

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.

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.

Victims of Crime Commissioner (VOCC)

In this fact sheet, we introduce the Victorian Victims of Crime Commissioner (VOCC). We outline how complaints can be made by people to Victims of Crime Commissioner.

The VOCC is an independent body that helps ensure victims of crime are treated fairly by justice agencies and victim support services in Victoria. If you're a victim or witness and feel you've been treated without respect, weren't kept informed, or your complaint to the agency hasn't been resolved, you may be able to make a complaint to the VOCC.

The VOCC can look into issues involving police, prosecutors, WorkSafe, and victim support services like the Victims Helpline. The VOCC doesn't take sides and cannot overturn court decisions, but they can investigate how you were treated and recommend improvements. Their service is free, and you don't need a lawyer to make a complaint.

Legislation and Key Terms

The VOCC was established in 2014 and legislated in 2015 under the [Victims of Crime Commissioner Act 2015](#) (**VOCC Act**). The VOCC was established to provide a unique voice to advocate for victims of crime in their dealings with the criminal justice system and with government agencies.

The *Victims of Crime Commissioner Regulations 2020* (**VOCC Regulations**) define the agencies and services that are required by law to comply with the Victims' Charter.

Relevant Legislation: Below are links to legislation that is relevant to the VOCC's complaint handling network.

- [Victims of Crime Commissioner Act 2015 \(VOCC Act\)](#)
- [Victims of Crime Commissioner Regulations 2020](#) (**VOCC Regulations**)
- [Victims' Charter Act 2006](#)

Key terms: Below are key terms that appear throughout this factsheet and their meaning.

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction where a response or resolution is wanted, expected or required.

Complainant means a person who has made a complaint.

Culturally safe means an environment that is safe for Aboriginal peoples, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity and experience.

DPP means the Director of Public Prosecutions

Investigatory agency means:

- (a) a police officer; or
- (b) a person authorised by an enactment to investigate a criminal offence.

OPP means the Office of Public Prosecutions

OVIC means the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner

Person adversely affected by crime means:

- (a) a natural person who has suffered injury as a direct result of a criminal offence, whether or not that injury was reasonably foreseeable by the offender; or
- (b) a family member of a person referred to in paragraph (a); or
- (c) a witness to a criminal offence.

Prosecuting agency means the DPP, or a police officer, or a person authorised to bring proceedings for a criminal offence against an enactment.

Trauma-informed response means a response informed by a deep understanding of the impact of trauma and victimisation and work to reduce and prevent re-traumatisation.

Victim of crime means:

- (a) a natural person who has suffered injury as a direct result of a criminal offence, whether or not that injury was reasonably foreseeable by the offender; or
- (b) if a person has died as a direct result of a criminal offence committed against that person, a family member of that person; or
- (c) if the person referred to in paragraph (a) is under 18 years of age or is incapable of managing his or her own affairs because of mental impairment, a family member of that person; or
- (d) in the case of an offence against section 49M of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16), the child and a family member of that child.

Victim centred approach means a way of engaging with victims that prioritizes listening, avoids re-traumatization, and systematically focuses on their safety, rights, well-being, expressed needs and choices.

Victims' Charter means Victims' Charter Act (2006).

Victims' services agency means:

- (a) an entity established under an enactment that is responsible for the provision of services to persons adversely affected by crime; or
- (b) a public official within the meaning of the Public Administration Act 2004 who is responsible for the provision of services to persons adversely affected by crime; or
- (c) an entity that is publicly funded to provide services to persons adversely affected by crime.

VOCC Act means *Victims of Crime Commissioner Act 2015*.

VOCC Regulations means *Victim of Crime Commissioner Regulations 2020*.

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

Complaints can be made by victims of crime or a witness to a criminal offence about justice agencies or victims' services who:	
Sub-category	Example
Disrespectful or insensitive treatment <i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s6</i>	<p>You should make a complaint if you were not treated with courtesy, respect, or dignity by a justice agency or victims' service. Agencies must treat all victims fairly, compassionately, and without discrimination, regardless of background, identity, or personal circumstances.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Samira, a 24-year-old international student, was not offered an interpreter when reporting stalking to police. She felt they didn't understand the risk she was in or respect her situation.</i> • <i>Reilly, who had recently been sexually assaulted, was dismissed by the officer on duty and felt unsafe returning. She was never taken seriously despite multiple attempts to report.</i> • <i>Zoe, a 15-year-old victim of sexual assault, was interviewed by a SOCIT officer without being told she could have a support person. The officer rushed through the process and didn't explain what to expect, leaving her confused and traumatised.</i> • <i>Kira's brother, who has an intellectual disability, was restrained by police after his support worker called emergency services. Afterwards, no one from Victoria Police or victim services followed up, offered support, or told the family how to make a complaint. Kira doesn't want to engage with police again but feels her brother was left traumatised and unsupported, and wants to ensure the system responds better next time.</i>
Not informed about support services or legal help <i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s7(a)</i>	<p>You should make a complaint if you were not told about available support services, counselling, or legal assistance after reporting a crime. Agencies must clearly tell victims where to get help and explain what services or entitlements might apply to them.</p> <p><i>Example: Amanda, a victim of a racist assault, reported the incident but was not told about counselling or community supports that could help her recovery.</i></p>
Not referred to support services <i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s7(b)</i>	<p>You should make a complaint if a justice or victims' service agency failed to refer you to a support service when appropriate. Referrals should be made to ensure victims can access timely help for their recovery, safety, or wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Example: Carlos, who was assaulted during a break-in, was never referred to housing or counselling services despite clearly needing help as a recent migrant with no family nearby.</i></p>
Communication needs or	<p>You should make a complaint if an agency did not adapt their communication to your needs or ignored your stated preferences.</p>

<p>preferences not respected</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s7B</i></p>	<p>This includes not offering an interpreter, not using accessible formats, or failing to contact you in your preferred way.</p> <p><i>Example: Olivia, who is Deaf, asked police to communicate with her by email but kept receiving voicemails she couldn't access.</i></p>
<p>Not kept updated on an investigation</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s8</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if the police or other investigating agency failed to provide you with reasonable updates about a reported crime. Victims are entitled to regular progress updates unless doing so would compromise the investigation.</p> <p><i>Example: Carlos never heard anything more about his aggravated burglary case, despite repeated efforts to follow up. He was left feeling ignored and unsafe.</i></p>
<p>Not told about decisions to charge or not charge</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s9</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you weren't told whether the accused was charged, or why no charges were laid. Victims have the right to be informed about outcomes relating to the accused, including decisions not to proceed.</p> <p><i>Example: Amanda wasn't notified that the person who attacked her was not charged, and no explanation was given.</i></p>
<p>Not informed about changes or withdrawal of charges</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s11</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you were not told about major changes to the charges, including withdrawal or acceptance of lesser charges. Victims should be told about any decisions to drop or change charges, and the reasons behind those decisions.</p> <p><i>Example: Maria was never consulted when her offender's charges were reduced, despite being the primary victim in the case.</i></p>
<p>Not kept informed about court proceedings</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s9A & s9</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you weren't given updates about court dates, hearing locations, or the outcomes of the case. Victims have a right to know what's happening in their case and when important court events are occurring.</p> <p><i>Example: Ethan, a young victim of family violence, only learned the outcome of the case after asking his mother. He had received no direct updates himself.</i></p>
<p>Not consulted before key prosecution decisions</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s9B & s12</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if the prosecution made a major decision about your case without seeking your views. Victims should be consulted before significant steps such as withdrawing charges or accepting plea deals.</p> <p><i>Example: Maria was not consulted when the court granted multiple adjournments that made her relive trauma repeatedly. She was never asked whether she was available for the new dates.</i></p>
<p>Not given reasons for key prosecution decisions</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s9C</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you weren't given the reasons behind decisions like discontinuing a case or accepting a plea deal. Agencies must explain such decisions in a timely and respectful manner unless doing so would compromise another legal matter.</p> <p><i>Example: Oliver found out the police hadn't recorded his sexual assault complaint only after pressing them. No explanation was offered for the decision not to proceed.</i></p>

<p>Not told about bail or protective conditions</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s10</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you asked to be kept informed about bail conditions but weren't told if the offender was released or what restrictions were in place. This includes failing to inform you of safety measures or relevant bail updates.</p> <p><i>Example: Pia, who had reported historic sexual offences, was not informed that the offender was released on bail and allowed to reside near her workplace.</i></p>
<p>Not told about court process or your right to attend</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s11</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you weren't told how the court process works or that you have the right to attend hearings. Agencies should inform you of your right to attend unless the court decides otherwise.</p> <p><i>Example: Elena, a young adult victim of assault, was never told she could attend court and only found out about sentencing through the media.</i></p>
<p>Not properly supported when giving evidence</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s11</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you were a witness and didn't receive appropriate information or support to give evidence safely and confidently. Agencies must prepare you and provide support, including special arrangements if needed.</p> <p><i>Example: A 17-year-old victim with a disability was made to testify in open court without being told they could ask to appear via video link.</i></p>
<p>Not protected from contact or intimidation at court</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s12</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you were exposed to the offender or their supporters in court and weren't offered protections. Prosecutors should minimise unnecessary contact between the victim and the accused, or anyone associated with them.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reilly was made to wait in a corridor with the accused's family, who intimidated her before the trial started.</i> <i>Geoff, a robbery victim, was summoned to court but wasn't told there was a separate waiting room. He was left sitting near the accused and their supporters, which made him feel unsafe and anxious before testifying.</i>
<p>Not supported in making a Victim Impact Statement</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s13(2)</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you were not given the opportunity or support to prepare a Victim Impact Statement. Victims should be referred to appropriate services to help them prepare and submit these statements.</p> <p><i>Example: Elena wanted to explain how the assault affected her but was never told how to write a Victim Impact Statement or where to get help.</i></p>
<p>Personal information was disclosed without consent</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s14</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if your personal details (such as your address or phone number) were released without your permission. Agencies have a duty to protect your privacy at all times.</p> <p><i>Example: Olivia's new address was accidentally included in the final court order sent to her violent ex-partner, who later showed up at her home.</i></p>

<p>Property was mishandled or not returned</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s15</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if your belongings were damaged, lost, or not returned after no longer being needed for investigation or trial. Victims' property should be treated with care and returned as soon as possible.</p> <p><i>Example: Geoff's laptop, taken as evidence, was returned scratched and no explanation or apology was provided.</i></p>
<p>Not told about compensation or financial assistance</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s16</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you were not informed about your right to apply for financial assistance or compensation. Victims should be advised about the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) or court-based compensation processes.</p> <p><i>Example: Carlos had to pay for counselling out of pocket for months because no one told him he could apply for financial assistance as a victim.</i></p>
<p>Not informed about the Victims' Register</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s17</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you weren't told you could apply to the Victims Register after the offender was imprisoned. This Register helps victims stay informed about an offender's prison status, parole applications, or compensation claims.</p> <p><i>Example: Sue, whose best friend was murdered while travelling, wasn't told about the Register and only later discovered the offender had received a prison payout.</i></p>
<p>Complaint mishandled by the agency itself</p> <p><i>Victims' Charter Act 2006 s19A</i></p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you raised a concern with a justice or victim support agency, and it wasn't handled fairly, seriously, or in line with their own complaints process. Agencies must take complaints seriously, resolve them fairly, and inform victims of their right to escalate the issue to the VOCC.</p> <p><i>Example: Oliver complained about the officer who told him to "man up," but police offered no real resolution and failed to notify him of his right to go to the VOCC.</i></p>
<p>Exclusions</p>	<p>VOCC cannot handle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting a crime: VOCC cannot take reports of new criminal offences - contact Victoria Police. • Court decisions or sentences: VOCC cannot review or change verdicts, sentences, or judicial decisions. • Decisions to charge or prosecute: VOCC cannot overturn or question decisions to charge, not charge, withdraw, or settle a case. • Tribunal or court compensation outcomes: VOCC does not review compensation decisions made by VOCAT or the courts. • Family law disputes: VOCC cannot handle parenting orders, custody matters, or Family Court processes. • Conduct of lawyers: Complaints about lawyers must go to the Victorian Legal Services Commissioner. • Conduct of judges or magistrates: Complaints about judicial officers should go to the Judicial Commission of Victoria.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination unrelated to justice agencies: Complaints about general discrimination should go to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. • Police misconduct or corruption: Serious police misconduct or corruption should be reported to IBAC or Victoria Police's Professional Standards Command. • General dissatisfaction with the system: VOCC cannot resolve complaints about the justice system overall or government policy. • Private or unfunded victim services: VOCC only oversees government-funded justice and victim support agencies. • Complaints not involving a recognised victim: The person affected must meet the legal definition of a victim under the Victims' Charter.
Additional Info	<p>Complaints must first be raised with the original agency:</p> <p>Before the VOCC can investigate, you must have already raised your complaint with the relevant agency (e.g. Victoria Police, Office of Public Prosecutions, or Victims Services). If you're not satisfied with their response, you can then escalate to the VOCC.</p>

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

Jurisdiction	Description
State	The VOCC can receive complaints under the laws of Victoria.
Geographical scope	The VOCC can receive complaints about incidents that have occurred in Victoria.
Time Limitations	<p>Generally speaking, a complaint must be made within 12 months of the date in which the issue the subject of your complaint occurred.</p> <p>However, the VOCC may accept a complaint made at a later time if the VOCC is satisfied that there is a good reason for the delay in making the complaint.</p>
Exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidents that occurred outside Victoria: The VOCC can only handle complaints about justice agencies or victim services operating within Victoria. Incidents that occurred interstate or overseas are out of scope. • Events that occurred before the Charter applied: Complaints about conduct that took place before 1 November 2006 (the start date of the Charter) are generally out of scope. • Complaints made too late: The VOCC generally cannot accept complaints made more than 12 months after the relevant conduct or failure, unless there is a valid reason for delay. • No relevant connection to a criminal offence in Victoria: The VOCC can only consider complaints if the person affected is a

	victim or witness of a criminal offence that occurred (or was prosecuted) in Victoria.
Exercise of discretion	<p>The VOCC does not need to accept every complaint. The VOCC may decline to investigate a complaint if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the agency has not finalised its investigation of the complaint; or VOCC refers the matter to another organisation or body (including IBAC); the complaint forms the basis of an investigation currently being conducted by another body, organisation, agency or entity; the VOCC is satisfied that the complaint is frivolous, vexatious, misconceived, lacking in substance, or otherwise does not warrant action; or the VOCC is satisfied that the complaint is not made in good faith; or the VOCC is satisfied that the complaint is made for an improper purpose. <p>The VOCC also has a broad discretion to not investigate a complaint if it is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so.</p>
Additional information	<p>Referral of complaints</p> <p>The VOCC has discretion to refer a complaint or part of a complaint to another body, organisation, agency or entity if the complaint raises issues that the VOCC is satisfied would be more appropriately dealt with by that other body, organisation, agency or entity.</p> <p>If this occurs, the VOCC will let you know in writing within 14 days following the referral.</p> <p>Withdrawal of complaints</p> <p>You can withdraw your complaint at any time by writing to the VOCC. The VOCC must take reasonable steps to assist you if you want to withdraw your complaint.</p>

Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

These are the agencies or service providers that the VOCC can investigate for non-compliance with the Victims' Charter. Each is legally obligated to uphold the rights of victims under the Victims' Charter Act 2006 (Vic). This includes:

Respondent	Description
Victoria Police	Victoria Police must treat victims with dignity and respect, explain the investigation process clearly, and keep victims informed. They are also responsible for referring victims to support services and helping prepare for court. If these obligations are not met, victims can complain to the VOCC after first raising it with police.

WorkSafe Victoria / WorkCover	WorkSafe has obligations under the Charter when dealing with victims during criminal investigations (e.g. workplace manslaughter or injuries from criminal conduct). If victims are not treated respectfully or are denied information about enforcement actions, they may complain to the VOCC after contacting WorkSafe first.
The Office of Public Prosecutions (OPP)	The OPP must inform victims about the court process, consult them before key decisions, and help them prepare Victim Impact Statements. If they fail to meet these duties, victims and family members can escalate a complaint to the VOCC.
Victorian Legal Aid and Community Legal Centres	These services provide legal support to victims applying for financial assistance or compensation. If victims are not treated appropriately or given accurate legal information in line with the Charter, complaints can be made to the VOCC if not resolved directly.
Magistrates' Court of Victoria	The Magistrates' Court must ensure that victims are treated respectfully in court, that their safety is considered, and that they are informed of their rights and entitlements. A failure to do so may lead to a VOCC complaint.
County Court and Supreme Court (in their administrative functions)	While judges themselves are excluded, courts as institutions have Charter obligations, such as ensuring victims are informed of court procedures, supported during the process, and protected from unnecessary contact with the accused.
Victim Services funded by the Department of Justice and Community Safety	This includes services like the Victims of Crime Helpline, Victims Assistance Program (VAP), and the Victims Register team. If these services fail to refer victims appropriately, provide information, or support recovery, a VOCC complaint may be made.
The Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS)	Staff responsible for administering FAS must treat victims respectfully and support their understanding of the process. While VOCC cannot review the outcome of decisions, it can review how victims were treated during the application process.
Youth Justice and Corrections Victoria (in Charter-related roles)	If these agencies interact with victims, for example, providing parole notifications or managing Victims Register access, they must meet Charter standards. Failures in communication or respect may lead to VOCC complaints.
The Adult Parole Board (administrative staff only)	While the VOCC cannot review parole decisions, complaints can be made about how staff interacted with victims, especially regarding access to the Victims Register or missed opportunities to make a parole submission.
Court Network (volunteer support services inside courts)	Court Networkers help guide and support victims in court. If their behaviour breaches Charter principles or fails to provide appropriate information, it may fall under the VOCC's oversight.

Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCITs)	As a division of Victoria Police, SOCITs have specialised responsibilities when investigating sexual or child abuse crimes. They must treat victims with care and keep them informed.
Exclusions	<p>These bodies cannot be investigated by the VOCC. If the issue involves one of the following, it is outside the VOCC's jurisdiction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judges and Magistrates (in their judicial capacity): The VOCC cannot investigate the conduct or decisions of judicial officers. Concerns about judicial behaviour should go to the Judicial Commission of Victoria. • Private legal practitioners (e.g. your own lawyer): If your concern is about a lawyer's conduct, you must contact the Victorian Legal Services Commissioner, the VOCC has no power over private legal practice. • Commonwealth agencies: Agencies like the Australian Federal Police, Family Court of Australia, or any federal departments are outside the VOCC's reach, even if they've dealt with crime victims. • Private support services not funded by the Victorian Government: The VOCC can only review services funded by or under the direction of the Victorian Government. This excludes private counsellors, charities, or unfunded community groups. • Media organisations or journalists: Complaints about the portrayal of crime victims in the media are not covered by the VOCC and may fall under media or broadcasting regulators. • Victoria Police Professional Standards Command (as a complaint handler): While Victoria Police can be the subject of a VOCC complaint, how they handle internal police misconduct complaints is not separately reviewable by the VOCC, this may fall under IBAC. • The Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC): IBAC investigates corruption and police misconduct, not victim treatment or Charter breaches and cannot be investigated by the VOCC. • Transport, housing, or health services (unless they are also Charter bodies): The VOCC can only investigate agencies where the service is part of a criminal investigation or victims' support context. General housing, medical or welfare services fall outside scope unless directly linked to the victim's case and bound by the Charter.

Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
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<p>Who can make a complaint?</p>	<p>You can make a complaint to the VOCC if you or someone you know is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a victim of a crime; • a witness of a crime; or • adversely affected by crime
<p>Pre-requisite steps</p>	<p>You must first attempt to resolve the matter directly with the agency.</p> <p>The VOCC has discretion to decline to investigate a complaint if you have not first attempted to resolve the issues with the agency or organisation involved.</p> <p>If you are unable to resolve the matter with them directly, you can contact the VOCC.</p>
<p>Can complaints be made on behalf of someone?</p>	<p>Yes. You can make a complaint on behalf of someone else. Complaints may be made by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a family member of a person who has died as a direct result of a criminal offence; • a family member of a person who is under 18 and that person has suffered an injury as a direct result of a criminal offence; or • a family member of a person who is incapable of managing their own affairs and that person has suffered an injury as a direct result of a criminal offence.

Exclusions	<p>You cannot make a complaint if you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a victim, witness, or family member: Only people directly affected by a Victorian crime, including victims, witnesses, or close family members, can make a complaint. • Crime didn't happen in Victoria: The VOCC only handles complaints linked to crimes that occurred or were dealt with in Victoria. • You are the accused: People accused of committing a crime cannot make complaints to the VOCC. • No direct involvement in the offence: General members of the public can't complain unless acting with permission on behalf of a victim or witness. • Not related to the victim and no legal authority: If the victim has died, only close family or a legal representative can complain on their behalf. • You haven't complained to the agency first: You must raise the issue with the agency (like police or prosecutors) before going to the VOCC, unless there's a good reason you couldn't. • Anonymous complaint with no details: The VOCC may not act on anonymous complaints if there's not enough information to investigate. • No consent and no authorised representative: If the person affected can't give consent (e.g. due to age or disability), a parent, guardian, or authorised advocate must lodge the complaint. • Complaint isn't about your experience as a victim or witness: The issue must relate to how you were treated as a victim or witness, not a general service complaint. • Complaint is only about a court or compensation decision: The VOCC can't review legal outcomes, only how you were treated during the process. • Advocating for a victim without their permission: You can't complain on someone's behalf unless they've given consent or can't act for themselves.
Additional information you need to know	<p>Referral of complaints: The VOCC has discretion to refer a complaint or part of a complaint to another body, organisation, agency or entity if the complaint raises issues that the VOCC is satisfied would be more appropriately dealt with by that other body, organisation, agency or entity.</p> <p>If this occurs, the VOCC will let you know in writing within 14 days following the referral.</p> <p>Withdrawal of complaints: You can withdraw your complaint at any time by writing to the VOCC. The VOCC must take reasonable steps to assist you if you want to withdraw your complaint.</p>

Step 5: What remedies are available at this body?

The VOCC cannot enforce outcomes but may recommend a range of fair and reasonable remedies after investigating a complaint. These aim to improve how victims are treated under the Victims' Charter Act 2006 (Vic).	
Power	Description
Apology	<p>The VOCC may recommend that the agency issues a sincere apology to the complainant for the treatment that led to the complaint.</p> <p>This may include a written or verbal apology, sometimes facilitated by the VOCC, and should be accompanied by an explanation of what went wrong and what steps will be taken to prevent it happening again.</p>
Explanation or acknowledgement	<p>The VOCC may recommend that the agency provides a clear explanation of what occurred, why it occurred, and an acknowledgment that the victim's treatment fell short of Charter standards.</p> <p>This response may be offered with or without an apology, depending on the circumstances.</p>
Commitment to prevent recurrence	<p>The VOCC may recommend that the agency outlines what steps it will take to prevent the issue from happening again, including internal reviews or service improvements.</p> <p>This ensures the complaint leads to positive change for future victims.</p>
Referral to internal review mechanisms	<p>In some cases, the VOCC may recommend that the complaint be referred to a more appropriate complaints or oversight unit within the agency itself (e.g. a formal internal investigation or disciplinary process), if the VOCC determines this is the most suitable path for resolution.</p>
Feedback to improve system-wide practice	<p>The VOCC may use the complaint, even without a direct remedy for the individual, to inform broader system improvements, policy development, or monitoring of trends across agencies.</p> <p>This may influence future reviews, guidance materials, or systemic recommendations to the Attorney-General.</p>
No further action (with explanation)	<p>If the VOCC determines that no Charter breach occurred or that the agency's response was reasonable, they may close the complaint and explain why no remedy is recommended.</p> <p>Even in these cases, complainants are often provided with an explanation or information about their rights.</p>
Additional staff training	<p>The VOCC may recommend that relevant staff undertake extra training, particularly in trauma-informed practice, respectful communication, cultural safety, or Charter compliance.</p>

	If training systems are inadequate, the VOCC may also recommend the development of new training programs.
Policy or procedural change	<p>The VOCC may recommend that the agency updates or changes its policies or internal procedures to improve service delivery to victims and ensure Charter compliance.</p> <p>This could include new guidance on communicating with victims, better referral processes, or improved privacy safeguards.</p>
Exclusions	<p>The VOCC cannot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce action or compliance: The VOCC cannot force or compel an agency to act. All recommendations are non-binding. • Award compensation or financial assistance: The VOCC cannot provide or order compensation, restitution, or payments. Victims must apply through the Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) or a court. • Review or overturn court decisions: The VOCC cannot change or review criminal verdicts, sentences, adjournments, or other court orders. • Direct police investigations or prosecutions: The VOCC cannot influence whether police charge someone, how they investigate, or how prosecutors run a case. • Discipline or punish staff or officials: The VOCC cannot take disciplinary action, fire staff, or order performance reviews within agencies. • Refer matters for prosecution or criminal charges: The VOCC cannot initiate or recommend criminal proceedings against agency staff or others. • Provide legal advice or representation: The VOCC cannot give legal advice or act as a legal representative. Victims needing advice must contact Legal Aid or a legal service. • Act as an appeal body: The VOCC cannot hear appeals or review decisions made by other complaint bodies or tribunals (e.g. IBAC, VOCAT, or the Legal Services Commissioner). • Reinvestigate the original offence: The VOCC cannot reinvestigate a reported crime or find new evidence. Its role is only to review how a victim was treated by a relevant agency. • Resolve interpersonal disputes: The VOCC cannot mediate or resolve personal disputes between individuals (e.g. victim–offender or victim–victim conflicts). • Provide mental health or crisis support: The VOCC is not a counselling or crisis service and cannot provide therapeutic care or medical support. • Make findings of legal liability: The VOCC cannot determine whether an agency broke the law or is legally liable for harm. That’s a matter for the courts.

- **Guarantee agency participation in resolution:** Agencies may choose not to act on the VOCC's recommendations, and the VOCC cannot require them to engage with the complainant or provide a remedy.

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

Requirement	Description
Format	<p>Complaints be made verbally over the phone, or via email.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Email: enquiries@vocc.vic.gov.au 2. Post: Victims of Crime Commissioner, GPO Box 4356, Melbourne VIC 3000 3. Telephone: 1800 010 017
Personal Details	<p>You can remain anonymous when making a complaint to the VOCC. However, this will limit their ability to address your concerns in the complaint.</p> <p>Generally speaking, you should provide information of your name, your contact details and whether you are the victim of the crime, a witness of a crime or otherwise adversely affected by a crime.</p>
Respondent's Details	You should provide the name of the relevant agency.
Relevant Facts	<p>You should provide as much detail should be included as possible including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date and time of the incident; • Location of the incident; • Impact of the problem has caused; • Steps already taken to try to resolve the problem; • The desired outcome. <p>Supporting documentation should be provided where possible.</p>

Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	<p>You can lodge a complaint verbally over the phone, or via email.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Email: enquiries@vocc.vic.gov.au 2. Post: Victims of Crime Commissioner GPO Box 4356 Melbourne VIC 3000 3. Telephone: 1800 010 017

Initial contact	<p>If you lodge your complaint over the phone, it will be acknowledged by the officer you are speaking to. They will make sure you understand what is involved in making the complaint, the possible outcomes, and what information is required.</p> <p>When your complaint is acknowledged you may be asked for more information or documentation to help with the assessment.</p>
Assessment	<p>After the required information has been gathered, the Commissioner can then assess your experience and decide to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress to the investigation stage. • Refer you to another organisation more able to assist. <p>During the information gathering and assessment process, you may be advised that your complaint is not about a breach of the Victims' Charter, or may fall outside of the Commissioner's powers, and therefore cannot be investigated by the Commissioner.</p> <p>If your complaint can't be investigated, the VOCC still values hearing about your experience with the justice system, and your story can help the Commissioner push for change to improve the experiences of all victims.</p>
Investigation	<p>The investigation process is thorough and involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting information from the agency or agencies involved in your complaint. • Comparing those submissions to your stated experience. • Establishing if breaches of the Victims' Charter have occurred.
Outcome	<p>If breaches of the Victims' Charter have occurred, the Commissioner is then able to recommend such things as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies from the agency or agencies for their treatment. • Additional training for agency staff. • Explanations, additional information, or a facilitated meeting. • Policy changes to minimise further negative experiences for victims. <p>These steps and your involvement in them can help improve the justice system for victims.</p> <p>The Commissioner can only recommend agencies take these actions or make changes. The Commissioner cannot require or direct an agency to do anything.</p>
Additional information you need to know	<p>You should try to provide all relevant information and documentation when you first lodge your complaint. This helps to ensure your concerns are understood and action can be taken as quickly as possible.</p>

You should update the Victims of Crime Commissioner about any changes that impact on your complaint, including if the problem has been fixed.

It is a good idea to keep a copy of your complaint for your reference.

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

Avenue	Description
Victorian Ombudsman	<p>If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint to the VOCC, you can raise your concerns with the Victorian Ombudsman. The Victorian Ombudsman investigates complaints about Victorian Government departments and agencies.</p> <p>To make a complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman you can call 03 9613 6222 or visit https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/complaints</p>

Step 9: Other bodies that handle related complaints:

Complaint body	Description
Australian Human Rights Commission	<p>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 ex, disability, race, age or sexual preference the AHRC may be able to help.</p> <p>There are also State Government discrimination complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.</p>
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	<p>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.</p> <p>There are also State Government privacy and information complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.</p>
National Anti-Corruption Commission	<p>The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) handles complaints about serious or systemic corruption in the Australian Government public sector.</p> <p>There are also a State Government corruption complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.</p>
Victims of Crime Helpline	<p>The Victims of Crime Helpline provides advice about victim entitlements and the criminal justice system and also helps you to apply for financial assistance and access other support services.</p>

	<p>You can contact the Victims of Crime Helpline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call: 1800 819 817 • Text: 0427 767 891 • Email: vsa@justice.vic.gov.au
Victim Services, Support and Reform (VSSR)	<p>The VSSR provides a number of services for victims of crime including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims of Crime Helpline • Victims Assistance Programs (VSSR funds the Victims Assistance Program across the state) • Victims Register • Prisoner Compensation Quarantine Fund • Family Violence Restorative Justice Service • Intermediaries Program • Child Witness Service • Coordination of Victorian government participation in the National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse • Victim-related policy and projects. <p>For more details about the VSSR, please visit https://www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au/about-victim-services-support-and-reform</p>

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
VOCC	Website: https://victimsocrimecommissioner.vic.gov.au/contact Telephone: 1800 010 017 Email: enquiries@vocc.vic.gov.au	Provides advice in preparing your complaint
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
The Victims of Crime Helpline	You can contact the Victims of Crime Helpline to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get advice about reporting a crime • find other services that can help you • get information about the court process • get help applying for compensation and financial assistance. The Victims of Crime Helpline is open 8am-11pm every day, including public holidays. To reach the Helpline, call 1800 819 817 or text 0427 767 891.
How to make a complaint	Guidelines on how to make a complaint to the VOCC.
Call It Out	Online register for racism/discrimination experienced or witnessed towards First Nations Australians. Not an official complaints body.
Law Society: Know Your Rights	Guidance for individuals who are uncertain about where to start when seeking legal advice.
Statewide Family Violence Service	Safe steps Family Violence Response Centre is a first response service for women, young people and children experiencing family violence.

	The safe steps family violence response phone line is open 24 hours a day, every day, including public holidays. To reach safe steps, call 1800 015 188 or visit safesteps.org.au
<u>Women's Legal advice line</u>	<p>Women's Legal Service Victoria is providing free, confidential legal advice and referrals for women who are victim-survivors of sexual abuse who want to know how the current public disclosure laws affect them.</p> <p>The service is operated by female lawyers who specialise in legal issues arising from violence against women, and operates Mondays to Fridays from 9am to 5pm.</p> <p>Contact 03 8622 0600 (Metro Melbourne) or 1800 133 302 (regional callers) or visit womenslegal.org.au</p>
<u>1800 RESPECT</u>	<p>1800 RESPECT is a confidential information, counselling and support service open 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.</p> <p>Contact 1800 737 732 or visit 1800respect.org.au.</p>

Citations here: [Victims of Crime Commissioner](#)