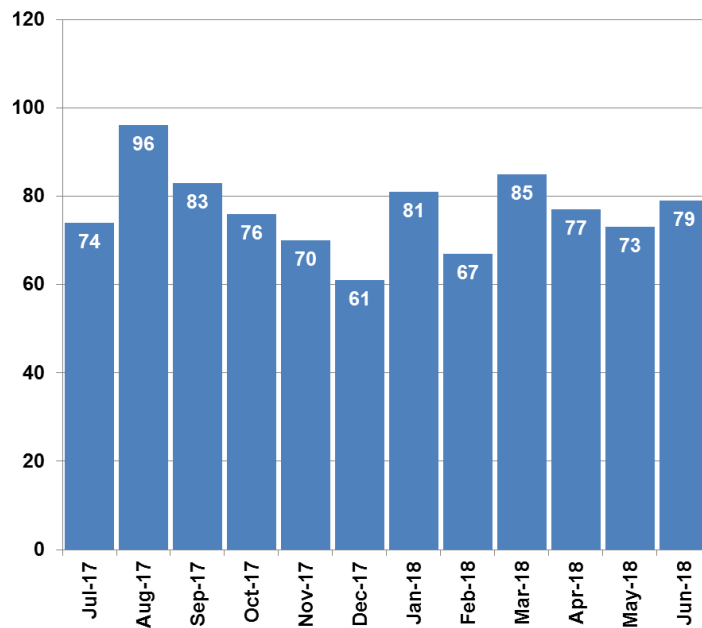


Figure 2 – Distribution of Complaints

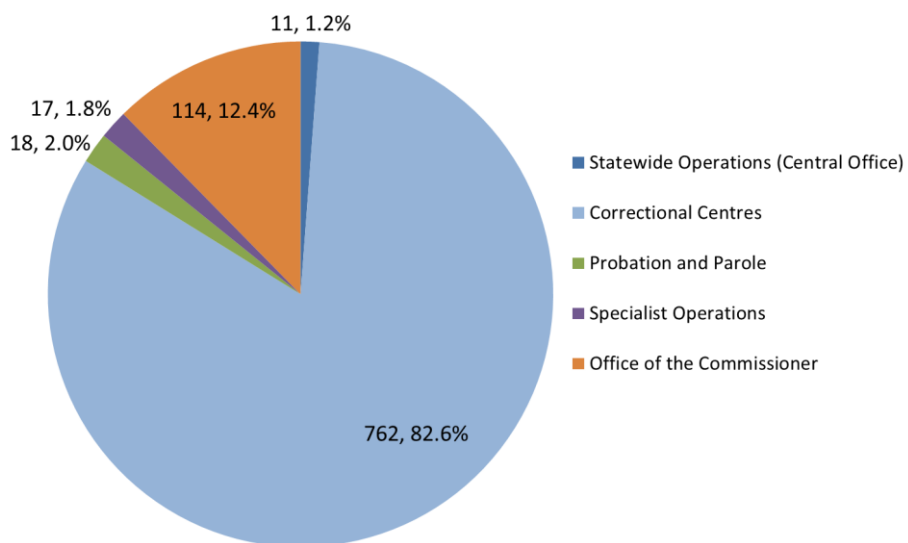


Table 1 - Number of Complaints Received

Location	Total	% of total
Statewide Operations (Central Office)	11	1.2%
Correctional Centres	762	82.6%
Probation and Parole	18	2.0%
Specialist Operations	17	1.8%
Office of the Chief Inspector	0	0.0%
Office of the Commissioner	12	1.3%
Operational Support Services	0	0.0%
Parole Board Secretariat	0	0.0%
Strategy and Governance*	102	11.1%
TOTAL	922	100.0%

*Strategy and Governance included the Office of the Commissioner until 8 March 2018.

Complaint Issues

Table 2 - Number of Complaints Received by Issue

The below table reports complaints received by QCS during 2017-18, presented by the issue type.

Issue	Total
Access to property	23
Employment	16
Minors	0
Offender Management	609
Offender Programs	33
Offender Release	0
Search	16
Staff	108
Visitors and Liaison	121
Other	111
To be confirmed/ matter under investigation	0
TOTAL *	1,037

** There may be more than one issue recorded per complaint. Therefore, the totals recorded in Table 1 may differ to the totals recorded in Table 2.*

There were a total of 1,037 complaints issues identified in the 922 complaints received during 2017-18.

The majority of complaints received during 2017-18 relate to 'Offender Management Issues' (58.7%).

The second most frequent area of complaint was in relation to 'Visitors and Liaison', with 121 complaints.

Complaint Outcomes

Of the complaints received during 2017-18, 23 (or 2.5%) remain open/unresolved.

Of the 899 complaints finalised, 444 were not substantiated (49.4% of finalised complaints).

A smaller proportion of complaints were either substantiated or partially substantiated (38.9% combined total of finalised complaints).

Table 3 - Outcome of Complaints Finalised

	Outcome	Total	% of finalised complaints
Further Action	Complaint substantiated	101	11.2%
	Complaint partially substantiated	248	27.6%
	Conciliation/mediation	8	0.9%
	Referred or made to another Agency	54	6.0%
	Other	6	0.7%
No Further Action	Complainant unable to be contacted	3	0.3%
	Complaint not substantiated	444	49.4%
	Frivolous/ Vexatious	1	0.1%
	Insufficient information provided	9	1.0%
	Withdrawn by complainant	25	2.8%
	Complaints Still Open/ Ongoing **	23	
	Total	922	
	<i>Complaint resulting in further action</i>	417	46.4%
	<i>Complaint resulting in no further action</i>	482	53.6%

** Refers to complaints which have not been finalised at the time of reporting (complaints with an 'open' status). An outcome remains unknown until the complaint is closed. A complaint which may have an outcome recorded on Resolve, but which remains 'open' are reported under this category until the complaint is closed.

Complaints Managed by QCS during 2017-18

Complaints carry over from one financial year to the next. During 2017-18, 1,002 cases were managed through the QCS Complaints Management System, consisting of:

- 80 cases received in 2016-17, which were finalised in 2017-18;
- 899 cases which were received and finalised within 2017-18; and
- 23 cases which were received in 2017-18, and which remain open.

Table 4 - Complaints Finalised during 2017-18

		Year Complaint Received	
		2016-17	2017-18
Outcome *		2016-17	2017-18
Further Action	Complaint substantiated	7	101
	Complaint partially substantiated	23	248
	Conciliation/mediation	0	8
	Referred or made to another Agency	6	54
	Other	4	6
No Further Action	Complainant unable to be contacted	0	3
	Complaint not substantiated	40	444
	Frivolous/ Vexatious	0	1
	Insufficient information provided	0	9
	Withdrawn by complainant	0	25
Complaints Still Open/ Ongoing **		7	23
Total		87	922
Complaint resulting in further action		40	417
Complaint resulting in no further action		40	482

* The above table records the outcome by the year the complaint was received.

** Refers to complaints which have not been finalised at the time of reporting (complaints with an 'open' status). An outcome remains unknown until the complaint is closed. A complaint which may have an outcome recorded on Resolve, but which remains 'open' are reported under this category until the complaint is closed.