

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

1257. Hon. C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

I refer to the report of the Auditor General No 9, October 2001, entitled Righting the Wrongs: Complaints Management in the Western Australian Public Sector and ask -

- (a) which of your agencies or departments have in place and operating a Complaints Management System (CMS);
- (b) how many of your agencies or departments have not got a CMS in place;
- (c) of those agencies or departments that have got a CMS in place, does the CMS comply with the essential elements of the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling;
- (d) if not, which elements are not being complied with;
- (e) since the operation of the CMS have audits been undertaken of individual complaint files;
- (f) since the operation of the CMS, have surveys of staff, consumers and complaints been undertaken; and
- (g) since the operation of the CMS what assessment has been undertaken of the database?

Ms MacTIERNAN replied:

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

- (a) The Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) has Complaints Management Systems ('CMS's') for most of its key service functions:

Transperth manages the Customer Comment Line for bus, train and ferry services and uses a contractor to provide this function.

The DPI's Marine Safety function has a CMS that meets ISO/AS Quality Assurance requirements and complies with the Australian Standard.

Planning complaints are in the main related to disputes over Statutory Planning Decisions. There is a formal 'appeal' process that is conducted independently of the operations of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. Planning appeals are tracked, monitored and recorded through a computer system. Recipients of Planning Decisions are formally notified of their right of appeal and a right of reconsideration.

General (non-Planning Decision) complaints are the subject of Administrative Instruction 30 published on the Department's Intranet. Complaints of this nature are not formally tracked.

The Transport Licensing function currently receives and manages complaints and is in the process of developing a CMS that will meet the Australian Standard.
- (b) The DPI has a CMS for most of its key service functions and, while the Transport Licensing function currently manages complaints, it is in the process of developing a CMS to meet the Australian Standard.
- (c) The Transperth Comment Line complies with essential elements of the AS 4269 -1995.

The DPI's Marine Safety CMS complies with ISO/AS Quality Assurance requirements and complies with the Australian Standard.

The Planning Appeals Tracking system complies with Appendix A - 'Essential Elements of Effective Complaints Handling' of the Auditor General's report.
- (d) N/A
- (e) Transperth conducts weekly random checks of all complaints received to ensure quality and timeliness of responses.

Marine Safety meets the QA requirements for the standard and is audited every 6 months by an independent auditor - last audited in October 2001. Part of this process enables the auditor to ask to see individual complaint files to investigate adherence to procedures for complaints handling.

Planning - N/A - Planning Appeals are determined external to the Department on a case by case basis and decisions are legally binding on the Department.

- (f) Transperth conducts weekly random checks of complaints received to ensure quality and timeliness of response and customer satisfaction with the handling of their complaint. Transperth also conducts an annual Passenger Satisfaction Monitor (the last one being in May 2001) and customers are offered the opportunity to provide comments on the various aspects of service including complaints handling.
- DPI also conducts customer needs and satisfaction surveys, and employee opinion surveys where concerns about policies, service provision and processes (including complaints) are welcomed. Marine Safety does not conduct customer surveys specifically relating to complaints management.
- Planning undertakes an annual survey of clients and staff to ascertain their views on the Department's performance. The survey is conducted by an external independent consulting firm who presents the results to the Department's Executive. The survey results are used to gauge the Department's performance and are published in the Annual Report and the Budget papers.
- (g) Transperth has made adjustments to its database on an ad hoc basis to meet changing customer and agency needs.
- Marine Safety's six monthly audits identifies any shortcomings in compliance with documented procedures and also opportunities for improving the way complaints are handled, recorded, monitored and reported on.
- The Planning Appeals database forms a component of the core information system for the Statutory Planning process. The database is regularly reviewed for relevance and possible improvement.

WAGR

- a) The Western Australian Government Railways Commission has a Complaints Management System in place and operating.
- b) Not applicable.
- c) Yes.
- d) Not applicable.
- e) Yes.
- f) Yes.
- g) Regular assessment of the database has been undertaken

LANDCORP

- (a) LandCorp has a manual recording complaint management system in place.
- (b) N/A
- (c) LandCorp's current manual recording system does not comply with the Australian Standard. An upgraded CMS, due to be implemented by the end of February 2002, will fully comply with the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling.
- (d) The current manual system does not have formal written policy and procedures.
- (e) Yes
- (f) No
- (g) The small database is regularly reviewed.

MRWA

- (a) Insofar as Main Roads is concerned a Complaints Management System in place and operating.
- (b) Not Applicable.
- (c) Some facets of Main Roads' CMS do not comply with all the essential elements of the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling and these are being currently addressed.
- (d) The elements that Main Road' CMS does not comply with are:
- analysing complaints data to identify service improvement opportunities; and

- reviewing the complaints management system.

- (e) Process audits of the customer feedback process are regularly undertaken.
- (f) General surveys of staff and customers are regularly undertaken. In addition, Main Roads runs focus groups and regularly meets with its main customer groups to deal with issues that they consider to be significant, including queries on Main Roads policies and operations.
- (g) Main Roads' CMS does not currently have a formal corporate data base. However, an appropriate system is currently being developed.

DOLA

- (a)-(b) Note: DOLA's Complaint Management System is referred to as the Customer Feedback System (CFS) and incorporates complaints, suggestions and praise.
- (c)-(d) DOLA's Customer Feedback System has not been assessed against AS 4269-1995 'Complaints Handling' by an independent auditor or accrediting agency. Therefore, compliance has not been determined. The Department's focus is on attaining and maintaining compliance with AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 'Quality Management Systems'.
- (e) No
- (f) Yes, customers are frequently surveyed to capture complaints. However, staff and complaints have not yet been surveyed.
- (g) In June and October 2001, audits conducted by Benchmark Certification (an independent accrediting agency) of the CFS against the relevant requirements of AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 deemed it compliant. IN September 2001, an internal audit confirmed the CFS was correctly utilised.

OMPPA.

- (a) The small size of the Office, forming part of the Minister's office, and paucity of complaints, has not called for a formal Complaints Management System (CMS) to be installed. Any complaints received are responded to immediately as required and full documentation is maintained on the file for future reference.
- (b) see (a) above.
- (c)-(g) N/A

Please note: The response from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure includes reference to planning appeal matters that it monitors.

MIDLAND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.

- (a) MRA does not have a CMS.
- (b) see (a)
- (c)-(g) N/A

EAST PERTH REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.

- (a) EPRA does not have a CMS.
- (b)-(g) N/A

SUBIACO REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.

- (a)-(g) N/A

The Subiaco Redevelopment Authority does not have a CMS. However, it has in place a Customer Service Charter which clearly sets out its objectives in providing a high standard of service to all customers and stakeholders and outlines procedures for complaints management.