

pla

Client Service Charter



**Prostitution**  
Licensing Authority

Queensland Government

## Introduction

The Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA) operates to ensure that its activities are based on the best information and research available. High quality service to our clients is central to our business, and this document seeks to establish the standards that we strive to reach in processing licence and certificate applications, in responding to complaints and inquiries about prostitution and in our compliance activities. We are committed to a high standard of service delivery. This client service charter sets out what you can expect if you are an applicant, if you wish to make a complaint or an inquiry about prostitution, or if you are subject to compliance activities.

## Who we are

The PLA is a statutory body established by the *Prostitution Act 1999* and constituted by an eight-member board appointed by Governor-in-Council. The PLA is supported by staff *appointed under the Public Service Act* and reports to the Minister for Police and the Parliament.

## Our clients

Our clients include:

- l the general community
- l applicants for brothel licences and managers' certificates
- l sex workers
- l brothel licensees and certified managers
- l the Queensland Government and its agencies
- l people who make complaints about prostitution.

## What we do

Our purpose is to regulate prostitution in Queensland by implementing the Prostitution Act. Our core business is to decide applications for brothel licences and managers' certificates. The Prostitution Act outlines a range of other functions that we fulfil with regard to prostitution regulation in Queensland, one of which is to receive complaints about prostitution.

## Application processing

The processing of brothel licences and managers' certificates can be a lengthy process and is determined by the requisites of the Prostitution Act. You can expect your application to take some time to process, particularly if you have applied for a brothel licence (investigations of applications may take several months or more to process, depending on the complexity of the application). Delay in processing applications may be due to the following reasons:

- All applications must be forwarded to the Prostitution Enforcement Taskforce (PET) at the Queensland Police Service for their own, separate inquiries. The PLA has no control over the inquiries undertaken by PET, nor over the length of time it takes to make those inquiries.
- Inquiries made with interstate agencies are necessary. Again, the PLA has no control over the length of time it takes agencies to respond to PLA inquiries.
- You may have used an old application form, or your application form may be incomplete. If your application form is incomplete you will receive a 'Notice to Seek Further Information from an Applicant'. Responding quickly to a request for further information will greatly assist the processing of your application.
- Lack of development approval for a brothel premises. The PLA prioritises those applications that have received development approval from a local authority. A brothel licence or manager's certificate will not be granted by the PLA if there is no approved brothel premises.
- Your personal circumstances and details may change during the life of the application or information may need to be updated. Any change to information in your application will need to be considered in light of any further relevant inquiries.
- If you have applied for a manager's certificate your application will not be considered until the brothel where you intend to work has been properly licensed.
- Incorrect fee/s paid.

**If you have made an application for a brothel licence or a manager's certificate, we will:**

- write and acknowledge your application and payment of fees as soon as we have accepted the application
- aim to complete proceedings within a reasonable time, bearing in mind the considerations outlined above
- keep you informed of our progress, on request, and report the outcome of your application as soon as it has been considered by the PLA
- keep your information confidential, unless disclosure is authorised by you or by the law.

Any decision by the PLA about your application will be made in the absence of bias, and all applicants will be afforded natural justice.\*

## Complaints

The PLA is responsible for receiving complaints about prostitution. In addition, the PLA has the power to refer any matter it considers appropriate for investigation to another agency. This means that anyone – including sex workers from any part of the sex industry – can make a complaint about any aspect of prostitution to the PLA.

We can accept complaints by telephone, facsimile, e-mail, post or other means as convenient.

## Help us to help you

You play an important part in establishing a positive client relationship. Below are some points that will make our service to you more efficient:

- outline your complaint clearly and include:
  - relevant dates and times
  - a description of incidents (people spoken to or present at the time of the incident)
  - documentation, if you have any (e.g. diary notes)
  - relevant explanations.

- l provide us with documentation that will support your complaint, such as letters, emails, dates, times and the names of people you dealt with
- l respond to our requests within the stated timeframes
- l be courteous in your dealings with us.

## What to expect from us – Complainants

If you make a complaint about prostitution, we will treat you with respect and carefully consider your complaint and the interests of everyone affected by the decisions we make and the actions we take.

If we find that your complaint is not within our jurisdiction to investigate we will explain why.

If we decide that your complaint should be considered by another agency we will make every effort to advise you which agency we intend to refer it to. Where appropriate, we will seek your agreement to forward the complaint to that agency on your behalf.

### **If we investigate your complaint, we will:**

- l aim to complete proceedings within a reasonable time
- l (if you have provided your contact details to us) keep you informed of our progress and report to you on the outcome of the investigation
- l (if you request) keep your personal information confidential, unless disclosure is authorised by you or by the law
- l advise you if we refer the complaint to another agency, and provide details of who it was referred to.

### **If you are the subject of a complaint investigated by the PLA, wherever possible we will:**

- l (if you are to be interviewed) give you reasonable notice of the interview time and place
- l give you the opportunity to respond to the allegations
- l advise you of the progress and outcome of the investigation.

\* Natural justice means that any administrative decision we make that may adversely impact on you will be made only after you have been made aware of our concern and you have had the opportunity to present your claims in relation to the concern.

## Complaints about the PLA

Complaints may also be lodged with the PLA which express dissatisfaction about the service or actions of the PLA or its staff. Any complaint, where the subject of the complaint is an officer or member of the PLA, can be made to the PLA directly. Once again, every effort will be made to resolve your concerns if you lodge a complaint about the PLA or its staff.

If you have concerns with lodging your complaint to the PLA, you may lodge your concerns with the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC). The CMC website, [www.cmc.qld.gov.au](http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au), provides details on how to make a complaint. Alternatively, you can contact the CMC on telephone number (07) 3360 6060 or for those outside Brisbane on toll free number 1800 061 611.

## What to expect from us – Brothel licensees and managers

The PLA, as a regulator of Queensland's licensed sex industry, is concerned to maintain operations of licensed brothels in accordance with the highest standards and commensurate with community expectations and Government policy. The PLA's compliance officers ensure licensed brothels comply with the Prostitution Act, *Prostitution Regulation 2000*, brothel licence conditions and *Guidelines for the Operation of Licensed Brothels in Queensland*. You can expect:

- a full compliance audit at least annually which will be conducted by prior arrangement, with other inspections conducted randomly through the year and without prior notification.
- to be provided with written documentation which outlines the standards we expect to find in place in licensed brothels; these standards will be monitored and reviewed regularly.
- to be given full opportunity to discuss any identified areas of non-compliance with the Compliance Officers during the audit or inspection on the day of the inspection and to be provided with a letter on the audit outcome within one month of the inspection.

- l to be treated with respect and impartiality.
- l ongoing support and assistance to assist you to meet your obligations.
- l any decision by the PLA to undertake disciplinary action under the Prostitution Act will be made in the absence of bias, and will be undertaken in accordance with the principle of natural justice.\*

## Feedback on our performance

We are keen to improve our client service standard, so your views are important to us. We have established a process of surveying applicants once their application has been decided to seek direct feedback about their satisfaction with our application process. We report the results of the client satisfaction survey publicly and use it to improve service to our applicants.

If we have not met the performance standards established in this Client Service Charter, or if you have any feedback about your contact with our office, please write, ring or come and see us. We will continuously monitor and review our service performance and report it in our Annual Report, and we will review this Client Service Charter every three years.

## How to contact us

You can contact us in writing, by telephone, e-mail or in person.

<b>Address:</b>	Level 3, 5 Gardner Close Milton Queensland 4064
<b>Postal address:</b>	GPO Box 3196 Brisbane Queensland 4001
<b>Telephone:</b>	(07) 3858 9500
<b>Fax:</b>	(07) 3876 3641
<b>E-mail:</b>	pladmin@iprimus.com.au
<b>Website:</b>	www.pla.qld.gov.au

For an interview in person, contact us first to make an appointment.