

### General Warning

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

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

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

### General complaint information

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

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

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

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

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

### Complaints involving discrimination

There are state and federal complaints bodies that handle complaints that about discrimination. If your situation involves discrimination, you should consider making a discrimination complaint in addition to any other complaints. Discrimination may occur when someone is treated less favourably on the basis

of: race; sex; gender; disability; age; sexuality; relationship status; pregnancy; caring responsibilities; or having or being thought to have an infectious disease.

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

## Victoria Police

In this fact sheet, we introduce the Victoria Police. The Victoria Police Professional Standards Command (PSC) is the part of Victoria Police that deals with complaints about police behaviour. You can make a complaint if you believe a police officer has acted in a way that was unprofessional, unfair, or abusive. This could include things like excessive force, discrimination, rude or aggressive behaviour, or failure to follow proper procedures.

The PSC investigates these complaints to make sure police officers are acting within the law and treating people fairly.

## Legislation and Key Terms

### Relevant Legislation:

- [Victoria Police Act 2013](#)
- [Victoria Police Regulations 2024](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012](#)

### Key terms:

**Complainant:** A person who has made a complaint to Victoria Police, either about their own experience or on behalf of someone else.

**Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction about the behaviour, actions, or decisions of a Victoria Police employee, where a response or resolution is wanted, expected, or required.

**Corruption or Criminal Conduct:** Serious misconduct by a police officer, such as bribery, theft, falsifying reports, or other behaviour that could be prosecuted as a crime.

**Discrimination or Harassment:** When a police officer treats someone unfairly because of their race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, or other protected attribute.

**Excessive or Unreasonable Use of Force:** When a police officer uses more force than necessary in a situation, such as rough handling, unnecessary restraint, or assault.

**Family Violence by a Police Officer:** Violence or abuse carried out by a serving officer within a domestic or family relationship.

**Improper Search or Entry:** A search of a person, home, or belongings carried out without legal authority, proper procedure, or explanation of rights.

**Jurisdiction:** The authority of Victoria Police's Professional Standards Command to investigate complaints about the conduct of its employees, including police officers, Protective Services Officers (PSOs), and Police Custody Officers (PCOs).

**Managerial Intervention:** A remedy where a police officer's supervisor directly addresses their behaviour, setting expectations or altering duties to prevent repeat conduct.

**Misconduct:** Improper or unlawful behaviour by a police officer, including excessive force, failure to investigate, discrimination, sexual harassment, or breaches of confidentiality.

**Order / Outcome:** The result of a complaint, which may include disciplinary action, a caution, training, policy change, referral to IBAC, apology, or no action if unsubstantiated.

**Police Custody Officer (PCO):** A Victoria Police employee responsible for overseeing people in custody. They can be the subject of a complaint.

**Police Misconduct:** Abuse by a police officer of their powers or position, including excessive force, unlawful arrest, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, or improper release of confidential information.

**Protective Services Officer (PSO):** A uniformed officer with limited policing powers, usually working in public spaces such as train stations. They can also be the subject of complaints.

**Professional Standards Command (PSC):** The internal Victoria Police unit responsible for handling and investigating complaints about police conduct.

**Remedy:** The action or response Victoria Police may take after a complaint, such as discipline, training, policy change, apology, referral to IBAC, or ex-gratia payment.

**Respondent:** The individual Victoria Police employee (officer, PSO, or PCO) or Victoria Police as an organisation that the complaint is made against.

**Retaliation After Complaint:** When a person believes police targeted or intimidated them in response to making a previous complaint.

**Unlawful Arrest or Detention:** When a person is taken into custody without legal grounds, held longer than permitted, or arrested under false pretences.

**Victoria Police:** The state police force established under the Victoria Police Act 2013, responsible for enforcing the law, protecting the community, and subject to complaints handling through its Professional Standards Command.

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

**The Victorian Police investigate issues involving the behaviour, decisions, or actions of police officers or Protective Services Officers (PSOs).**

**They consider complaints including, but not limited to, the following:**

Sub-category	Example
Service Complaints	<p><b>You should make a complaint if you received poor customer service, or police failed to follow proper procedure, or took too long to act.</b> This includes things like police rudeness, delays in responding to calls, poor follow-up on cases, or unprofessional communication.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tito called their local police to report loud banging and shouting next door. Hours passed with no police response, and no follow-up was made after the report.</i></li> <li>• <i>Priya went to the station to ask about a stolen bike and was met with a dismissive attitude from the officer at the counter.</i></li> <li>• <i>After reporting a burglary, Amir wasn't contacted again by police for several weeks, even after calling multiple times for an update.</i></li> </ul>
Misconduct Complaints	<p><b>You should make a complaint if you believe a police officer acted in a way that was improper, unlawful, or went against ethical or professional standards.</b> Misconduct can include anything from using excessive force, failing to investigate a report properly, behaving inappropriately during an arrest, or misusing police powers.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Joanne was at a protest when police pushed her to the ground without provocation, causing her to hit her head and injure her wrist.</i></li> <li>• <i>A police officer failed to record or follow up on a domestic violence report that Sarah made about her ex-partner.</i></li> <li>• <i>Leon was forced into a strip search by police without clear justification and no same-gender officer present, leaving him feeling humiliated.</i></li> <li>• <i>Simone was handcuffed and held in a police vehicle for hours with no explanation after being mistakenly identified.</i></li> </ul>
Excessive or Unreasonable Use of Force	<p><b>You should make a complaint if a police officer used more physical force than needed for the situation.</b> This includes being roughly handled, tackled unnecessarily, struck, or injured by a police officer in a way that wasn't justified.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A teenage boy was shoved face-first into a wall during a routine ID check at the train station, despite not resisting.</li> <li>• An officer used a baton to strike a man who was already lying on the ground during an arrest.</li> </ul>
Unlawful Arrest or Detention	<p><b>You should make a complaint if you were arrested or detained by police without a valid reason or without following proper legal process.</b> This includes being taken into custody without cause, being held longer than legally allowed, or being arrested under false pretences.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emily was walking home when she was arrested for “suspicious behaviour” without being told what law she’d broken.</li> <li>• Darren was held at a police station overnight for questioning, even though no charges were laid and there was no legal basis for his detention.</li> </ul>
Discrimination or Harassment	<p><b>You should make a complaint if you were treated unfairly by a police officer because of your race, gender, disability, sexuality, or other protected attribute.</b> This includes things like racist comments, discriminatory behaviour, or failure to accommodate medical or accessibility needs.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nico was called a racial slur by a police officer during an arrest.</li> <li>• Sammie, who has diabetes, was denied access to insulin while in custody despite clearly stating their medical condition.</li> <li>• Kiran, who uses a wheelchair, was left outside a station in the cold because the entrance wasn’t accessible and no one came to help.</li> </ul>
Sexual Harassment or Sexual Offences	<p><b>You should make a complaint if a police officer made inappropriate sexual comments, touched you without consent, or committed any form of sexual misconduct.</b> These complaints are treated seriously and may also be criminal offences.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During a random stop, an officer made sexually suggestive comments about Rosa’s clothing and appearance.</li> <li>• After being arrested, Hayley was touched inappropriately during a search in a way that made her feel unsafe.</li> </ul>
Threats, Bullying or Intimidation	<p><b>You should make a complaint if a police officer used threats, pressure, or bullying behaviour to scare or control you.</b> This includes verbal abuse, threatening arrest without grounds, or trying to force you into doing something.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An officer told Jordan he’d “make his life hell” if he didn’t give names of people at a local party.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During a noise complaint, a police officer told Maria that if she called again, they'd "find a reason to arrest her."</li> </ul>
Breach of Privacy or Confidentiality	<p><b>You should make a complaint if a police officer shared your private information without reason or accessed your records without authority.</b> This includes accessing police databases inappropriately or talking about your case with people who shouldn't be involved.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A friend told Bianca that a police officer had shared details of her domestic violence report with someone in the community.</li> <li>A Victoria Police officer looked up his ex-partner's new address in the police system without a lawful reason.</li> </ul>
Corruption or Criminal Conduct by a Police Officer	<p><b>You should make a complaint if you believe a police officer has committed a crime or is involved in corrupt activity.</b> This includes bribery, stealing evidence, falsifying reports, or any behaviour that could be prosecuted.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A police officer was seen taking cash from the glovebox of a car he had pulled over.</li> <li>A witness overheard an officer promising to "lose" evidence in exchange for money.</li> </ul>
Family Violence by a Police Officer	<p><b>You should make a complaint if a police officer has used violence or abusive behaviour in a domestic or family relationship.</b> This includes physical violence, controlling behaviour, or threats by a police officer against a partner or family member.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Olivia, who was married to a serving officer, experienced ongoing physical abuse but felt afraid to report it because of his position in the police.</li> </ul>
Failure to Act or Inadequate Investigation	<p><b>You should make a complaint if police failed to investigate a matter properly or ignored a serious issue you reported.</b> This includes refusing to take a report, failing to follow leads, or dismissing legitimate concerns.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After reporting her son missing, Tanya felt police did not treat the situation urgently and delayed the search.</li> <li>Kwame reported a racist attack but felt police didn't take his statements seriously or follow up on witnesses.</li> </ul>
Improper Search or Entry	<p><b>You should make a complaint if police searched you, your home, or your belongings without following proper legal procedure.</b> This includes warrantless searches, searches without justification, or not being told your rights.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Police entered Jemma's house without a warrant and searched her room, claiming they were "just checking" for drugs.</i></li> <li>• <i>An officer stopped and searched Raj on the street without explaining why or giving any legal grounds.</i></li> </ul>
Retaliation After Making a Complaint	<p><b>You should make a complaint if you believe police targeted, intimidated, or harassed you because you previously made a complaint about them.</b></p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>After making a complaint about a local officer, Bilal noticed a police car parked outside his home regularly and was pulled over multiple times without cause.</i></li> <li>• <i>After submitting a misconduct complaint, Alana started receiving repeated visits from police late at night under the guise of "welfare checks."</i></li> </ul>
Failure to Provide Language or Accessibility Support	<p><b>You should make a complaint if police failed to provide an interpreter or did not accommodate your disability or accessibility needs during an interaction, interview, or custody.</b></p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mai, who is deaf, wasn't offered an Auslan interpreter before being questioned at a police station.</i></li> <li>• <i>Dinesh, who speaks limited English, was questioned for over an hour without an interpreter and didn't understand his rights.</i></li> </ul>
Exclusions	<p><b>These types of complaints are outside the scope of Victoria Police's complaints system:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Court decisions or legal outcomes:</b> You can't complain to Victoria Police about a decision made by a court, tribunal, or judge.</li> <li>• <b>Fines, penalties or infringements:</b> If you want to challenge a traffic fine, parking ticket, or infringement notice, there's a separate process as this isn't handled through a police complaint.</li> <li>• <b>Matters already before the courts:</b> If your issue is already part of a court case, Victoria Police can't investigate it as a complaint until after the case is finished.</li> <li>• <b>Complaints about other government departments:</b> Victoria Police can't deal with complaints about other organisations (like Corrections, Centrelink, or councils) - only about their own employees.</li> <li>• <b>Civil disputes or private matters:</b> Disputes between neighbours, family members, or businesses that don't involve police misconduct are not something you can complain to Victoria Police about.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Anonymous complaints with no detail:</b> While you can make a complaint anonymously, if you don't include enough detail, Victoria Police may not be able to take action or investigate.</li> </ul>
Additional Information	<p><b>Not sure what category your complaint fits into?</b> That's okay. Just explain what happened — Victoria Police will make sure it goes to the right place.</p> <p><b>Who handles police complaints?</b> Most complaints are handled by Victoria Police's Professional Standards Command. If it's something serious, like corruption or a crime by police, it might go to IBAC.</p>

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

Jurisdiction	Description
State	Victoria
Geographical Scope	The conduct must involve the act/inaction of a Victoria Police employee. There is no strict geographical bar.
Time Limitations	<p>There is no formal time limitation, however there are several elements of timing that you may want to consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generally, lodging a complaint as soon as possible after an incident means it may be easier to collect and then substantiate your complaint with evidence, which may be lost if the complaint is lodged later.</li> <li>2. If you've been charged, or may be charged, with an offence relating to the incident(s) about which you are complaining, this may have negative consequences because police officers may: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. be more reluctant to withdraw charges or proceed with lesser charges if you, as an alleged offender, have made a misconduct complaint; and</li> <li>b. pursue a prosecution more aggressively when a complaint has been made against a police officer involved in the incident(s) or investigation.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. If you decide to not lodge a complaint until after your case, the fact you had not lodged it prior can be used against you in court to suggest you are making up the allegations to help your own case. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Additionally, due to the discretionary nature of the VPPSC, some police investigators consider complaints that are not lodged immediately to be less credible than those lodged quickly after an incident.</li> <li>b. If you do take your time, you should ensure you still collect all the relevant evidence and record the reason/s for delaying the lodgement of your complaint. This will enhance your credibility and increase the chances of your complaint being proven true.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Exclusions	<p>Per s 71 of the Victoria Police Act, complaint or other proceedings cannot be brought against a protected person (i.e. an involved police officer) for anything done or purportedly done in the course of executing a warrant until a written demand to inspect and obtain a copy of the warrant has been made to the protected person and either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the demand to produce the warrant has been complied with;</li> <li>the demand to produce the warrant has been refused; or</li> <li>6 days have passed after the demand was made.</li> </ul>
Exercise of discretion	<p>Complaints will be handled according to their seriousness. A complaint of serious misconduct (e.g. where the alleged conduct amounts to a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment, is disgraceful or is likely to damage the reputation of the police) is required to be investigated formally, but less serious complaints may not involve a formal investigation.</p>

### Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

Respondent	Description
Individuals	<p>Complaints can be made about individuals if they are members of Victoria Police and you're concerned about their behaviour, conduct or decisions. This includes police officers, Protective Services Officers (PSOs), Police Custody Officers (PCOs), or any other Victoria Police employees (VPs).</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A police officer using excessive force</li> <li>A PSO behaving in a threatening or discriminatory way</li> <li>A police station staff member refusing to take your report without reason</li> </ul>
Body/Organisation	<p>Complaints can be made about Victoria Police as an organisation, particularly around failures in systems, procedures, or the actions of multiple officers (e.g. failure of a local command to act, delays in investigations, or poor organisational responses).</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No follow-up or response to multiple reports of theft</li> <li>Inadequate procedures around vulnerable people in custody</li> <li>A group of officers acting inappropriately during a protest</li> </ul>
Exclusions	<p>You cannot make a complaint about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People who are not Victoria Police staff, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transport officers</li> <li>Corrections or prison staff</li> <li>Court staff or magistrates</li> <li>Council rangers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Centrelink or other federal/state government workers</li> <li>• Private Security or Non-Police Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Private security guards (e.g. at shopping centres or events)</li> <li>○ Security staff contracted by government agencies (e.g. in hospitals)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fines, Infringements and Speed Cameras <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The issuing of a fine, parking ticket or speeding infringement</li> <li>○ The location of a speed camera or red-light camera</li> <li>○ Disputes over penalties or requests to review a fine</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>These matters have their own appeal or review processes, which are separate from police conduct complaints.</p>
Additional information	Serious allegations of police corruption or misconduct involving senior officers (e.g. Assistant Commissioners) may be more appropriate for IBAC, but you can have complaints with both Victoria Police (VPPSC) and IBAC at the same time.

#### Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
Who can make a complaint?	Anyone who has had an interaction with Victoria police employee(s) can make a complaint.
Pre-requisite steps	There are no specific steps that must be completed before making a complaint, however the incident or conduct that is the subject of the complaint must qualify as conduct within the meaning of s 166 of the <i>Victoria Police Act 2013</i> (Vic), i.e. conduct that constitutes an offence punishable by imprisonment, or conduct which is likely to bring Victoria Police into disrepute or diminish public confidence in it, or disgraceful or improper conduct (whether in the officer's official capacity or otherwise).
Can complaints be made on behalf of someone else?	<p>Yes. To make a complaint on behalf of someone else, you must also complete an Authority to Act consent form (<a href="https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/Authority-to-Act-consent-form-accessible-document.pdf">https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/Authority-to-Act-consent-form-accessible-document.pdf</a>).</p> <p>This must be filled out by you and the person affected by the complaint. If submitting online, the Authority to Act form requires the reference number from your online complaint. Thus, you should fill out the authority form as soon as you submit your online complaint.</p> <p>If complaining on behalf of another person in-person, you will be prompted to fill out the authority form upon submitting your in-person complaint.</p>
Exclusions	While there is no explicit time-based exclusion for complaints, the discretionary nature of the investigating body means that long delays in making the initial complaint may undermine the investigator's view of your credibility.

Additional information you need to know	If you anticipate making a complaint about misconduct, make sure you record as much about the interaction/s as possible within legal limits. Write down your recollection of events when they are fresh in your mind, compile documentary evidence if relevant and/or seek out video, photographic or other documentary evidence from other people who may have witnessed the event/s or been otherwise involved.
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**Step 5:** What remedies are available at this body?

Power	Description
Discipline, caution or counsel of the police officer/s	If your complaint is upheld, or if the investigation finds other improper behaviour, Victoria Police may discipline the officer. This can include a formal warning, demotion, or even dismissal in serious cases. In less serious cases, the officer may be given a caution or required to undertake further training or supervision.
Professional Conduct Resolution	For lower-level matters, especially around rudeness, communication issues, or delays, Victoria Police may resolve the matter informally through its Professional Conduct Resolution process. This is a facilitated conversation or meeting between the officer and their supervisor, focusing on improving service and accountability.
Managerial intervention	In some cases, the officer's direct supervisor may speak with them and set clear expectations for future behaviour, possibly including changes to their work duties or closer oversight. This is aimed at preventing similar conduct from happening again.
Internal review and policy change	If your complaint highlights broader problems, like poor procedures or systemic issues, Victoria Police may update internal policies or training to fix these problems. This kind of remedy often leads to change across the organisation, not just for the officer involved.
Referral to IBAC (for public interest disclosures)	If your complaint involves serious misconduct, corruption, or criminal activity, Victoria Police may refer it to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC). Public interest disclosures are defined in s 9 of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (Vic) as serious complaints including corruption, criminal allegations or dishonesty. IBAC then decides whether to investigate, refer it back, or take no further action.
Financial compensation	In limited cases, Victoria Police may decide to make a payment as a gesture of goodwill where misconduct is acknowledged. These payments are not guaranteed and are at the discretion of Victoria Police.
Explanation, apology or acknowledgement	You may receive a formal apology, explanation, or acknowledgement of your experience from Victoria Police. This is common in cases where the matter doesn't warrant disciplinary action but your concern is still recognised as valid.
No action taken	If the complaint cannot be substantiated or there is insufficient evidence, Victoria Police may decide to take no further action. This does not mean your complaint wasn't taken seriously, but that it couldn't be formally upheld.

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

Requirement	Description
Format	You must complete the Victoria Police Complaint Form, either in hard-copy or online at <a href="https://www.police.vic.gov.au/complaint-form">https://www.police.vic.gov.au/complaint-form</a> .
Personal Details	<p>You can elect to remain anonymous. This prevents the VPPSC from contacting you to seek further information, discuss the complaint, advise of progress or an outcome.</p> <p>If you choose to identify yourself, you must provide your full name, residential and postal address(es), date of birth, email, preferred phone number and whether you/the affected person is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. In the online complaint form you can also indicate if you or the person for whom you are making the complaint requires an interpreter.</p>
Respondent's Details	<p>You must indicate if you are complaining about the conduct of individual Victoria Police employees and/or Victorian policies, procedures or systems.</p> <p>Where possible, include the name/s of the Victoria Police employee/s involved.</p>
Relevant Facts	<p>Date, time and location of the incident. You should provide descriptive details of your allegation or complaint, name any witnesses and provide their contact details. If a Victoria Police vehicle was involved, provide the registration if known. You can also provide any other evidence or supporting information such as videos, photographs, penalty notices or statements.</p> <p>You should also indicate if you have previously complained about the same incident to the police, IBAC or other institutions (e.g. the Minister for Police or the VEOHRC).</p>
What NOT to include	Do not include false or misleading statements or use overly emotive or exaggerated language.
Additional information you need to know	<p>If you are submitting a complaint on behalf of someone else, you must ensure you submit an Authority to Act consent form within 5 days of lodging the complaint.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>If you are complaining while in or when leaving police custody, consider your timing. In some circumstances, if you do not complain at the police station while or directly after the incident/s have occurred, your credibility may be challenged when you make a complaint later.</p> <p>The police office in charge of the station must take note of your complaint if it is made in a police station, whether or not you are in police custody.</p> <p>You do not need to answer police questions about whether or not you have a complaint about the quality of treatment you received while in police custody. You cannot be detained for refusing to answer this question or not signing the attendance register.</p>

<sup>1</sup> [Authority to Act](#) – Victoria Police

Similarly, you can say you do not have a complaint currently, but intend to lodge a complaint after release and after obtaining independent legal advice. This is helpful as it is noncommittal but indicates your intention early on, which may bolster your credibility later on in the process, should you proceed with a complaint.

### Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	<p>Online form: <a href="#">Complaint form   Victoria Police</a></p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:psc-policeconductunitcomplaintsandcompliments@police.vic.gov.au">psc-policeconductunitcomplaintsandcompliments@police.vic.gov.au</a></p> <p>Post: Police Conduct Unit, GPO Box 913, Melbourne VIC 3001</p> <p>Telephone: For support and further information, 1300 363 101</p> <p>In person: A complaint can be lodged directly at any police station in Victoria.</p>
Receipt/ acknowledgement of complaint	<p>Once your complaint is submitted, if you have provided the VPPSC with your contact details, you will receive a confirmation email from them.</p>
Investigation	<p>Regardless of whether the complaint is lodged with the VPPSC or with the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC), the complaint is likely to be investigated by a police officer.</p> <p>A complaint made directly to the police will be handled according to how serious the allegations are considered to be.</p> <p>Police may choose not to investigate less serious complaints or dismiss trivial complaints.</p> <p>Police investigations usually involve at least one interview between the officer investigating the complaint and the person making the complaint. Sometimes, police officers will also interview other witnesses and/or make various enquiries. This may involve legal or scientific advice.</p> <p>An investigation may take several months. Once completed, the results of the investigation are referred to the officer in charge of the VPPSC who will make a determination as to whether the investigation has substantiated the claim.</p>
Outcome	<p>You will receive a letter at the conclusion of the investigation notifying you of the outcome of your complaint.</p> <p>This is unlikely to contain much detail about why the decision was made.</p> <p>The Fitzroy Legal Service has a <a href="#">compiled</a> a useful list of possible terms that may be used in the letter to indicate the resolution of your complaint status, which you may wish to refer to when reviewing the notification letter regarding the outcome of your complaint.</p>

Additional information you need to know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a good idea to keep a copy of the complaint made.</li> <li>• You should update the complaint body about any changes that affect your complaint.</li> <li>• You should try to provide all relevant information at the outset. If you drip feed information over time, this may slow the progress of your complaint or negatively impact your credibility.</li> </ul>
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**Step 8: Post-complaint – what if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint?**

Avenue	Description
First review	If you are unhappy with a decision made by the VPPSC, you can ask IBAC to review the decision.
Second review	<p>If you are unhappy with a decision made by IBAC, you can request an internal review of the decision by IBAC.</p> <p><i>This should be done as soon as possible following a primary decision.</i></p>
Other option – civil proceedings	If you have been wronged by a police officer, you may wish to take legal action by initiating civil proceedings for police misconduct. You should seek legal advice from a private solicitor or community legal centre if you wish to do this.

**Step 9: Other bodies that handle complaints about police-related complaints**

Complaint body	Description
Australian Human Rights Commission	<p>The Australian Human Rights Commission (<b>AHRC</b>) 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. There is a 6 month time limit in which you can make a complaint to the AHRC – i.e. you must complain within 6 months from the time of the incident.</p> <p>For example, complaints about discrimination by Police Officers can be made to the AHRC.</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 (<b>OAIC</b>) 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 (<b>NACC</b>) 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>
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission	<p>The IBAC is responsible for preventing and exposing public sector corruption and police misconduct in Victoria. This covers Victorian state and local government, Victoria Police, Victoria Parliament and the Victorian judiciary. They form part of Victoria's integrity system alongside the Victorian Inspectorate and Victorian Parliament. See <a href="https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au">https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au</a> for more information.</p>
Victorian Equality Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<p>Complaints about discrimination by police officers can be made in some circumstances to the VEOHRC, which is the Victorian state-based human rights body. See <a href="https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/">https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/</a> for more information.</p> <p><i>These complaints go through a conciliation phase at the commission. If they are not resolved, they can then be referred to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal or the Federal Court for adjudication.</i></p>
Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme	<p>The Victorian Victims of Crime state department can assist with applications for financial assistance if you have been affected by a crime (see <a href="https://www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au/fas">https://www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au/fas</a> for more information). You can still apply even if the police complaint against you is resolved in the negative, but the likelihood of payment may be lower.</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
Fitzroy Legal Service	Website: <a href="#">Fitzroy Legal Service – Fitzroy Legal Service</a> Email: N/A Telephone: (03) 9419 3744	Answer queries over phone, legal representation, can assist with understanding the complaints process and/or drafting complaints.
Police Accountability Project	Website: <a href="#">Police Complaints Links &amp; Resources – Police Accountability Project</a> Telephone: 03 9328 1885	The Police Accountability Project is a specialist public interest legal project that started at the Inner Melbourne Community Legal Centre. They can assist with advice and preparation of complaints against Victoria Police.
Translating and Interpreter Service	Website: <a href="http://www.tisnational.gov.au">www.tisnational.gov.au</a> Telephone: 131 450	Provide support to people if English is not their first language.
National Relay Service	Website: <a href="http://www.accesshub.gov.au">www.accesshub.gov.au</a>	Provides a range of services to support people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment to communicate.
Office of the Victorian Minister for Police	Website: <a href="#">Anthony Carbines - Parliament of Victoria</a> Telephone: 03 9136 2888 Email: <a href="mailto:minister.carbines@justice.vic.gov.au">minister.carbines@justice.vic.gov.au</a>	The Hon. Anthony Carbines is the current Minister for Police in the Victorian Parliament. You can contact the ministerial office about the police portfolio.

### Self-help tools and additional resources

Resource	How this helps
<a href="#">Call It Out</a>	Online register for racism/discrimination experienced or witnessed towards First Nations Australians. Not an official complaints body.
<a href="#">How to make a complaint</a>	Guidance on how to make a complaint from Victoria Police itself.
<a href="#">Law Society: Know Your Rights</a>	Guidance for individuals who are uncertain about where to start when seeking legal advice.
<a href="#">Fitzroy Legal Service's Law Handbook</a>	An accessible online explainer about police complaints by the Fitzroy community legal centre.

**Citations here:**

Police Victoria: <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/complaints>

IBAC: <https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au>

Australian Human Rights Commission: <https://humanrights.gov.au>

Victorian Equality Opportunity and Human Rights Commission: <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au>

Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme: <https://www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au/fas>

Fitzroy Legal Service: <https://fls.org.au>.