Complaints handling

NSW has more than 34,000 Crown reserves—land set aside on behalf of the community for a wide range of public purposes such as environmental and heritage protection, recreation and sport, community halls and open space.

The Crown reserve system is owned by the NSW Government on behalf of the people of NSW. The broader community expects that Crown reserves will be managed with transparency, integrity and good governance. The NSW Department of Industry appoints Crown land managers (CLMs) who are responsible for the care, control and management of Crown reserves.

This guide on complaints handling is part of a suite resources designed to assist CLMs administer their duties and enable a consistent approach to the governance of Crown reserves. A sample complaint register is also attached.

This resource is aligned to the Crown reserve code of conduct—a guide for a minimum standard of behaviour and ethical decision-making. For managing complaints, the code states:

‘We are customer-focused and responsible for ensuring necessary information and assistance is communicated in a prompt, impartial and professional manner.’

The department expects all Crown reserve stakeholders to uphold these values and comply with the code in the performance of their duties.

Complaints

A complaint is a statement expressing dissatisfaction of behaviour in relation to the code’s minimum standards. A complaint could relate to:

- isolated behaviour issues (e.g. rude, abrupt, unsympathetic)
- poorly managed conflict of interest
- incorrect, misleading or incomplete advice
- failure to provide a responsive service.

Allegations

An allegation is a statement claiming serious concern regarding behaviour in relation to the code’s minimum standards. An allegation could relate to:

- fraud
- received/offered bribes
- abuse of power (e.g. entering into a contract/agreement to benefit private interests)
- serious/substantial waste of public resources, including funds
- unacceptable behaviour (e.g. harassment, assault, drunkenness, discrimination, etc.).

Other resources