

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 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.

Local Government Investigations and Compliance Inspectorate

In this fact sheet, we introduce the Local Government Investigations and Compliance Inspectorate (**Local Government Inspectorate**), the dedicated integrity agency for Victorian councils. It is led by the Chief Municipal Inspector. We outline how complaints can be made by any person to the Local Government Inspectorate.

The Local Government Inspectorate follows the *Local Government Act 2020 (LGA)* and assesses and investigate complaints made in respect to councils, councillors and staff and their potential breaches of the LGA. These include complaints about conflict of interest, misuse of position, disclosure of confidential information, directing council staff and electoral offences.

As part of their role, the Local Government Inspectorate:

- Accept and investigate complaints about some council operations, including councillors and council staff.
- Monitor governance and compliance with the Act.
- Provide guidance and education for councils.
- Encourage transparency and accountability across the sector.

Legislation and Key Terms

Relevant Legislation:

- [Local Government Act 2020 \(LGA\)](#)¹

Key terms:

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction where a response or resolution is wanted, expected or required.

Complainant: A person who has made a complaint.

Gross misconduct: This is more serious behaviour by a councillor that shows they are not fit to hold office. It usually involves a serious or repeated breach of public trust, or conduct that would be considered disgraceful or dishonest.

IBAC: Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission

¹ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/local-government-act-2020>

Serious misconduct: This is behaviour by a councillor that seriously breaches their responsibilities or council's code of conduct, but isn't necessarily illegal. It includes bullying other councillors, ignoring council rules, or repeatedly failing to follow directions.

VCAT: Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

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

The LGI deals with complaints about breaches of the LG Act by councils, councillors and staff including:	
A) Misuse of Position	
Sub-category	Example
Misuse of position by councillor ²	You should make a complaint if someone who is currently or has previously been a Councillor has intentionally misused their position to either: • Gain an advantage for themselves or for another person. • Cause detriment to the Council or another person. Misuse of position includes: • Making improper use of information acquired from the position of Councillor. • Disclosing confidential information. • Directing or improperly influencing a member of Council staff. • Exercising or performing, a power, duty or function the person is not authorised to exercise or perform. • Using public funds or resources improperly or in an unauthorised manner. • Participating in a decision on a matter in which the person has a conflict of interest. Example: • <i>Councillor Sarah Lee is on the planning committee for a new commercial development. She has access to confidential details about the project, including financial data and zoning changes. Sarah uses this confidential information to buy properties near the development, anticipating a rise in value once the project is approved. She also discloses this information to her friend, who also purchases properties in the area. She does not disclose her personal interest in the area and continues to support the project, knowing her investments will benefit. A council staff member notices Sarah's unusual property purchases near the development site and reports her anonymously.</i> • <i>Councillor Thorpe approached Councillor Kim who was reviewing planning permit applications. He pressures Councillor Kim to approve an application for a new shopping centre despite concerns raised in the staff report about traffic congestion and the environmental impact it would have on native flora and fauna. He suggests if the application is approved, it could lead to positive publicity for the council. He also implies that failing to</i>

² LGA s 123(1)-(4)

	<i>approve the application could negatively affect Councillor Kim's future prospects for a promotion. Councillor Kim feels uncomfortable but fearing the potential consequences, agrees to approve the application.</i> • <i>Councillor Roberts, frustrated with a delay in approving a new community park project, bypasses the council's proper procedure for approving work and instead directly contacts the construction company involved, giving them the green light to commence preliminary work such as excavation.</i> • <i>Councillor Mark Thompson is part of a local council overseeing a public park development. He has a personal relationship with a contractor, ABC Construction. Mark pushes for ABC Construction to be awarded the contract, despite other competitive bids. After the contract is awarded, Mark authorizes payments for work that was never completed, such as undelivered materials and uninstalled park amenities. In return, ABC Construction gives Mark a kickback from the misused funds. A local resident notices the delays and poor quality of park development, and reports the issues to the council, which prompts an investigation into the project's progress and funding by the Local Government Inspectorate.</i> • <i>Councillor John Lee sought legal advice purportedly on behalf of his Council but failed to obtain a resolution of the Council authorising the procurement of legal services. A fellow councillor noticed his attempt to misuse Council resources, by seeking to have the Council pay invoices for legal services when those services had not been authorised by Council.</i>
Improper Direction of Council Staff	You should make a complaint if a councillor tries to direct council staff outside of proper channels. Councillors must go through the CEO and cannot manage staff directly. <i>Example: Nathan, a council employee, was pulled aside by a councillor after a meeting and told to "fix the landscaping" in front of their friend's business. The councillor also said to not tell the CEO.</i>
Interfering with CEO Responsibilities	You should make a complaint if a councillor tries to control things meant for the CEO. The CEO is responsible for staff and operations and councillors must stay out of it. <i>Examples: Mark, a former council employee, was repeatedly asked by a councillor to report directly to them about internal staffing decisions, even after the CEO had made it clear that all staff matters were under their control.</i>
Using public resources improperly	You should make a complaint if a councillor uses council property, money, or resources for personal or unauthorised purposes. <i>Example: A councillor uses a council car for private holidays.</i>
Participating in decisions with a conflict of interest	You should make a complaint if a councillor votes on a matter they stand to gain from.

	<i>Example: A councillor votes on a grant application submitted by a business they partially own.</i>
B) Conflict of Interest and Transparency	
Conflict of interest by a councillor, senior council employee or person providing advice to council³	You should make a complaint if a councillor, council employee, or advisor fails to properly declare a personal interest that may influence their duties. A person has a conflict of interest if they, or a person or entity they are close to, could benefit or be seen to benefit from a decision or action they could make in their official capacity. Councillors and council officers must disclose conflicts of interest to demonstrate that they are not using their public office for their own private benefit. Certain ‘relevant persons’ must make a statement that a conflict of interest exists and then exclude themselves from the decision-making process.⁴ A relevant person includes: • councillors • members of delegated committees who are not councillors • council staff who are members of or providing advice to delegated committees or asset committees • council staff who are exercising a delegation, delegated function or statutory power Examples of conflicts of interests: • <i>A councillor fails to excuse themselves when their partner applies for a job as the CEO.</i> • <i>A councillor is a part-owner of a development company that submits a planning application to council.</i> • <i>A councillor’s friend applies for a community grant and does not leave the meeting when the grants are considered and approved by council.</i> • <i>A councillor does not leave a meeting where council makes a decision on a planning permit for a property belonging to the councillor’s mother-in-law.</i> • <i>A councillor is a board member of a for profit sporting club which has applied for a council grant.</i> Examples of interests which are NOT in breach include: • <i>A councillor’s daughter is a coach (and not an office holder) at a not-for-profit community soccer club and the councillor considered an application for funding by the club.</i> • <i>A councillor’s wife is the editor of a local newspaper that reports on the council.</i>

³ LGA s 127-131

⁴ LGA Part 6, Division 2; LGA s 126

	<i>A councillor works in alcohol research for a university and voted on the council's strategic plan, which includes an objective to reduce the harm associated with alcohol. The council plan is a very general document so the conflict is considered remote or insignificant.</i>
Failure to Lodge or Accurately Disclose Interests	You should make a complaint if a councillor or council staff member who is required to declare interests fails to do so properly or leaves out important information. This ensures transparency about things like property ownership, gifts, or board positions. <i>Example: A councillor doesn't declare that they own land affected by a proposed rezoning plan.</i>
Accepting Prohibited Gifts or Donations	You should make a complaint if someone accepts gifts they're not allowed to. Anonymous gifts, large undeclared donations, or bribes are not permitted. <i>Examples: Samira, who works in small business, heard from another trader that a councillor had accepted free event catering from a large business owner who had a contract pending with council. The councillor later voted in favour of renewing the contract.</i>
C) Electoral Misconduct	
Council election offences ⁵	You should make a complaint if someone breaks election laws during a local council election. The Local Government Inspectorate investigates electoral offences under the LGA. The Local Government Inspectorate's role in local government elections is to receive, assess and investigate matters and offences related to electoral provisions of the LGA. This may involve candidates, community groups and voters. They also monitor the submission of campaign donation returns by candidates. To lodge a complaint about council election offences, please fill out this election complaint form here. Example: <i>Councillor Jack Robinson is running for re-election in a Victorian local council race. During the campaign, he learns that several local businesses are offering discounts or free services to voters who show proof of voting for him. Jack, aware of these actions, encourages these businesses to continue their practice, even though offering material incentives to voters in exchange for their vote is a violation of election laws. He also suggests that voters who bring in evidence of their vote for him will receive additional benefits, such as vouchers for free meals or products.</i> <i>An anonymous member of the public made a complaint about a possible unlawful nomination by an election candidate. The</i>

⁵ LGA s 286-305

	<i>person said the candidate had listed the Kensington address of a fellow candidate on her nomination form but did not live in the area.</i>
Nomination of someone not qualified to be a council election candidate	You should make a complaint if someone who doesn't meet the legal requirements nominates to run for council. A person who is not qualified to be a Councillor is prohibited from acting in the role of Councillor.⁶ Example: <i>Councillor Lisa Green is running for re-election in a Victorian local council election. Lisa has property which is subject to control due to bankruptcy and has also been convicted of fraud charges, which means she fails to qualify to be a Councillor under the Local Government Act. Despite knowing about her disqualification, Lisa submits her candidacy, hoping her disqualification will go unnoticed by election authorities.</i>
Authorisation of electoral material	You should make a complaint if campaign materials like flyers or social media posts don't include proper authorisation. The requirement to authorise all electoral material is an ongoing requirement, not just during an election period. Example: <i>Councillor Tom Harris is running for re-election in a Victorian local council election. As part of his campaign, he distributes flyers and posters to promote his candidacy in the community. Tom's campaign team designs and prints flyers with his image and a message encouraging people to vote for him. However, Tom fails to properly authorise the electoral material by not including the required "authorised by" statement, which must identify the name and address of the authoriser, as required by the Local Government Act. The flyers are distributed in various public spaces, including near voting locations, without the correct authorisation, making them non-compliant with electoral regulations.</i>
Failure to Comply with Candidate Obligations	You should make a complaint if a candidate doesn't follow the rules during an election. This includes failing to lodge donation returns, misrepresenting information, or breaching campaign finance laws. <i>Examples: Olivia, a uni student helping with a community campaign, noticed that another candidate hadn't lodged their campaign donation return online by the deadline, even though they had openly spoken about receiving private donations.</i>
Bribery, Treating or Undue Influence in Elections	You should make a complaint if someone offers gifts, money, or other benefits to influence how people vote, or threatens them to vote a certain way. These actions damage the fairness of elections. Examples: <i>A candidate promises free meals to people who vote for them.</i>

⁶ LGA s 34

	• <i>A local leader pressures residents to vote a certain way by threatening to withhold support for their community group.</i>
Tampering with Voting Process	You should make a complaint if someone tampers with votes or interferes with ballots. Voting must be free, fair, and secure. <i>Examples: Yvette, a carer for her elderly father, found that someone had filled out and posted his postal vote without permission. Her father, who has a cognitive disability, hadn't understood what was happening.</i>
D) Information and Confidentiality Breaches	
Disclosure of confidential information ⁷	You should make a complaint if a councillor, council staff member, or committee member shares confidential council information without permission.⁸ Example: • <i>Councillor Emily Davis is on a local council economic development committee overseeing a confidential infrastructure project. Details about the project, including budget and site locations, are classified. Emily shares sensitive project information with a close friend working for a competing company. She shares specific information about the project's budget, timeline, and potential land acquisitions, hoping to gain favour. This allows the competitor to adjust their strategy and undermine the council's negotiations.</i>
E. Inappropriate Conduct or Eligibility	
Serious or Repeated Misconduct	You should make a complaint if a councillor behaves inappropriately over time or after being warned. This includes bullying, ignoring directions, or breaching conduct codes. <i>Examples: Dale, who works in a disability advocacy group, observed a councillor continually mocking public submitters with a stutter during meetings. Even after being warned, the behaviour continued in person and on social media.</i>
Acting as a Councillor When Not Allowed	You should make a complaint if someone acts as a councillor while disqualified or suspended. This can happen if they've been convicted of a crime, declared bankrupt, or removed from office but still try to act in the role. <i>Example: A person who has been disqualified due to a fraud conviction still attends council meetings and votes on matters.</i>
F. Obstruction and Interference	

⁷ LGA s 125

⁸ LGA s 125(1)

Obstructing Council Staff in Their Duties	You should make a complaint if someone stops or interferes with council staff while they're carrying out their lawful duties. This includes using threats, denying access to property, or blocking inspections. <i>Example: A business owner refuses to allow council inspectors into their shop for a health and safety check.</i>
Exclusions	
Exclusions	You cannot make a complaint about: • Poor service from a council or council staff: The Inspectorate does not deal with complaints about things like rubbish collection, road repairs, tree trimming, pet management, or customer service. These must be reported directly to your local council. • Disagreeing with a council decision that was made legally: If the council made a lawful decision (even if you think it's unfair or wrong), the Inspectorate cannot review or overturn it. • Councillor rudeness, bullying, or poor behaviour that doesn't break the law: Behavioural issues that don't involve breaches of the law or the Local Government Act must be raised through the councillor conduct framework with your local council. • Employment issues involving council staff: The Inspectorate does not investigate staff grievances about pay, conditions, bullying, unfair dismissal, or human resources processes. These should be raised internally, or with the Fair Work Commission or relevant union. • Personal disputes with a councillor unrelated to their council role: If you're having a personal issue with a councillor that isn't about their official duties, the Inspectorate can't get involved. • Planning or development decisions (unless corruption or conflict of interest is involved): If you're unhappy with a planning permit decision, you should contact your council or appeal to VCAT. The Inspectorate will only investigate if there's alleged corruption or misuse of power. • Complaints that are already being handled by another authority: The Inspectorate won't investigate if another appropriate body is already involved (e.g. IBAC, Victorian Ombudsman, VCAT, Fair Work, VEOHRC, etc.). • State or Federal Government decisions or services: The Inspectorate only investigates issues relating to Victorian local councils – not state departments, federal agencies, or public services like Centrelink or public hospitals. • Political or policy disagreements: If you disagree with a councillor's political stance, voting record, or campaign promises, this is not something the Inspectorate investigates. • Complaints made without any evidence or that are too old: The Inspectorate may not investigate if there's no supporting

evidence or if the complaint relates to something too far in the past.

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

Jurisdiction	Description
State	This complaints body has powers to hear complaints under the law of Victoria.
Time Limitations	No formal time limit is listed in the Local Government Act 2020 for complaints to the LGI. However, the Inspectorate may decide not to investigate a complaint if: • The matter occurred too long ago, and • Sufficient evidence or documentation cannot be provided.
Exclusions ⁹	The Local Government Inspectorate does not investigate the following matters: • complaints relating to councils' decisions or democratic processes, unless there is a breach of the Act • services issues such as bins not being collected, rate charges being too high or parking infringements • planning and building permits • council services • performance of council staff, unless related to offences under the act • public interest disclosure matters • council decisions (unless there is a conflict of interest) • council fines • councillor code of conduct (such as profanity in meetings). These are matters dealt with by council's own complaint policy or the Victorian Ombudsman.
Exercise of discretion	The LGI has the discretion to: • Decline to investigate a matter if it believes the issue is vexatious, trivial, or not in the public interest. • Refer the complaint to a more appropriate body, such as IBAC, VCAT, the Victorian Ombudsman, or the council itself.
Additional information	The law gives the Local Government Inspectorate a range of powers to conduct investigations into council matters to:

⁹ <https://www.lgi.vic.gov.au/make-complaint-local-government-inspectorate>

	• require people and organisations to provide the Local Government Inspectorate with material or information they ask for – even if it is confidential • require people to give all reasonable assistance (such as submit to an interview) during an examination or investigation • require people to be interviewed under oath or affirmation • inspect personal interests returns • receive referrals and investigate matters from other integrity agencies such as the Independent Broad Based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC), Victorian Ombudsman, and the Minister for Local Government • investigate failures by council staff or committee members to comply duties such as disclosing conflicts of interest investigate allegations of serious or gross misconduct by a councillor • make an application to the Supreme Court to order a witness to answer questions or provide material relevant to an investigation or review.
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Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

Respondent	Description
Councillors	Elected representatives of local councils. Complaints can relate to misuse of position, conflicts of interest, election offences, or other breaches of the Local Government Act.
Council Staff	Employees of local councils, including officers involved in administrative, planning, enforcement, or operational duties. Complaints can be made if they're involved in misconduct relevant to LGI powers.
Senior Council Employees (including CEOs)	High-level council executives who oversee council operations. Complaints can relate to misconduct, failure to disclose interests, or unlawful involvement in decision-making.
Advisors to Council or Delegated Committees	Individuals (including contractors or consultants) who provide advice to councils or participate in delegated or asset committees. They are subject to conflict of interest rules.
Nominated Council Election Candidates	People running for election to local councils. Complaints can be made if the person is ineligible to run, has breached election rules, or has authorised improper electoral material.
Victorian Local Councils (as entities)	Complaints can be made about the conduct or decisions of the council as an organisation, where it relates to matters within LGI's powers (e.g. systemic misuse of council resources, election processes).
Exclusions	This body does not take complaints about:

	• Individuals not connected to a council role: Disputes between private individuals (e.g. neighbours, family members, or personal matters unrelated to local government) are outside LGI's jurisdiction. • Private Organisations: This includes building and construction companies, real estate agents, banks, credit and insurance providers, superannuation funds, energy companies (electricity, gas, water), and landlords. • Prisons or Corrections Staff: Complaints relating to prison operations or prisoner treatment should be directed to the Victorian Ombudsman or IBAC, depending on the nature of the issue. • Planning or Building Permit Disputes: LGI does not deal with objections or concerns about planning approvals, building permits, or development outcomes – even if issued by a council. • Workplace Safety Matters (e.g. OH&S): Safety concerns or workplace breaches (e.g. at a construction site or council depot) should be referred to WorkSafe Victoria. • Members of Parliament (MPs): Concerns about MPs must be addressed through the proper parliamentary channels. • Victorian Government Bodies and Public Sector Agencies: This includes state government departments (e.g. Department of Justice, Department of Education), public hospitals, universities, and TAFEs. • Australian (Federal) Government Bodies: Includes Centrelink, ATO, Services Australia, Australia Post, and Medicare. • Victoria Police: Complaints about police conduct or misconduct should be directed to IBAC or Victoria Police Professional Standards Command. • Decisions Made by Courts or Tribunals: LGI cannot investigate decisions made by a court or tribunal, including VCAT.
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Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
Who can make a complaint?	Any person can make a complaint to the Local Government Inspectorate. You do not need to live in the local area or be directly affected by the issue, but you should have enough information to support the complaint.
Pre-requisite steps	None. You do not need to go through your local council or any other process before making a complaint to the Inspectorate.

Can complaints be made on behalf of someone?	Yes. You can make a complaint on behalf of another person (for example, a family member, client, or community member). If possible, include their consent and any relevant details to support the issue being raised.
Exclusions ¹⁰	You cannot make a complaint through the standard LGI process if you choose to have your matter treated as a public interest disclosure (formerly known as a protected disclosure or “whistleblower” complaint), or if you do not opt out of that process. These complaints are managed separately under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 and must follow specific procedures.

Step 5: What outcomes are available at this body?

Power	Description
Official warnings for a range of breaches of the Act	It is an indictable offence under the <i>LGA</i> for councillors to intentionally misuse their position or to aid and abet (assist or help) another councillor to misuse their position. A person who commits such an offence may be fined up to 600 penalty units (\$118,554 as at 1 July 2024) or imprisoned for up to five years. ¹¹
Referral to Councillor Conduct Panels ¹²	The Chief Municipal Inspector can make referrals to Councillor Conduct Panels. A Councillor Conduct Panel is an independent process which assesses and makes a decision on allegations of serious misconduct. ¹³ It can reprimand the councillor, direct them to make an apology or suspend them from office. ¹⁴
Prosecutions in the Magistrates Court	The Chief Municipal Inspector can initiate a prosecution of any possible offences under the Act as a result of an investigation. The Local Government Inspectorate has previously prosecuted councillors for misuses of position. Penalties may include: - Fines (e.g. up to 600 penalty units, or \$118,554 as at 1 July 2024) - Imprisonment for up to 5 years, for serious offences like intentional misuse of position

¹⁰ <https://www.lgi.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-12/Fact-sheet-Public-interest-disclosures.pdf>

¹¹ LGA s 123

¹² LGA, Division 7

¹³ LGA s 154

¹⁴ LGA s 167(3)-(4)

Chief Municipal Inspector applies to VCAT to stand down a councillor	A councillor may be stood down while their behaviour as a councillor is under investigation or if they have been charged with a serious offence by VCAT.¹⁵ A serious offence: • has a maximum penalty of at least 120 penalty units or 12 months' jail, or • is punishable upon first conviction by imprisonment of 2 years or more, or • disqualifies them from managing corporations. Examples of serious offences include: • a councillor has been charged with aggravated assault • a breach of an intervention order • a councillor being disqualified from managing a corporation after a bankruptcy. If VCAT makes an order to stand down the councillor, it will remain in place until the legal proceedings for the serious offence are concluded. When a councillor is stood down, they are suspended from their role. They must not perform any of the functions and duties or exercise the power of a councillor. Also, they cannot attend council meetings, delegated committees or attend council premises. The councillor's allowance is also suspended while they are stood down.
Make an application to the VCAT for a finding of gross misconduct by a councillor	The Chief Municipal Inspector may make an application to VCAT regarding an allegation of gross misconduct by a councillor.¹⁶ Upon a finding of gross misconduct by a councillor, VCAT may order that the councillor is disqualified from continuing to be a councillor for up to 8 years and the vacation of the councillor's office.¹⁷
Recommending changes to actions or processes	Formal action might not be taken against the council, but rather the Local Government Inspectorate may write a report to the council and request a written response. This is part of their guidance and education work which seeks to influence future council operations and the service delivery to the council's community.¹⁸

¹⁵ LGA s 229

¹⁶ LGA s 171

¹⁷ LGA s 172

¹⁸ <https://www.lgi.vic.gov.au/case-studies-local-government-compliance>

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

Requirement	Description
Format	Remember that providing detailed, specific and relevant information on this form will allow the Local Government Inspectorate to effectively assess your complaint. Please set out clearly and concisely the allegations you wish to make, before providing further information or context surrounding the circumstances.
Personal Details	Your details (first and last name, email, mobile and home phone, employment position or title, postal address) may be provided but it is optional. You can choose to make an anonymous complaint, which means the Local Government Inspectorate won't ask for your name or other contact information. Being anonymous prevents them from contacting you to seek further information, advising you of progress or an outcome, or discussing the complaint if you contact them.
Respondent's Details	Selecting the council/entity which your complaint is about is required information. Be clear on which council and person are the subjects of your allegation and have all relevant documents ready to upload to support your allegation.
Relevant Facts	If your complaint relates to a council meeting, provide date(s) and any relevant information, plus circumstances surrounding this allegation. If your allegation relates to a specific incident please list where the incident occurred and if there were any witnesses who could corroborate your allegation.
What NOT to include	Do not include false or misleading statements as it carries penalties.
Additional information you need to know	Public interest disclosures: A public interest disclosure is information provided about improper conduct or detrimental action in the public sector. If your complaint shows that a councillor or member of council staff has engaged or proposes to engage in improper conduct, this could constitute a public interest disclosure. If you want your complaint assessed as a public interest disclosure, then your complaint will be referred to IBAC instead. The Local Government Inspectorate will only assess the complaint if you tell them your complaint is not a public interest disclosure. If you did not think it should be assessed as a public interest disclosure but the Local Government Inspectorate disagrees and think it could fit the criteria, the Local Government Inspectorate will write to you to ask you if you want it to be considered as public interest disclosure.

You must tell the Local Government Inspectorate in writing if you do not wish your complaint to be considered under the Public Interest Disclosure scheme.

If the IBAC later finds your complaint is not a public interest complaint, IBAC may refer the complaint back to the Local Government Inspectorate for assessment and investigation.

Assessment by IBAC may take several weeks to complete. If you do not think your complaint is about improper conduct or detrimental action, it may be better to avoid the extra time needed to assess it as a public interest disclosure.

Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	Online form: To lodge a complaint, please fill out this form here. You will need to provide the following information: • choose the statement which best describes your complaint • whether you've already contacted the Inspectorate about your matter • whether you've reported your complaint to any other person or agency, and if so, the name of the person or agency • the name and position (if known) of the person(s) your complaint is about • your complaint summarised in 1 sentence • details of your complaint • confirming whether you want your complaint to be a public interest disclosure or not If you have supporting evidence and wish to submit documents or images related to your complaint, please email inspectorate@lgi.vic.gov.au. Supporting evidence (such as documents and emails) plays an important role in substantiating an allegation, so please be clear on the purpose of your supplied documents and their relevance to your complaint. Email: inspectorate@lgi.vic.gov.au While the Local Government Inspectorate can receive complaints by email, they do not assess or respond to emails that are addressed to other government agencies or individuals (such as 'mass distribution' emails CC'd to them and other agencies). Telephone: The Local Government Inspectorate can also receive complaints and enquiries by phone 1800 469 359 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. However, due to their limited

	resources, you may get a more efficient response if you submit your complaint through the online form above.
Receipt/acknowledgement of complaint	Once the Local Government Inspectorate receives a complaint, it is assessed by their team to determine if it can be investigated. The Local Government Inspectorate aims to acknowledge receipt of complaints within ten working days. Due to the high volume of complaints that will be received, especially during the election period, no timeline for the finalization of your complaint can be provided.
Assessment/investigation	As part of their investigation, the Local Government Inspectorate can require people and organisations to provide them with material or information they ask for – even if it is confidential. Similarly, in an examination or investigation, people are required to give reasonable assistance. The Local Government Inspectorate can also make an application to the Supreme Court to order a witness to answer questions or provide material relevant to an investigation or review. The Local Government Inspectorate will refer complaints to other agencies if the complaint is out of their jurisdiction.
Additional information you need to know	The Local Government Inspectorate collects the information that you provide with this complaint form. The information that you provide is used to respond to your enquiry. You should update the complaint body about any changes that impact on your complaint. You can request access to, and corrections of, any personal information provided in this form. Requests for access or correction should be sent to inspectorate@lgi.vic.gov.au. You should try to provide all relevant information at the outset. If you drip feed information over time, that can slow your complaint down. Similarly, if you do not provide all or part of the information requested, the Inspectorate may not be able to contact you regarding your enquiry. Supporting information (such as documents, emails and images) plays an important role in substantiating an allegation. When including information in your complaint submission, each piece of information should be uploaded individually as separate files. Information in the form of documents, emails, photographs, images, etc. should be uploaded as individual files and not grouped all together. Each piece of information should be uploaded one at a time. Please contact the Local Government Inspectorate if you wish to use an alternative mechanism to the online form.

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

Avenue	Description
Internal review opportunities	There is no formal internal review or appeal process available through the LGI once a complaint decision has been made. The Chief Municipal Inspector (CMI) and the LGI have discretionary powers under the Act to decide whether to investigate a matter and what action to take. Once a decision has been made (e.g. not to investigate, to issue a warning, or to close a matter), there is: • No formal right of appeal • No published internal review mechanism • No external review body that can compel the LGI to reopen a case
External review/remedies	A complainant may be referred to another complaint body such as the Victorian Ombudsman or IBAC. A complainant could take the matter further at court, however, we suggest obtaining advice from legal practitioners before doing so.

Step 9: Other bodies that handle related complaints about councils, misconduct and corruption.

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.
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC)	For complaints about corruption and misconduct in the public sector and Victoria Police, including: • taking or offering bribes • using a position of influence dishonestly • fraud or theft • misusing workplace information IBAC does not handle complaints about: • issues from other States or Territories or Federal matters • matters in the private sector, unless it relates to a Victorian public sector employee • rudeness or poor customer service.
Victorian Ombudsman	The Ombudsman investigates the actions, decisions or conduct of public sector organisations and their staff. It also looks at whether a public sector organisation has acted in accordance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. These include decisions made by a council, government departments and agencies, such as: • services • communication • complaint handling • compliance with policies, procedures or law • other actions or decisions that might be unreasonable The Ombudsman will generally not become involved in a complaint when: • you have not yet attempted to resolve it with the organisation directly • the matter may be decided by a court or tribunal • the complaint is more than 12 months old.

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
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
How to make a complaint	Local Government Inspectorate complaint form, and guidance how to complete the form.
Integrity Agencies	Information about integrity agencies and what they do.