

General Warning

The purpose of this fact sheet is to give general introductory information about the complaints process. It does not contain legal advice.

WARNING: Alternative legal action should be considered before making a complaint. What is included in a complaint may be relevant to any current or future legal proceedings. If you are involved in legal action you should immediately see a lawyer and not proceed with a complaint.

If you (or the complainant, if you are complaining on their behalf) want financial compensation, support or money you should see a lawyer before making a complaint.

General complaint information

Complaints are rarely about just one thing. When you have a problem, it may be that a number of things have gone wrong. Below are some of the common areas where issues may arise that could lead to a complaint.

Discrimination	Disability and NDIS services	Policing, Custody and Detention
Seniors and Aged Care supports and services	Consumer and Business disputes	Phone and Internet services
Banking, Insurance and Superannuation	Energy and Water services	Housing and Real Estate
Health Care services	Employment issues	Education and Training providers
Government Agencies and Departments	Child Safety and Protection	State Fines and Debts
Corruption	Privacy and Access to Information	Media and Publications

There are different complaint bodies to handle different types of complaints. You should consider the different pathways available to decide the most appropriate pathway for your circumstances. One event could lead to multiple complaints. That means you may need to lodge more than one complaint to have all of your concerns addressed.

[The online triage tool on this website can help you to identify the different complaint bodies that may be able to assist you.]

It is usually quickest and easiest to try to resolve a complaint directly with the person or body you are having a problem with. Many complaint handling bodies will not act on a complaint unless you have tried to resolve your complaint directly. If you do not feel it is safe or appropriate to complain directly, you should contact the relevant complaint body to discuss your situation.

Complaints involving discrimination

There are state and federal complaints bodies that handle complaints that about discrimination. If your situation involves discrimination, you should consider making a

discrimination complaint in addition to any other complaints. Discrimination may occur when someone is treated less favourably on the basis of: race; sex; gender; disability; age; sexuality; relationship status; pregnancy; caring responsibilities; or having or being thought to have an infectious disease.

WARNING: The state and federal bodies that handle discrimination complaints have different rules, including time limits. You can make a complaint to both the state and federal complaint bodies, but they may decide not to address your concerns if you have already complained elsewhere. For example, if you have already lodged a discrimination complaint to anti-discrimination NSW, it is likely that Australian Human Rights Commission will decide not to act on your complaint. Please carefully review the discrimination factsheets for information about your options before making a discrimination complaint.

Liquor Control Victoria

In this factsheet, we introduce Liquor Control Victoria (LCV). We outline how any member of the public can make a complaint to LCV about a licensed venue or alcohol-related activity in Victoria.

LCV is the state body responsible for regulating the sale, supply, promotion, and service of alcohol in Victoria. It oversees venues such as pubs, bars, clubs, bottle shops, restaurants, and events that serve alcohol.

You can make a complaint to LCV if you're concerned about things like:

- Alcohol being served to minors or drunk patrons
- Excessive noise or violence at a licensed venue
- Irresponsible alcohol promotions
- Breaches of licence conditions (e.g. opening hours, patron limits)
- Unlicensed sale of alcohol

LCV's role is to investigate complaints and take regulatory action where needed to ensure alcohol is supplied in a safe and responsible way. However, it does not provide compensation or handle disputes between individuals.

Legislation and Key Terms

Relevant Legislation:

- [Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 \(Vic\)](#)

Key terms:

Amenity: The enjoyment, comfort, or convenience of an area. If a licensed venue negatively affects this (e.g. with loud noise, litter, or unsafe behaviour), it may be considered an "amenity impact".

Complainant: A person who makes a complaint.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about something within LCV's powers, where a response or outcome is expected (e.g. an investigation or enforcement action).

Intoxicated person: Someone who appears to be drunk based on signs like slurred speech, unsteady movements, or affected behaviour. It is illegal for venues to serve alcohol to someone who is visibly intoxicated.

Licence conditions: Specific rules or requirements placed on a liquor licence. These may relate to trading hours, security measures, noise control, patron numbers, or permitted activities.

Licensee: A person or business that holds a liquor licence and is legally responsible for complying with its terms.

Red-line plan: A diagram that outlines the area where alcohol can legally be served or consumed at a licensed venue.

Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA): The legal obligation for venue staff to serve alcohol safely, for example, refusing service to underage or intoxicated patrons.

Step 1: What type of Complaints can be made to this body?**Complaints able to be made to LCV**

Liquor Control Victoria (LCV) handles complaints about how alcohol is sold, supplied, and managed at licensed venues and events in Victoria. You can make a complaint if a venue is breaking the rules of its liquor licence or causing harm to the local community, such as by serving alcohol to minors, ignoring trading hour limits, or creating ongoing noise and safety issues.

This section outlines the specific types of complaints LCV can investigate.

Sub-category	Example
Alcohol Advertising or Promotions	You should make a complaint if a licensed business is using inappropriate alcohol advertising or promotions that break the rules or encourage irresponsible drinking. This includes ads or events that target minors, promote excessive drinking, or otherwise violate liquor advertising standards. <i>Example: A bar runs a “free shots for every new customer” night that encourages rapid drinking and unsafe behaviour. A concerned patron notices the promotion on social media and reports it, as it could lead to harmful drinking practices</i>
Excessive Noise from a Licensed Venue	You should make a complaint if loud noise from a pub, bar or club is impacting the comfort of the neighbourhood. This is considered an “amenity” issue. For example, if music or crowd noise from a licensed premises is so loud that it disrupts your sleep or daily life. <i>Example: A resident living nearby is kept awake every weekend by a nightclub’s music and shouting patrons at 2:00 AM. The noise is harmful to their sleep and comfort, so they report it as an amenity complaint about excessive noise.</i>
Drunk or Intoxicated Patrons Allowed	You should make a complaint if a venue is allowing patrons to become heavily intoxicated or drunk on the premises without taking action. Licensees must practice Responsible Service of Alcohol, it’s against the law for staff to keep serving someone who is clearly drunk. Venues are expected to intervene or refuse service once a person is intoxicated. <i>Example: At a local hotel bar, the staff continue serving a man who is visibly intoxicated. He’s slurring, unsteady, and knocking into others. Other customers are uncomfortable as the bar does nothing. A witness reports the venue for failing to cut off alcohol to an obviously drunk patron, which is a breach of RSA rules.</i>
Violence or Anti-Social Behaviour Linked to a Venue	You should make a complaint if fights, aggressive behaviour or other anti-social conduct frequently occur in or around a licensed venue due to poor management. Licensees are expected to maintain order, where unruly or violent incidents stemming from a venue can be a liquor complaint issue. This overlaps with amenity concerns, as such behaviour can make the area feel unpleasant or unsafe.

	<i>Example: Neighbours often witness brawls and drunken shouting matches outside a particular nightclub when it closes. On several occasions, patrons leaving the club have vandalised nearby property. Residents file a complaint because the venue's patrons are regularly causing fear and disturbance in the street.</i>
Obstructing Footpaths or Public Spaces	You should make a complaint if a licensed venue or its patrons block footpaths or public areas, detracting from others' ability to use those spaces. Under Victoria's liquor laws, causing obstruction or inconvenience in public areas (for example, queues or furniture blocking the sidewalk) can be considered an amenity issue. <i>Example: A popular bar has an unsupervised queue spilling onto the footpath every Friday night. The crowd waiting outside forces pedestrians to walk on the road to get past. A local pedestrian, frustrated with having to step into traffic, files a complaint about the venue obstructing the public footpath.</i>
Litter and Waste from a Licensed Venue	You should make a complaint if a venue's operations result in litter, trash, or waste polluting the surrounding area. This is another amenity issue - licensed premises should not negatively affect the cleanliness and pleasantness of the neighbourhood. Constant rubbish, like bottles or cups left by patrons, is not acceptable. <i>Example: Each morning after a nightclub's events, nearby residents find empty beer bottles, plastic cups, and cigarette butts scattered in front of their homes. The mess clearly comes from the club's patrons the night before. A resident reports the club for causing litter and not cleaning up, as it detracts from the area's amenity.</i>
Supplying Alcohol to Minors (Under 18)	You should make a complaint if you believe a licensed business has supplied alcohol to anyone under 18. It is illegal for a venue or bottle shop to sell or give alcohol to minors, and LCV can investigate breaches involving underage drinking or supply. This includes situations where IDs aren't checked or adults purchase alcohol for minors. <i>Example: A convenience store with a liquor licence sold a six-pack of beer to a teenager without asking for any identification. A bystander who knows the youth is under 18 notices this and reports the store for supplying alcohol to a minor, which is against the law.</i>
Minors Illegally Selling or Serving Alcohol	You should make a complaint if you see people under 18 working in a role where they serve or supply alcohol, which is generally not permitted. All staff serving alcohol are required to be adults (with very limited exceptions) and properly trained. If a minor is bartending or selling liquor, the venue may be violating the law. <i>Example: A patron observes that the cashier at a local bottle shop appears to be very young and discovers the worker is only 17 years old. The teenager is handling alcohol sales at the register. The patron reports the venue, since minors are not allowed to serve or supply alcohol in a licensed business.</i>
Breach of Liquor Licence Conditions	You should make a complaint if a venue breaks the specific conditions of its liquor licence. For example, by trading outside permitted hours, exceeding the approved number of patrons, or failing to

	have required security staff (crowd controllers) when required. License conditions are legal requirements, and ignoring them is a serious breach. <i>Example: A restaurant is licensed to serve alcohol only until 11:00 PM, but it routinely stays open pouring drinks until 1:00 AM. On top of that, it often packs in more guests than its licence allows, leading to overcrowding. These are clear breaches of its licence conditions, so a concerned neighbour files a complaint to LCV with these details.</i>
Serving Alcohol Outside the Licensed Area (Red Line Plan Breach)	You should make a complaint if a venue is serving alcohol in areas that are not approved on its licence (outside the “red line” plan). Every liquor licence includes a red-line plan outlining the exact area where alcohol can be supplied. If a business extends beyond that, for instance, onto the street or an adjacent space without permission, it’s a breach that LCV can address. <i>Example: A cafe with a liquor licence is approved to serve alcohol only inside its walls, but it has started handing beers to customers who are sitting on the public benches outside. A local community member notices the cafe regularly serving alcohol well beyond its red-line area and reports it, since the business is not licensed for those outdoor spaces.</i>
Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) Violations	You should make a complaint if a venue is failing to uphold Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) standards in ways not covered above. This might include having untrained staff serve alcohol, not offering food or water when it’s required to slow down drinking, or any other practice that shows a lack of responsible service. Essentially, if the venue’s conduct around alcohol service seems reckless or non-compliant with RSA guidelines, you can report it. <i>Example: An ex-employee of a bar reveals that none of the servers have completed the mandatory RSA training course. This means staff may not know how to refuse service to drunk patrons or check IDs properly. The ex-employee contacts LCV to complain that the bar is not meeting RSA requirements for having appropriately trained staff, putting patrons at risk.</i>
Unlicensed Alcohol Sales	You should make a complaint if someone is selling alcohol without a valid liquor licence. All alcohol sales in Victoria must be licensed – if you encounter a business (or person) selling booze illegally (for example, an unlicensed bottle seller or a pop-up bar with no permit), LCV can investigate and take action. <i>Example: A community market stall is discovered offering homemade spirits for sale by the bottle, but the seller does not hold any liquor licence. A shopper finds this suspicious and reports the operation for selling alcohol without a licence. LCV can then investigate this unlicensed alcohol sale and enforce the law.</i>
Sexually Explicit Entertainment Breaches	You should make a complaint if a licensed venue that provides sexually explicit entertainment is not complying with the liquor licence conditions set by Liquor Control Victoria. However, regulation of sexually explicit entertainment venues more broadly is overseen by the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC). For example, if a venue starts hosting adult entertainment without the proper licence conditions on its liquor licence, it falls under LCV’s jurisdiction, while gambling or broader adult entertainment matters belong with the VGCCC.

	<i>Example: A nightclub begins featuring weekly striptease performances but never applied for the required licence conditions for sexually explicit entertainment. The shows are held in a venue not approved for that kind of activity, raising concerns. A patron reports the club for these unapproved adult entertainment nights, as the venue may be violating liquor licensing rules for sexually explicit venues</i>
Failing to Display Required Signage	You should make a complaint if a licensed premises is not displaying the legally required signs or notices relating to liquor laws. Victorian liquor regulations require venues to post certain signage (for example, proof-of-age signs, RSA posters, or their liquor licence details) so patrons are informed of the rules. Not having these visible is a compliance issue. <i>Example: When visiting a bar, a customer notices there are no signs about underage drinking or intoxicated patrons, and the liquor licence certificate isn't on display. Since licensees are required by law to display specific signage for patrons and staff, the customer reports the bar for not having the mandatory liquor signs posted.</i>
Failing to Provide Free Drinking Water	You should make a complaint if an on-premises venue does not provide free drinking water to patrons, as required by law. In Victoria, any place serving alcohol for consumption on site must ensure free potable water is easily available. This is an important part of responsible service, helping to prevent intoxication and keep patrons safe. <i>Example: At a late-night music club, people who ask the bar staff for tap water are told the venue only sells bottled water. By law, the club should offer free drinking water to anyone consuming alcohol on the premises. A patron files a complaint because the venue is failing to provide free water, which is a breach of their obligations.</i>
Unsuitable Licensee (Character Concerns)	You should make a complaint if you have serious concerns about the character or suitability of a liquor licensee or permit holder. LCV can investigate if a licensee is not a fit and proper person to hold a liquor licence. For instance, undisclosed criminal convictions, involvement in illegal activities, or other gross misconduct by the licensee could be grounds for a complaint. Essentially, if the person in charge shouldn't be holding a licence due to their background or behaviour, it's within LCV's remit. <i>Example: Neighbours find out that the owner of a local bar (the licensee) has a serious recent criminal conviction for violence which was never disclosed during the licensing process. This raises alarm about his suitability to run a licensed venue. A concerned resident contacts LCV, reporting that the licensee's character may make him unfit to hold a liquor licence.</i>
Unreported Change of Licensee or Directors	You should make a complaint if a licensed business has changed its ownership, licensee or company directors without notifying Liquor Control Victoria, as required. All licence holders must inform the regulator of changes in people who have control or significant roles in the business. If a venue is secretly sold or new directors come on board and this isn't reported or approved, it's something LCV can look into. <i>Example: A nightclub that was once run by a well-known management team seems to have been taken over by new operators, yet there was no public notice or update to the licence records. The new individuals in</i>

	<i>charge include someone who previously had their liquor licence revoked at another venue. A patron familiar with the situation submits a complaint, suspecting that the business changed directors without the required approval from LCV</i>
Exclusions	LCV cannot handle complaints about: • Noise from Non-Licensed Premises: LCV addresses noise complaints only when they pertain to licensed venues. Noise disturbances from private residences or unlicensed establishments should be directed to local councils or the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria. • Criminal Activities Unrelated to Liquor Licensing: Matters involving criminal behaviour, such as assaults or thefts occurring in or around licensed venues, are under the purview of Victoria Police. LCV does not investigate these incidents unless they directly relate to breaches of liquor licensing laws. • Employment Disputes: Issues concerning employment conditions, wages, or workplace disputes within licensed venues fall outside LCV's scope. Such matters should be addressed through appropriate employment dispute resolution channels. • Food Safety and Hygiene Concerns: Complaints about food handling, hygiene practices, or foodborne illnesses in licensed venues are managed by local councils or the Department of Health, not LCV. • Gambling-Related Issues: LCV does not oversee gambling activities within licensed venues. Concerns about gambling operations should be directed to the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC). • Private Events Without Liquor Licences: LCV regulates events and venues that hold liquor licences. Complaints about private events without liquor licences, such as private parties, are not within LCV's jurisdiction. • Historical Complaints: LCV may not be able to investigate complaints about incidents that occurred a significant time ago, especially if evidence is lacking or the venue no longer operates. • Matters Already Addressed by Other Agencies: If a complaint has been or is currently being handled by another regulatory body or authority, LCV typically does not re-investigate the matter.

Step 2: What is the Jurisdiction of the complaints body?

Jurisdiction	Description
State	This complaints body has powers to hear complaints under the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (Vic), which applies within the state of Victoria.
Geographical Scope	LCV only handles complaints involving conduct or premises located in Victoria. The person or entity complained about must be operating

	under a Victorian liquor licence or permit. LCV cannot address complaints about venues or alcohol service in other states or territories.
Time Limitations	There is no explicit statutory time limit under the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (Vic) for submitting complaints. However, LCV may choose not to investigate historical matters where: • the venue is no longer licensed • there is insufficient evidence due to time elapsed • the incident occurred too long ago to be practically investigated.
Exclusions	LCV cannot handle complaints relating to: • Noise from private residences or unlicensed premises (Council/EPA) • General criminal conduct (Victoria Police) • Employment disputes (Fair Work, other employment bodies) • Food safety or hygiene (Council/Health Dept) • Gambling activities (VGCCC) • Private unlicensed events • Matters already handled by another agency • 8. Events too far in the past to investigate reliably
Exercise of discretion	LCV may decline to investigate: • complaints from people not directly affected by the conduct • complaints lacking sufficient detail or supporting evidence • minor or one-off breaches with no clear public interest • issues better resolved by mediation or local council mechanisms
Additional information	LCV has investigative powers and can impose conditions, issue warnings, or initiate disciplinary proceedings. Serious breaches may result in suspension or cancellation of a licence. Complainants do not need to be directly associated with a venue (e.g. a resident, staff member, or patron can all lodge complaints).

Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

Respondent	Description
Licensed Individuals	You can make a complaint against any person who holds a Victorian liquor licence or permit, including: • individual licensees (e.g. the person named on a general, on-premises, or limited licence) • venue managers or approved managers listed on a licence

	They must be licensed under the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (Vic).
Licensed Businesses or Organisations	You can make a complaint against any business, company, or organisation that holds a liquor licence in Victoria. This includes: • pubs, bars, nightclubs, cafes, restaurants, wineries, breweries • bottle shops and packaged liquor retailers • event operators with a temporary liquor licence • community clubs, sporting clubs, and RSLs with club licences The organisation must be the legal holder of a Victorian liquor licence or permit.
Licensee Nominees and Directors	You can complain about people with legal or managerial responsibility for a licensed venue or business, including: • nominee(s) listed on the licence • directors, partners or officers of a company that holds the licence • persons in day-to-day charge or with significant influence over the licensed business (as defined under the Act)
Unlicensed Persons or Entities Selling Alcohol Illegally	You can report any individual or business selling alcohol without a Victorian liquor licence. This includes: • unlicensed bottle shops or bars • individuals selling alcohol online or at events without permission • persons operating illegal supply chains This applies to any unlawful sale, supply, or promotion of alcohol in Victoria.
Venues Offering Sexually Explicit Entertainment Without Proper Approval	You can make a complaint about venues or operators offering adult entertainment (e.g. strip shows) if they do so without holding or complying with the required liquor licence conditions. This applies to: • licensed venues with unapproved or concealed adult entertainment • – licensees breaching adult entertainment restrictions or notification requirements
Event Organisers with Liquor Licences	You can complain about individuals or organisations running public or private events where alcohol is served under a liquor licence. This includes: • music festivals • sporting events • private functions that obtain a temporary licence The organiser must have held a liquor licence or permit for the event.

Exclusions	You cannot make a complaint to LCV about: • Individuals or businesses not involved in alcohol sale or supply • General public patrons or private individuals not acting in a licensed capacity • Employees of a licensed venue unless they are directly responsible for liquor service (e.g. RSA breaches) or named on the licence • Councils, police, security firms, or noise unrelated to liquor licensing
Additional information	LCV can also investigate where a person or entity fails to notify changes in control or conceals ownership or management, even if that person is not officially named on the liquor licence.

Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
Who can make a complaint?	Anyone can make a complaint to Liquor Control Victoria. There are no restrictions based on age, location, or personal involvement. You do not have to be a Victorian resident or directly affected. Complaints can be submitted by: • local residents • customers or patrons • employees • nearby business owners • community groups or associations • – members of the public who have observed concerning conduct
Pre-requisite steps	There are no formal pre-steps required before making a complaint to LCV. However, LCV may consider whether: • the complaint could be resolved by speaking to the venue directly • the matter falls within another body's jurisdiction (e.g. Council, Police) • there is sufficient detail or evidence to support action LCV encourages complainants to provide as much specific information as possible (e.g. dates, times, venue details, description of behaviour).
Can complaints be made on behalf of someone?	Yes. You can make a complaint on behalf of someone else (e.g. a family member, community member, friend or client), especially if: • the person is vulnerable or unable to complain themselves

	• you have direct knowledge of the issue There is no legal requirement for written authority, but LCV may seek clarification or further details if needed.
Exclusions	LCV may choose not to act on complaints that: • are vague, anonymous, or lacking enough information • relate to incidents too far in the past to investigate properly • are submitted maliciously or without genuine concern • have already been handled by another appropriate agency • – are about matters clearly outside LCV's remit, such as food safety, employment disputes, or general criminal conduct
Additional information you need to know	• Complainants are not required to give their name, but anonymous complaints may be harder to investigate. • LCV does not have to act on every complaint, decisions are made based on public interest, evidence, and relevance to LCV's powers. • There are no penalties for making a complaint in good faith, and your personal information is protected under privacy laws.

Step 5: What remedies are available at this body?

Power	Description
Warning Notice or Letter	LCV may issue a formal warning to a licensee or permit holder if a breach has occurred but does not warrant immediate disciplinary action. This is used where: • the breach is minor or unintentional • the venue cooperates and agrees to improve • it is the first time the issue has arisen Outcome: Written warning; may be cited if there are future breaches.
Compliance Direction	LCV can issue a compliance direction, requiring the licensee to take (or stop) specific actions to comply with the law. This might include: • improving staff RSA training • stopping a non-compliant promotion • restricting certain operating practices Failure to comply can lead to disciplinary proceedings.
Licence Variation (Adding or Changing Conditions)	LCV may change the conditions of a licence following a complaint. This is one of the most common remedies and may include:

	• reducing trading hours • limiting patron numbers • requiring extra security or CCTV • restricting types of entertainment or promotions This is usually considered when a venue's operation is causing amenity harm or repeated breaches.
Licence Suspension	For more serious or repeated breaches, LCV can suspend the liquor licence, temporarily stopping the sale of alcohol at the venue. This may apply when: • serious risk to public safety is identified • the licensee fails to comply with prior directions • the business refuses to engage with LCV investigations
Licence Cancellation or Disqualification	In the most serious cases, LCV may cancel a liquor licence entirely, or disqualify a person or company from holding a liquor licence in future. Grounds include: • repeated serious breaches • supplying alcohol to minors • major RSA violations • involvement in criminal conduct This permanently ends the venue's ability to serve alcohol.
Disciplinary Proceedings (Show Cause Notice)	If LCV believes a serious breach may have occurred, it can issue a show cause notice requiring the licensee to explain why action should not be taken. This may result in: • licence suspension or cancellation • disqualification • fines or enforcement orders The process is formal and governed by natural justice rules.
Immediate Licence Suspension (Interim Action)	In urgent cases where there is immediate danger to public health, safety or order, LCV may impose an interim suspension of a liquor licence while it investigates further. This is a protective power and can be applied before a full hearing or disciplinary outcome.
Referral to Police or Other Agencies	LCV may refer matters to Victoria Police, the VGCCC, local councils or other regulators if: • the complaint involves possible criminal conduct • gambling or food safety issues arise • planning or building breaches are suspected This does not stop LCV from taking parallel licensing action.

Investigative Report and Findings	LCV may complete a formal investigation and issue findings, even if no enforcement action is taken. This might help: • support future licence reviews • inform local councils or objectors • put a licensee on notice for future scrutiny
No Further Action (Discretionary Closure)	If the issue is minor, unsubstantiated, outside jurisdiction, or already resolved, LCV may close the complaint with no formal action. This outcome may be based on: • insufficient evidence • the venue resolving the matter informally • it being a one-off or historical concern
Exclusions	LCV cannot provide: • Financial compensation or damages: LCV cannot award money to complainants; compensation must be pursued through courts or tribunals. • Enforced apologies: LCV cannot compel a licensee to apologise or make personal amends. • Refunds or replacement services: LCV does not handle consumer refunds or service dissatisfaction (e.g. bad food or drink). • Employment or wage outcomes: LCV cannot resolve staff disputes, underpayment, or workplace bullying; this falls under Fair Work or other employment bodies. • Legal findings of guilt or liability: LCV is not a court and cannot make findings of criminal or civil liability. • Planning or building enforcement: LCV cannot issue remedies related to land use, building codes, or local planning permits; this is handled by local councils. • Food safety or hygiene enforcement: LCV does not issue remedies related to health code breaches; these go to local councils or the Department of Health. • Gambling-related remedies: LCV cannot act on gaming machine issues or gambling harm; refer to the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC). • General noise remedies unrelated to liquor: If the noise issue is not linked to liquor licensing, LCV cannot act; complaints go to local councils or EPA.
Additional information you need to know	LCV remedies are regulatory in nature, they aim to improve compliance and reduce harm, not provide personal compensation.

	Complainants do not receive compensation, damages, or personal remedies. However, their complaints can result in real changes to how a venue operates. Complainants are not usually involved in the outcome process beyond lodging the complaint and providing information. LCV's duty is to regulate the liquor industry in the public interest.
--	---

Step 6: Preparing your complaint. What should it include?

Requirement	Description
Format	Complaints can be made: • Online using the LCV complaint form (preferred for structured detail) • By email or letter (acceptable, especially for complex or ongoing matters) • Verbally via phone, but this may be limited to simpler complaints or initial contact only It is strongly recommended to submit written complaints for more complex issues or where evidence is being supplied. Interpreters and translators are available on request through the Department of Justice and Community Safety.
Personal Details	You should provide: • Your name, contact number and email (if available) • Optional: postal address You can complain anonymously, but this may limit LCV's ability to investigate, especially if more information is needed or if evidence cannot be verified without contact.
Respondent's Details	Include as much of the following as you can: • Name of the venue, licensee, or business • Address of the licensed premises or event • Any known licence number or business name If you're unsure of exact details, describe the venue clearly (e.g. "The nightclub above [store name] on Swanston Street operating late on Saturdays").
Relevant Facts	Provide clear, factual information, including: • What happened • When (dates and times) • Where (venue name and location) • Who was involved, including any witnesses

	• Impact of the behaviour or issue (e.g. noise, safety, harm) • Steps already taken (e.g. did you speak to the venue?) • What you want to happen (e.g. licence conditions changed, investigation, etc.) Attach supporting documents, such as: • Photos, videos, written logs, screenshots of promotions, etc. There is no strict limit on attachments, but ensure they are relevant and not excessive.
What NOT to include	• Do not include false, misleading, or defamatory statements • Avoid unnecessary or offensive language – stick to facts • Don't include private health or employment information unless it is directly relevant and you have permission to share it
Additional information you need to know	• LCV may share your complaint or parts of it with the licensee or respondent, but will protect your identity if requested, unless required by law to disclose it • You do not need a lawyer or advocate, but you may seek help from a support service or community group • Minors can submit complaints, and do not require a guardian's consent • If your complaint is about an incident that happened some time ago, include a reason for the delay and any attempts you made to resolve it earlier • LCV may not contact you after lodging your complaint unless more information is needed or an outcome is provided

Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	Online form: https://www.vic.gov.au/complaints-liquor-industry Email: liquor.enquiries@justice.vic.gov.au Post: Liquor Control Victoria Department of Justice and Community Safety GPO Box 4356 Melbourne VIC 3001 Telephone: 1300 182 457 (9:00am – 5:00pm, Monday to Friday) In person: In-person complaints are not standard but may be possible by prior arrangement at 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 (during business hours).

Acknowledgement	You will usually receive an automated acknowledgement if you submit online or via email. If further information is required, a staff member may contact you.
Initial Review and Triage	LCV will conduct an initial assessment to check if: • The complaint is within LCV's jurisdiction • It contains enough detail to investigate • The issue is serious enough to warrant compliance action If it's outside LCV's remit, they may refer you to another agency (e.g. Council, VGCCC, Police). There is no fixed timeframe, but straightforward complaints may be reviewed within a few weeks.
Investigation (if accepted)	If LCV decides to investigate, they may: • Contact you for more detail • Request evidence or documentation • Contact the venue or licensee for a response You won't always be updated regularly, but you may receive an outcome once the matter is finalised. For serious or ongoing issues, investigation can take several weeks to months.
Regulatory Action (if warranted)	If a breach is found, LCV may: • Issue a warning • Vary licence conditions • Direct the venue to take action • Suspend or cancel a licence in serious cases You won't receive personal compensation, but your complaint may result in concrete changes to how the venue operates.
Conciliation or Mediation?	LCV does not provide mediation or conciliation between complainants and venues. Its role is regulatory enforcement, not dispute resolution. While some venues may voluntarily change practices if approached, this is outside LCV's formal complaint process.

Additional information you need to know	Keep a copy of your complaint for your records. Submit all key information upfront to avoid delays, providing facts in stages may slow down the process. Update LCV if your contact details or the situation changes. You do not need a lawyer or advocate, but community legal centres or support organisations can help you prepare. You can remain anonymous, but this may limit what LCV can do, especially if follow-up is needed.
---	--

Step 8: Post-complaint – what if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint?

Avenue	Description
Internal review opportunities	LCV does not have a formal internal review process for complaint decisions. However, if you believe your complaint was misunderstood, important evidence was overlooked, or a significant error was made, you can: • Request clarification or reconsideration by emailing liquor.enquiries@justice.vic.gov.au • There is no guaranteed right to review, and reconsideration is discretionary • There is no fixed timeframe for response, but prompt follow-up is advised
External review/ remedies	If you believe LCV acted unreasonably, unfairly, or failed to investigate properly, you may contact: • Victorian Ombudsman: Can review how LCV handled your complaint, but cannot overturn licensing decisions ○ Website: www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au ○ Timeframe: Lodge as soon as possible after receiving the outcome • Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT): If you are the licensee or permit holder affected by LCV's regulatory decision (e.g. licence variation, suspension), you may have the right to appeal. ○ Timeframe: Must usually lodge within 28 days of the decision ○ Legal advice is recommended, especially for licence-related appeals • Judicial review (Supreme Court): Available in limited cases where LCV's decision involves an error of law or denial of procedural fairness. This option is complex and requires legal representation.

Other option	- You can raise concerns with your local MP if you believe the law or LCV's powers are inadequate - Community legal centres or advocacy organisations may assist in making a follow-up submission or complaint, especially for affected residents or community groups
Additional information you need to know	You cannot appeal to LCV simply because you disagree with the outcome, there must be a valid reason such as procedural unfairness or missed evidence. LCV decisions focus on public interest and compliance, not individual satisfaction. If your concern relates to a broader policy issue, such as the suitability of a venue in a residential area, you may wish to make a submission during a liquor licence application or variation process instead.

Step 9: Other bodies that handle complaints about liquor-related complaints related complaints

Complaint body	Description
Australian Human Rights Commission	The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) can handle complaints about discrimination that occurs in employment, education, the provision of goods and services, accommodation, sport or the administration of Commonwealth laws and services. If you have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment on the basis of you sex, disability, race, age or sexual preference the AHRC may be able to help. There are also State Government discrimination complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) can handle complaints about the way personal information has been handled by Australian Government agencies and some private organisations. The OAIC can also review freedom of information decisions that are made by Australian Government agencies and ministers. There are also State Government privacy and information complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.
National Anti-Corruption Commission	The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) handles complaints about serious or systemic corruption in the Australian Government public sector. There are also a State Government corruption complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights	VEOHRC handles complaints about discrimination, sexual harassment, racial vilification, and victimisation in Victoria. If your experience at a licensed venue involved discriminatory treatment by

Commission (VEOHRC)	staff or management, or you were targeted while trying to access services, VEOHRC may be more appropriate than LCV.
Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC)	VGCCC handles complaints about gambling regulation and harm in licensed venues, such as poker machine conduct or betting practices. If your issue is about gaming machines, gambling addiction services, or failures in responsible gambling obligations, the VGCCC is the appropriate body.
Victorian Ombudsman	If you believe Liquor Control Victoria handled your complaint unfairly or unreasonably, or if you have concerns about administrative conduct within the Department of Justice, you can lodge a complaint with the Victorian Ombudsman. The Ombudsman cannot change licensing outcomes but can review LCV's process.
Local Council	Your local council handles planning permits, noise complaints, public safety issues, and outdoor dining breaches involving licensed premises. If your complaint involves zoning, after-hours construction, or unapproved footpath use, council may be the better contact.
Victoria Police	Police handle criminal matters occurring at or around licensed venues, including assaults, drink driving, or alcohol supply to minors. If you are reporting a crime, contact police directly rather than LCV.
Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA)	EPA Victoria manages some serious or persistent noise and pollution complaints, particularly where industrial noise, waste, or environmental harm is involved. If a licensed venue is emitting waste or causing ongoing environmental harm, EPA may be the relevant authority.
Additional information you need to know	If you're unsure who to contact, start with LCV. If your complaint is outside their scope, they may refer you to the right body. You can complain to multiple bodies if different parts of the issue fall under different jurisdictions (e.g. discrimination + liquor licensing). It's a good idea to record who you contacted, when, and what was said, in case your complaint needs to be escalated.

Need help to preparing or pursuing your complaint?

Below are organisations that may be able to help you to make your complaint, provide support or advocacy during the complaint process or give you more information.

Organisation	Contact Details	How they can help
Law Institute of Victoria	Website: https://www.liv.asn.au/legalhelp Email: inquiries@liv.asn.au Telephone: +61 3 9607 9311	Find a lawyer or other professional such as a mediator or arbitrator. They offer a free referral service.
Victorian Legal Aid	Website: https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/ Telephone: 1300 792 387	Find free information on their website about common legal issues, and in some circumstances can provide legal advice. Visit their website to search for legal information and use their Legal Help Chat.
Justice Connect	Website: https://justiceconnect.org.au/ Telephone: +61 2 8599 2100	Justice Connect works with pro bono lawyers to provide legal information, advice and representation for people in our community. You can apply for legal help for a range of services listed on their website.
Consumer Action Law Centre	Website: https://consumeraction.org.au/ Telephone: (03) 9602 3326	For free, independent and confidential advice for a range of consumer and financial issues such as debt collection, banking or credit disputes, public transport fines and insurance.
Translating and Interpreter Service	Website: www.tisnational.gov.au Telephone: 131 450	Provide support to people if English is not their first language.
National Relay Service	Website: www.accesshub.gov.au	Provides a range of services to support people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment to communicate.

Self-help tools and additional resources

Resource	How this helps
Complaints VLSBC https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/Making-a-complaint/complaints-we-handle	A list of resources on the complaints process.
How to make a complaint	Guidance on how to make a complaint with the VLSB+C.
Home VLSBC	Guidance for individuals who are uncertain about where to start when seeking legal advice.
Call It Out	Online register for racism/discrimination experienced or witnessed towards First Nations Australians. Not an official complaints body.