

# Complaints & Disputes Handling Policy



## OUR COMMITMENTS

HQPlantations is committed to:

- consulting with and considering the needs of its stakeholders, and openly communicating commercial forest management activities and outcomes both internally and externally; and
- striving to gain public recognition as a socially and environmentally responsible commercial forest plantation manager including compliance with Responsible Wood® (RW/1-21-3) and Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®-C107541) certification requirements.

We value the feedback of our stakeholders, both positive and negative, as a means of strengthening and improving our relationships and interactions and we adopt the following principles to support informed outcomes:

- confidentiality;
- accessibility;
- fairness;
- responsiveness; and
- integration

## SCOPE

This policy applies to complaints and disputes against HQPlantations, our operations, our staff and contractors by external stakeholders (such as neighbours, local businesses and community groups, recreational users, road users etc).

It does not apply to complaints or disputes:

- arising from unlawful or unauthorised activity by a complainant;
- by our employees, suppliers, customers, commercial permittees or the State Government, each of whom have specific channels for dispute resolution in their contracts with us; or
- made under our Whistleblower Protection Policy.

## MAKING A COMPLAINT

A number of methods are available for stakeholders to formally notify us of a complaint, including:

- contacting us in person or by phone at any [HQPlantations office](#);
- submitting your details using the [Contact Us](#) page on our website; or
- emailing [information@hqplantations.com.au](mailto:information@hqplantations.com.au)

Where the complaint relates to a HQPlantations employee it should only be made by contacting us directly in person or by phone.

While we will endeavour to accommodate other methods of notification, calling or emailing an employee directly or talking to an employee out of the office, will not constitute formal notification of a complaint. However, we will take cultural and accessibility needs into consideration when making this determination.

To enable us to respond in a timely manner, we recommend that you submit any complaints in writing and with as much detail as possible, including the following:

- name, address, phone number and email address;
- nature and details of your complaint, including dates, times, places and people involved, and any other helpful information;
- copies of relevant photos, videos, statements or documents; and
- how you would ideally like to see the complaint resolved.

## RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

Depending on the complexity of your complaint, it may involve the following steps:

- receiving and acknowledging your complaint;
- assessing the complaint;
- investigating the complaint; and
- responding to you.

We will keep you advised throughout the process. We will also make reasonable endeavours to resolve complaints in a timely manner. However some complaints are complex and take time to resolve even when all parties are working diligently towards their resolution. Adequate time should be allowed at each level of escalation and for the resolution process to reach a conclusion. While some complaints may be resolved at the time they are raised or within days, others may take significantly longer. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints within 8 weeks. If our endeavours to negotiate a resolution with you are unsuccessful, we will cooperate with any external dispute resolution bodies and processes that are appropriate.

## RESOLVING COMPLAINTS (CONTINUED)

Subject to reasonable concerns about health and safety, steps taken to investigate and resolve a complaint will not interfere with the continued operation of the business in the meantime. Operations will only cease work immediately where it can be demonstrated that they do not meet our health, safety and environmental requirements, do not comply with relevant laws or are of substantial magnitude. Examples of things that may be of 'substantial magnitude' include where there is a negative impact of such a scale that it cannot be reversed or mitigated, it affects legal or customary rights of First Nations Groups and local communities or involves acts of intimidation, physical violence, destruction of property. If operations cease due to any of the above concerns, they may recommence when they can be modified to meet these requirements, as determined by us, in our absolute discretion.

We will make reasonable endeavours to mitigate the cause of a complaint when it takes longer than 8 weeks to resolve and where it can be established that our business activities have an objectively measurable impact on you, as long as we can continue to meet our contractual obligations under our customer supply agreements, plantation licence or other legal requirements. Mitigation will not apply if you are not making reasonable efforts to participate in the resolution process in a timely manner.

## RECORD MANAGEMENT

We record complaints in our stakeholder database and record management systems. This information is maintained in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

This policy will be reviewed from time to time as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.