



COMMISSIONER  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY  
AND THE  
ENVIRONMENT



## Guidelines for Making a Complaint

Under the ACT *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993*

### TYPES OF COMPLAINTS HANDLED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Commissioner can investigate complaints about *'the management of the environment by the Territory or a territory authority'* and *'issues relating to ecologically sustainable development in the ACT'*.

### THE COMPLAINT FORM

Complaints to the Commissioner must be made in writing on the complaint form available from the Commission or website at [www.envcomm.com.au](http://www.envcomm.com.au)

Before you fill in the form, you are welcome to discuss the matter with the Complaints Officer who can advise you about how the Commissioner handles complaints. This can be done over the phone or by email with the Commissioner's office.

### WHAT HAPPENS ONCE YOUR COMPLAINT IS SUBMITTED

1. You will receive an acknowledgement that the Commissioner has received your complaint form.
2. Your complaint will be assessed to determine whether it will be investigated.
3. The Commissioner may decide the complaint will not be investigated and the complaint will be closed. You will be notified about this decision.
4. If the complaint proceeds to investigation, the Commissioner will notify all relevant parties in writing that an investigation is to take place.
5. The Commissioner will then commence the investigation of the complaint.
6. The Commissioner will conclude the investigation and produce an investigation report.
7. The investigation report, including any recommendations, will be provided to the relevant Minister(s), the Territory and Territory authority(s). A copy of the report will also be provided to the complainant.
8. The complaint will then be closed.

## WHEN CAN YOU EXPECT TO HEAR BACK

To the extent it is appropriate and at the Commissioner's discretion, updates may be provided to complainants regarding the progress of the complaint investigation.

*Indicative timeframes for complaint processing - please note timeframes are provided as an estimate only. Complaint processing timeframes are dependent on the complexity and scope of the complaint.*

<b>Complaint processing stage</b>	<b>Indicative timeframe (estimate only)</b>
Commissioner acknowledges receipt of official Complaint Form completed in full	Within 7 business days of receipt of the completed Form.
Complaint assessment	Depending on the complexity of the complaint, up to 3 months from date of receiving the completed Complaint Form. Additional time may be required at the Commissioner's discretion.
Complaint investigation	Within 6 to 12 months.
Communication of the investigation report to complainant and the relevant Minister(s), the Territory and Territory authority(s)	Within 3 business days.
Complaint is closed / acquitted	Immediate.
Response from relevant Minister(s), the Territory and Territory authority(s)	No timeframe available. Minister(s), the Territory and Territory authority(s) are not subject to any statutory requirement to respond to complaint investigation reports, including any recommendations contained therein.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED

Once the complaint investigation is completed and the investigation report is produced, copies of the report are distributed to the complainant, relevant Minister(s), the Territory and Territory authority(s).

### *Regarding recommendations*

The complaint investigation report may contain recommendations.

These recommendations are not binding, in that they do not have statutory power under the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993*. The Minister, the Territory and Territory authority(s) may choose to act on the recommendations at their own discretion.

**Please do not hesitate to contact the Complaints Officer at the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment if you have any further queries or concerns about your complaint.**

**Office phone number (02) 6207 2626.**