

Human Rights

The Public Trustee has been embedding human rights understanding across our organisation before and since the commencement of the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Human Rights Act) on 1 January 2020.

We are committed to:

- building a culture that respects and promotes human rights
- protecting and promoting human rights
- promoting a dialogue about the nature, meaning and scope of human rights
- placing the human rights of individuals, especially the most vulnerable, at the forefront of our service delivery.

Prior to 1 January 2020, we took a number of steps to prepare for the commencement of the Act including:

- established an organisation-wide working group to develop and progress an implementation plan to ensure that we are best placed to meet our legislative obligations arising from the Human Rights Act from 1 January 2020
- all programs reviewed policies, procedures, manuals and related documents to ensure that they were compatible with human rights and promoted actions and decision-making in line with the Human Rights Act
- we reviewed how we deliver our services to our customers to ensure that we are acting compatibly with their human rights
- our Complaints team reviewed the Complaints Management Framework to ensure that our process is in line with the new complaints processes and reporting requirements under the Human Rights Act
- our Human Resources Services team reviewed their policies and procedures to ensure alignment with the Human Rights Act and consulted important stakeholders such as the Agency Consultative Committee and ELT
- commenced development of our Social Responsibility Charter
- created a project page so staff could follow the progress of the Working Group and access further information about human rights
- provided regular communication to staff about the Human Rights Act and encouraged staff to familiarise themselves with the legislative changes and access a range of resources developed within the Public Trustee and from external sources such as the Queensland Human Rights Commission
- produced a Human Rights Act Introductory Awareness Video for our staff
- all staff completed a mandatory self-paced online course, delivered in conjunction with the Queensland Human Rights Commission, in December 2019
- 64 senior and executive staff attended training on the Human Rights Act delivered by Crown Law

- celebrated Human Rights Month by holding a PT-wide morning tea on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2019, which provided an opportunity for staff to learn more about human rights and what it means to them, our customers and the broader Queensland community.

Since the Human Rights Act came into force:

- we have finalised our Social Responsibility Charter
- we have embedded human rights into our Strategic Plan 2020–2024
- all new staff are enrolled in the mandatory self-paced online course on the Human Rights Act
- incorporated awareness of the Human Rights Act and its application into our corporate orientation day which is attended by all new employees
- new and existing staff can access a range of resources and guides on acting and making decisions that are compatible with human rights. This includes case studies illustrating actions and decision-making that are compatible with human rights and which put the customer at the forefront of our service delivery
- the consideration of human rights in all decision-making for frontline employees is being measured as part of the quarterly quality assurance program, which examines the quality of evidencing of decisions, and provides for systems review, training opportunities and trend analysis
- all programs are required to consider human rights and the Human Rights Act when developing, implementing and reviewing their policy documents to ensure that the Public Trustee acts compatibly with human rights when acting or decision-making.

Human rights complaints

The Public Trustee has reviewed its Complaints Management Framework to ensure that:

- human rights complaints are identified at the point of receipt
- the complaints process is compatible with human rights, the principles of natural justice and incorporates the complaints resolution process available under the Human Rights Act.

The Public Trustee has advised its customers of the availability of making a human rights complaint and the complaints process through:

- our website - <https://www.pt.qld.gov.au/contact/contact-us/compliments-and-complaints/>
- our Complaints Management Policy and leaflet called 'Your Complaints Journey' which are also available on the Public Trustee's website.

During 2019-20, the Public Trustee received five complaints that were assessed as human rights complaints:

- three complaints were identified by the complainant as human rights related
- two complaints were assessed by the Public Trustee as being human rights related.

The complaints were resolved by the Public Trustee providing an explanation to the customers or the customers' support network about the decision that was made or the action that was taken. In each case, the Public Trustee was of the view that it had acted compatibly with human rights and in line with its obligations under the Human Rights Act.

The Queensland Human Rights Commission has not notified the Public Trustee of any unresolved complaints that it has accepted for review.

COVID-19

As outlined in this report, the global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the Public Trustee in a number of ways. Throughout this period, the Public Trustee has endeavoured to balance continued service delivery with:

- the health, well-being and safety of our staff and customers
- the different needs of our customers
- ensuring that there are multiple avenues for our customers to contact the Public Trustee including in person, by telephone and by email.

Throughout the COVID-19 period, the Public Trustee's Complaints Unit has remained available during its standard operating hours to ensure that the Public Trustee can receive and respond to any concerns that our customers and stakeholders may have to any changes in service delivery.