

# 115 Code of Competitive Neutrality Complaints

## Statutory Policy



### PURPOSE

Guide for Council received complaints under the Competitive Neutrality Complaints, under the Queensland Local Government Act.

### SCOPE

The aim of this process is to provide, in accordance with *Section 48 of the Local Government Act 2009*, a means for resolving complaints by affected persons about failures of Council's local government business entities to carry out activities in a way that complies with the competitive neutrality principles applying to the activities.

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### 1. Preliminary Procedures

The preliminary procedure for affected persons to raise concerns about alleged failure of business activities to comply with the relevant competitive neutrality principles, and for clarifying and, if possible, resolving those concerns is:

- Complainant advises Council verbally or in writing of their concerns. If the complaint is made verbally, it should be referred to the CEO if available or another senior officer and all relevant details obtained.
- Council will acknowledge receipt of the concerns in writing within fourteen (14) days and advise the person expressing the concerns that the Chief Executive Officer is investigating the matter;
- The Chief Executive Officer may refer the matter to a review officer of his/her choice or elect to personally undertake the function of the review officer;
- The CEO or review officer will seek to establish the facts relating to the concerns expressed by the person. Investigation of the matter may involve meeting with the person, collecting data, and holding further meetings;
- The CEO or review officer will develop a proposed response to the concerns and seek, within a reasonable time, the person's views on the proposed response;
- The CEO shall make a response to the person in writing.

#### 2. Advice to Applicants of the Complaints Procedure

In the case where a person has expressed concerns that have not been resolved under the preliminary process and Council becomes aware that the person proposes to make a formal complaint about Council's business activities, Council will make the information in Appendix A available to the complainant to ensure that they are able to make the complaint.

#### 3. How to Make a Complaint

In making a complaint, the following information should be provided in writing by the complainant and addressed to the CEO:

- Details of the complainant's name and contact details such as:
  - a) Address
  - b) Phone number/s
  - c) Fax number/s
  - d) Email address
- Details about the alleged failure of the business activity to comply with the relevant competitive neutrality principles;
- Details of how the complainant was adversely affected by the alleged noncompliance;
- Details as to whether the complainant is, or could be, in competition with the local government business entity; and

- A statement that the complainant has made a genuine attempt to resolve his/her concerns with the local government business entity using the preliminary procedures set up by Council. The complaint process under *Division 7 Subdivision 2 sections 45 to 55* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* should be followed by Council.

#### **4. Sending Complaints to and Investigation of Complaints by Referee**

- Formal complaints received by Council are to be directed to the CEO and acknowledged in writing within five (5) working days;
- The CEO must refer the complaint to the Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) within five (5) working days of receipt;
- Formal complaints are to be recorded, showing the date of referral of the complaint to the QPC and an outline of the complaint; and
- The relevant business activity or business unit is to be informed that a formal complaint has been received.

#### **5. Recording System**

The record system will record the following information in regard to complaints made about the competitive neutrality of Council's business activities:

- Details of the complaint process established;
- Where persons express concerns about the operations of Council's business activity, the concerns and the outcome of the preliminary procedures are to be recorded;
- Where persons have made a complaint to Council, details of the complaint are to be recorded;
- Details of when the complaint was sent to the QPC for investigation;
- Where a person has made a complaint to Council, and the QPC has determined not to investigate the complaint, the notification issued by the referee under *Section 48* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* is to be recorded;
- Where a person has made a complaint to Council, and the QPC has determined to investigate the complaint, the investigation notice issued by the QPC under *Section 49* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* is to be recorded;
- Handling of QPC records (eg. data from finished investigations) is to be done in accordance with *Sections 52 and 53* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*;
- Where the QPC has issued a report on the complaint under *Section 52* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, the receipt of the report and any recommendations contained in the report are to be recorded;
- Where Council has made a decision on a report by the referee, the resolution incorporating the decision, the date of the resolution and any directions to implement the decision that are given to a business activity under *Section 55* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* are to be recorded;
- Where Council has advised relevant persons of its decision, the notification issued by the local government under *Section 55* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* is to be recorded.

#### **6. Opportunities for the Complainant to Provide Further Information to the QPC**

If, after the initial complaint is made, the complainant wishes to provide further relevant information to the QPC, they may do so. The QPC may request further information from a complainant at any time during the investigation period.

#### **7. Reporting Period for QPC**

The referee must provide the report to Council in accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

### **RELEVANT LAW**

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Local Government Regulation 2012*

### **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Nil

## RELATED FORMS

Nil

## DEFINITIONS

Nil

## APPROVAL

Council approved this policy on 27 June 2018.

## REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years by Chief Executive Officer, Office of the CEO and is due for review in July 2020.

## REVISION HISTORY

Version	Meeting	Date	History
1	Budget Meeting	12/07/2011	New Policy
2	Budget Meeting	07/08/2012	Revised for 2012/2013
3	Budget Meeting	30/07/2013	Revised for 2013/2014
4	Budget Meeting	08/07/2014	Revised for 2014/2015
5	Budget Meeting	07/07/2015	Revised for 2015/2016
6	Budget Meeting	06/07/2016	Revised for 2016/2017
7	Budget Meeting	05/07/2017	Revised for 2017/2018
8	General Meeting	27/06/2018	Review

## APPENDIX A

### INFORMATION ON HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUSINESS ACTIVITY

#### WHERE TO CONTACT COUNCIL

The Chief Executive Officer  
North Burnett Regional Council  
34-36 Capper Street  
PO Box 390  
GAYNDAH, Qld. 4625

Phone: 1300 696 272  
Fax: (07) 4161 1425  
Email: [admin@northburnett.qld.gov.au](mailto:admin@northburnett.qld.gov.au)

#### HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

##### Requirements for complaint.

A complaint must:

- Be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer;
- Be in writing;
- Provide sufficient detail about the alleged failure of the business activity to comply with the relevant competitive neutrality principles;
- State how an complainant was adversely affected by the alleged noncompliance;
- State whether the complainant was, or could be, in competition with Council's business entity and
- Indicate how the complainant has made a genuine attempt to resolve his/her concerns with Council's business entity using the preliminary procedures set up by Council under Section 48 Local Government Act 2009

**Who can complain?**

A complaint can only be made by a person who:

- Currently is competing with the activity alleged to have a competitive advantage or
- Is hindered from competing by the alleged competitive advantage of Council's business activity under *Section 48 Local Government Act 2009*.

**What is a competitive advantage?**

A competitive advantage is a business advantage of Council's business activity that is solely due to local government ownership. It can be financial advantage, a regulatory advantage, a procedural advantage or any other advantage.

**Grounds for complaint**

A complaint must be on the grounds that a Council business entity has failed to carry on its business activity in compliance with the competitive neutrality principles applying to that activity under Section 47 of the *Local Government Act 2009*.