

<b>Endorsed by Board:</b> 18 May 2016	<b>Review Date</b> 18 May 2019
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## 1. Introduction and Purpose

The Victorian Healthcare Association (VHA) recognises that from time to time, members and stakeholders may wish to make a complaint over any aspect of the organisation's services, including about particular services provided and about the conduct of staff.

The VHA is committed to an effective and fair complaints handling system and supports a culture of openness and willingness to learn from complaints. Mutual respect, responsiveness, transparency and confidentiality will underpin the process by which the VHA seeks to resolve any complaints or grievances.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the system in place to ensure complaints are dealt with effectively and appropriately.

## 2. Definitions

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction or concern made by an individual, organisation, group or member of the public about the services, processes or policies of the organisation, including about the conduct of staff or Directors.

For the purpose of this policy, feedback sought from members or event attendees by questionnaire (for example through event evaluation exercises or through feedback during customer satisfaction surveys) is not considered to represent a complaint requiring investigation.

This policy is not intended to cover staff grievances or staff complaints about other staff.

## 3. Complaints Procedure

### 3.1. Making a complaint

Any member, stakeholder or member of the public can lodge a complaint about the VHA. Complaints must be made in writing.

Complaints should be made to:

The Chief Executive (marked Private & Confidential)  
Victorian Healthcare Association  
Level 6, 136 Exhibition Street  
Melbourne, Victoria, 3000  
Ph (03) 9094 7777

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, the complaint should be made to the Chair at the above address.

While this policy requires complaints to be made in writing, the Chief Executive or Chair has the discretion to initiate a complaint investigation process arising from a verbal complaint if the complainant does not wish to make a formal documented complaint.

### 3.2. Receiving complaints

If a verbal complaint is made to a staff member, the staff member receiving the complaint should request that the complaint be submitted in writing in accordance with this Complaints Policy, and provide a copy of the Complaints Policy to the complainant.

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the complaint is forwarded to the Chief Executive or Chair depending on the nature of the complaint, and a letter of acknowledgement is sent to the complainant within **three (3) working days**. (See **Attachment 1** for sample correspondence)

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, the complaint will be forwarded to the Chair.

The Chief Executive or Chair has the discretion to initiate the complaints investigation process following a verbal complaint.

### *3.3. Recording complaints*

All complaints will be recorded on a VHA Complaint Record (**See Attachment 2**) by the Chief Executive (or delegate) or Chair in the case of a complaint about the Chief Executive. The Complaint Record acts as the complaint tracker incorporating the details relating to the investigation process and outcome of the complaint. At the end of the process, the Complaint Record is filed on the Complaints File in the central filing system as a standing record.

### *3.4. Investigating complaints*

The Chief Executive (or delegate), or Chair if the complaint is about the Chief Executive, will commence investigating the complaint within **three (3) working days** of being made aware of it.

The investigation may include where appropriate:

- Assessment of the complaint, including consideration of whether a complaint may be unfounded or showing a misunderstanding by the complainant. Where a complaint is believed to be unfounded or showing a misunderstanding, it will still be recorded and the appropriate comments will be written in the report.
- Contact with the person making the complaint to obtain further information
- Discussions with VHA staff or Directors directly involved in the matter
- Discussions with any witnesses or other organisations involved
- A review of the circumstances leading to any event or situation related to the issue
- Discussions with all parties to enable the negotiation of a resolution of the issue and strategies to avoid recurrence
- An examination or review of any policy or documents related to the issue and consideration of whether amendments are necessary
- A written report either on or annexed to the Complaint Form which details the investigation process, the outcome of the complaint and the action to be taken (if any)

During the complaint process, all parties are expected to treat one another with courtesy and respect.

The above process should be completed **within thirty (30) days** of the complaint being received.

### *3.5. Reporting to the Board*

All complaints will be reported to the VHA Board at the next meeting of the Board (or earlier if the complaint is deemed to have serious implications), and investigation progress and outcomes will also be reported. This is to allow the Board to monitor the organisation's response and minimise the risk to the organisation.

### *3.6. Communication to Complainant*

At the end of the complaint investigation process, the Chief Executive (or Chair if the complaint is about the Chief Executive) will write to the complainant to detail the outcome of the investigation, the process undertaken and any action taken (or to be taken) as a result.

#### **4. Review**

The Board will review this Complaints Policy every three years.

**POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL RECORD****Policy Name:** Complaints Policy

<b>Reviewed by:</b>	<b>Nature of Amendment</b> (List changes made to Policy)	<b>Date Board Endorsed</b> <b>Amendment</b>
	First endorsed by Board 17 April 2013	
Board	V2) No amendment required	18 May 2016



Date

Name  
Title  
Organisation  
Address  
Suburb State Pcode

Dear [Name]

I have received your complaint about [brief description]. Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. We value feedback from our members and stakeholders as it enables us to improve our services.

Your complaint is currently being investigated. I will keep you informed of progress and hope to resolve your complaint as soon as possible.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss anything in the meantime, feel free to contact me on [insert details].

Yours sincerely

Name [of person investigating complaint]



## COMPLAINT RECORD

On completion, this form should be filed in the Complaints File (EO x.x) located in the Central Filing System. Refer to the Complaints Policy for more information.

### COMPLAINT DETAILS

Name of complainant: .. (if anonymous, please indicate)

Title: ..

Organisation : ..

Contact phone: ..

Email address: ..

Date complaint made: ..

Complaint addressed to: ..

Nature of complaint (attach the written complaint to this form)

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### ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINT

Consideration of the validity of the complaint, including whether it requires investigation, or may reflect a misunderstanding of the complainant or be unfounded:

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Name of person assessing complaint : ..

