

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

1255. Hon. C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage

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?

Dr EDWARDS replied:

Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority:

- (a) The Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority has a complaints handling system in place.
- (b) N/A.
- (c) The Complaints Management System (CMS) of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority complies with the Australian Standard in most respects.
- (d) The Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority's CMS would not comply fully with the data collection and reporting aspects of the Australian Standard.
- (e) Reviews have been undertaken of individual complaints since the operation of the CMS.
- (f) Yes.
- (g) An assessment of the CMS process was undertaken in 2001.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management:

The Department of Conservation and Land Management has a complaints handling system suitable for an agency that provides a wide range of services through a highly decentralised delivery system and receives very few written complaints.

The Department's draft complaint handling policy and procedure complies with the essential elements of the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling, AS 4269-1995.

The Conservation Commission of WA:

- (a) The Conservation Commission does not have a Complaints Management System in place, but has a feedback facility on its website.
- (b) No Complaints Management System in place.
- (c) Not Applicable.
- (d) Not Applicable.
- (e) Not Applicable.
- (f) Not Applicable.
- (g) Not Applicable.

Heritage Council of Western Australia:

- (a) The Heritage Council of Western Australia handles complaints through its Corporate Public Relations area.
- (b) Not applicable.

- (c) An assessment has not been undertaken, however a review of the current process will be undertaken during 2002.
- (d) As above.
- (e) Complaints and comments about assessments, development referrals, grants and other areas of the Heritage Council of Western Australia activities are audited as part of our normal processes.
- (f) The Heritage Council of Western Australia has undertaken a number of customer surveys during this period.
- (g) The Heritage Council of Western Australia's database is reviewed and amended as required on a regular basis.

The Office of Water Regulation:

- (a) The Office of Water Regulation is operating a Complaints Management System for complaints relating to services or products provided by the Office.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) The Complaints Management System within the Office of Water Regulation complies with most of the essential elements of the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling AS4269-1995.
- (d) The Complaints Resolution Policy and processes are reviewed annually. The review and examination of internal processes to meet the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling is currently underway. The focus of the review this year is to re-educate staff to recognise and classify complaints correctly, and ensure the systematic recording of complaints and their outcomes to meet the Standard.
- (e) To date the Office of Water Regulation has not undertaken audits of the complaint files, however this aspect of the Standard is being included in the current review.
- (f) The Office of Water Regulation has undertaken two external stakeholder surveys, one in 1997 and the other in 1999. These surveys canvassed comments from major and minor service providers, lobby groups, the relevant Minister, state government regulatory and policy agencies, state government planning and resource agencies, community associations and private and public sector professional advisers. Three external Customer Surveys have also been completed in 1999, 2000 and 2001. The main focus of the surveys relates to customer satisfaction with the services provided by water utilities.
- (g) The database records all relevant information. However, as explained in (d) and (e) data collection assessment, and audits of complaints, forms part of this year's annual review.

The Department of Environmental Protection and the Water and Rivers Commission:

- (a) The Department of Environmental Protection and the Water and Rivers Commission have specific complaints management systems dealing with pollution and other environmental and water protection issues.

A formal Complaints Management System (CMS) compliant with the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling is being developed as part of the formation of the new Department of Environment, Water and Catchment Protection.
- (b) N/A
- (c) N/A
- (d) N/A
- (e) N/A
- (f) N/A
- (g) N/A

The Perth Zoological Gardens:

- (a) Perth Zoo has an established complaints and public feedback system.
- (b) Not applicable.

- (c) An assessment has not been made between the Zoo's system and the Australian Standard on complaints handling. This will be undertaken shortly.
- (d) A compliance check has not yet been undertaken.
- (e) Complaints and feedback from Zoo visitors are continually audited as part of the existing public feedback system.
- (f) No.
- (g) Perth Zoo's database is regularly reviewed and fine-tuning of the system occurs on an ongoing basis.