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# **Policy on policies**

# September 2020

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| Approved |
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| Scott McDougall  Commissioner  5 November 2020 |

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# Purpose

This document establishes the policy framework of the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC) and sets out procedures for the development, review and approval of policies.

The purpose of the policy is to establish standards and formats that make the overall suite of policies easy to access and understand, consistent with each other and also to ensure that they are kept up to date.

# Principles

The general principles that apply to the development and publication of the commission’s policies, procedures and guidelines are that the documents:

* have been made available for consideration and comment by those who may be affected by them prior to them being submitted for approval;
* are written in a plain English style and common format that is concise and easy to understand;
* are practical and present requirements clearly and logically in order to facilitate understanding and compliance;
* are consistent with each other and comply with relevant statutory requirements that apply to the commission;
* are readily available and accessible to all people who may have an interest in or be affected by them;
* have a designated officer responsible for maintaining the currency of the document, undertaking periodic review, and responding to requests for clarification or interpretation;
* are reviewed regularly and are kept up to date.

# Policy hierarchy

The commission is not in a position to develop a full suite of policies due to its limited size and resources. However, there will be areas or issues that require the development of policies that are specific to the commission. The development of such policy will be performed in accordance with this document.

The commission will adopt the policies, procedures and guidelines of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) in cases where a specific commission policy has not been developed. Occasions will arise where DJAG documents will require interpretation to apply to the commission’s circumstances. Managers are expected to exercise judgment in applying DJAG policies, procedures and guidelines.

The Director, Engagement and Corporate Services is the Responsible Officer for DJAG policies, procedures and guidelines.

The following hierarchy will apply to policy documents within the commission:

* Directives
* Whole of Government policies, procedures and guidelines
* Commission policies, procedures and guidelines
* DJAG policies, procedures and guidelines

In any cases of inconsistency the higher level document takes precedence.

# Procedures and guidelines

## Procedure – interpretation

### File number

All policies must have an associated official file on which previous and current versions are maintained, along with relevant correspondence. Previous versions of a policy need to be on file so that the version applying at a particular period can be identified.

### Responsible officer

All policies are allocated to a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) responsible for ensuring that they are communicated appropriately to commission staff, implemented and reviewed. This officer would also be the point of contact for major questions of principle and application of the policy.

### Relevant legislation or prescription

Policies will generally be made under State legislation, regulations, directives or government policy. The source of authority and prescription for the policy should be specified.

### Effective date

The date the new or revised version of the policy came into effect.

### Next review

Revision dates are normally 3 years after approval of policies. A schedule of rolling reviews is maintained by the Director, Engagement and Corporate Services.

### Policy

A policy is a statement that sets out the commission’s official position in relation to a particular issue and any mandatory requirements.

### Procedure

A procedure is a statement that sets out the commission's standard and required practice for implementation of a policy.

### Guidelines

A guideline is a statement that is advisory or explanatory in nature and provides guidance on how commission policies and procedures might best be implemented or applied.

## Procedure – development and revision

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| STAGE | PROCEDURES |
| Identification of need for development of new policy or the review of an existing policy | New Policy: requires approval of the Commissioner to proceed.  Revision of existing policy involving changes of substance: requires approval of the Commissioner to proceed.  Revision of existing policy involving changes of an editorial nature or which clarify existing policy: requires approval of Responsible Officer to proceed. |
| Establishment of drafting group or appointment of a sole author | Determined by Responsible Officer considering the nature and impact of the policy or the revision. |
| Drafting the policy paper | Drafting group: Normally drawn from members of the Leadership Group.  Sole author: A sole author would be expected to consult with key stakeholders in the Leadership Group.  Care should be taken at this stage to ensure the policy proposal is consistent with relevant legislation, directives and policies. |
| Consultation within the commission | New policy or revision of existing policy involving changes of substance: Appropriate circulation of the draft policy as determined by the Responsible Officer taking into account the importance of the policy or revisions.  Revision of existing policy involving changes of an editorial nature or which clarify existing policy: Consultation as determined by the Responsible Officer.  If the policy is redrafted in light of comments received, the redraft is to be circulated as determined by the Responsible Officer. Once the policy proposal is finalised the Responsible Officer will approve it or submit it to the Commissioner for approval. |
| Approval | New policy or revision of existing policy involving changes of substance: Must be approved by the Commissioner.  Revision of existing policy involving changes of an editorial nature or which clarify existing policy: May be approved by the Responsible Officer. |
| Promulgation and implementation | Once then policy is approved the Responsible Officer is to arrange for:   * Promulgation of the policy to staff. * Publication of the policy on the intranet and website (where required). * Amendment of all relevant forms and relationships to other affected policies. * Removal of outdated web links. * Staff training if required. |
| Review of policy | All policy is to be reviewed in accordance with the approved schedule of review or every 3 years. |

### Guidelines

To be read in conjunction with the policy and procedures.

### Policy development

Proposals to develop a new policy or revise an existing policy will emerge as members of staff or committees identify the need for such action. Proposals made by other than Responsible Officers should be assigned to the relevant Responsible Officer.

Drafting groups should include appropriate representation of stakeholder interests but not be so large as to be unwieldy, given that wider consultation will occur with Leadership Group once the draft has been prepared.

Once comments on the draft have been received and the policy proposal finalised the Responsible Officer would put the policy to the Commissioner for approval.

Further information and assistance

Employees requiring further information or assistance in relation to this policy should contact their Regional Manager or the Responsible Officer.

Implementation of this policy requires Managers to exercise professional judgement. Managers are encouraged to consult with each other in making these determinations.

Policy administration

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| File Number | BNE0143577 |
| Responsible Officer | Director, Engagement & Corporate Services |
| Approving Officer | Commissioner |
| Effective Date | 5 November 2020 |
| Date Approved | 5 November 2020 |
| Next Review | 5 November 2023 |
| Review version approved by | Commissioner |
| Relevant Legislation or Prescription | *Public Service Act 2008*  *Financial Accountability Act 2009*  *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* |
| Network location | S:/Policies/Current |

Version History

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| Action | Approved by | Date |
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