

How to make a Complaint, Appeal a decision, pay a Compliment or provide Feedback to Common Ground Queensland

This fact sheet is to help tenants of Common Ground Queensland (CGQ) understand our Complaints, Compliments, Appeals and Feedback process.

Definitions

Compliment

A **compliment** is when you are happy with a part of CGQ's service and want to inform us.

Complaint

A **complaint** is when you are unhappy with a part of CGQ's service.

Appeal

An **appeal** is when you are not happy with a decision CGQ has made to resolve your complaint.

Feedback

Feedback is an observation or suggestion where you are not expecting an official response.

Our Commitment to You

We are committed to facilitating your right as a tenant to raise concerns about our service, to appeal a decision we have made that directly affects you, and to pay us a compliment when we've done well.

Our staff take all complaints seriously and are committed to doing everything in our power to work with you to resolve them. We give consideration to all feedback because it is the best way for us to identify improvements in the services we provide for you. We especially encourage compliments because it is valuable in helping us identify what we are doing well.

Your Rights as a Tenant

As a tenant, you have the right to:

- Have your complaint dealt with confidentially and objectively
- Ask for help in lodging a formal complaint from the support provider or an external advocate.
- Request a support person to accompany you to any meetings
- Have access to interpreting and translating services
- Be given information on tenant advice and advocacy services
- Lodge an appeal if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint
- Be informed of the resolution of your complaint in a timely manner

What CGQ Can and Cannot Do

Tenant and property manager behaviour in Queensland is governed by housing laws. These laws outline the rights and responsibilities of tenants and property managers.

This means there are situations where our staff can respond directly; and other situations where we have no authority to respond because it is the responsibility of external organisations such as the police or council. In the latter situations, all we can do is try to influence the best possible outcome.

What we are responsible for

- Rent payments and utility arrangements
- Maintenance of units and common areas
- Cleanliness and condition of the building
- Assisting tenants to sustain their tenancy
- Referring tenants in need of support to the support provider.

What we can do

- Use Sustaining Tenancy Plans and/or Acceptable Behaviour Agreements to work with tenants and any behavioural issues
- Take formal action in accordance with the Rental Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act (2008) in relation to on-going and repeated behavioural issues
- Take action to end a tenancy where behaviour is dangerous.
- Assist in maintaining safety in the building through visitor management systems

What we are not responsible for

- Anti-social behaviour of a criminal nature including theft, violence or threats of violence
- Drug or alcohol use in units
- Disturbances or issues that occur outside the building
- Matters that happen inside a tenant's private unit (unless they impact other tenants).

What we can't do

- Resolve tenant to tenant disputes
- Control on-going noise disturbances from tenants, visitors or pets
- Interfere with the personal beliefs, habits, circumstances or attitudes of individual tenants

What we can influence

- General behaviour where it affects others in the community
- Engagement with tenants to identify issues and provide opportunities to work together to develop solutions to improve their housing.

Anti-social behaviour, disputes and issues within the building

If you experience disputes or behavioural issues within the building, we encourage you to contact concierge immediately so that, if the situation is resolvable, it can be resolved as soon as possible.

Criminal activity or illegal behaviour

If you believe you are in immediate and urgent danger of being harmed or subjected to criminal activity, we strongly encourage our tenants to call Queensland Police Service at **000**. All other criminal activity should be referred to Queensland Police through PoliceLink at **131 444**.

Matters relating to on-going noise disturbances (including from people and pets) are subject to Brisbane City Council (BCC) by-laws and should be reported to Brisbane City Council on **07 3403 3888**.

Letting us know about a complaint, appeal, compliment or feedback



The best way to make a complaint, appeal a decision, provide feedback or give us a compliment is to complete a Tenant Form or, alternatively, let us know directly.

In person

You can ask concierge staff for a hard copy of the form, then put the completed form into the **Tenant Forms Mailbox** on the ground floor.

Online

Use the **online Tenant Form** to send your complaint to us. You can scan the QR code on the right to open the online *Tenant Form* with your phone.



Email

You can send an email to admin@cgq.org.au making sure to include all relevant details, your full name and contact information.

Phone

If you are more comfortable speaking to us directly, you can do that too by calling the office on (07) 3370 8320.

If you have difficulties with any of the above methods, you can always ask the support provider to assist you.

Remember: When you send us a complaint, we ask for your name, address, phone number and email. We will only use this information to help us assess or respond to your complaint. Should the complaint escalate to legal proceedings, (for example, at the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, or QCAT) any personal details will be redacted.

Anonymous Complaints

CGQ will accept **anonymous complaints** however it may be difficult for us to assess or respond to them if there is not enough detail. We are also unable to advise complainants about the outcome of any actions if no contact details have been provided.

Timeframes



After you submit a complaint, CGQ will let you know that we have received your complaint through a **Letter of Acknowledgement**.

You'll receive this letter within **two business** days of submitting your complaint.



We will allocate your complaint to the appropriate team member who will assess and respond to your complaint with the resolution.

In most cases, we will get back to you within **14 days** of you submitting your complaint with a **Letter of Resolution**.

Important: If your complaint involves other parties, details regarding other parties will not be disclosed in the resolution. This is done to protect everyone's privacy.



If your complaint requires more time to assess, we will let you know and provide you with an updated timeframe.

Important: Complaints remain open for 21 days after you have been sent a *Letter of Resolution*. During this time, you have the option to appeal the outcome. If we do not receive an appeal during this time, the matter will be closed.

Appealing a Decision

If you're not happy with the outcome of a complaint, or a decision made by CGQ in relation to your tenancy (for example receiving a breach or notice to leave) you can submit an appeal. Appeals can be submitted through a hard copy letter, the online **Tenant Form**, over the phone or email.



Important: We take appeals seriously. All appeals are reviewed by our Chief Executive Officer. You will receive a response from the Chief Executive Officer within 14 days.

External Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the Chief Executive Officer's review, you can contact the **Residential Tenancies Authority's (RTA)** free and impartial dispute resolution service to try to reach a mutually agreed outcome. In some limited circumstances the RTA dispute resolution service can also assist with general neighbourhood disputes that are outside of CGQ's property and tenancy management responsibility.

You can make a formal complaint to the **Queensland Registrar of Housing** who is responsible for administering the **National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH)**. The Registrar regulates community housing to ensure providers are fulfilling their legal obligations under The Housing Act (2003) and tracks the number and nature of complaints against individual providers. The Registrar doesn't deal with tenant to tenant disputes. Nor do they act on individual cases unless there is adequate evidence of systemic failure. Nevertheless, if you have serious complaints about the way we have dealt with a particular matter, we strongly urge you to inform the Registrar of your displeasure and why you are unhappy. This will not only be good for us, it will be good for the entire sector.

CGQ has been contracted by the Queensland Government's **Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works** to provide community housing on its behalf. They don't have any direct involvement in disputes or appeals and in normal circumstances will seek answers to your enquires by contacting the provider or referring you to the Registrar of Housing or RTA.

Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS) is strictly a general advice and referral service for all renters in Queensland. They will not provide any advice if it involves another tenant, even if the complaint is about how an organisation has behaved in dealing with your dispute.

Handy Contacts and Links

Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA)

Phone: 1300 366 311

Website: www.rta.qld.gov.au/contact

National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH)

Online Form: www.form.nrsch.gov.au/

Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS)

Statewide Advice Number: 1300 744 263

Website: www.qstars.org.au

Queensland Department of Housing, Local Government, Public Works

Phone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Online Form: www.qld.gov.au/contact-us

Queensland Human Rights Commission

Phone: 1300 130 670

Online: <https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint>

Other Information

This fact sheet is based on information provided in our Tenant Compliments, Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy and Procedure. If you have privacy issues, please have a look at our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. You can also ask for copies of these documents at any time.

If you would like to ask us anything about the information on this fact sheet, please don't hesitate to email us at admin@cgq.org.au with your questions.