

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 to 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.

Victorian Building Authority

In this fact sheet, we introduce the Victorian Building Authority ('VBA'). We outline how complaints can be made by members of the public, property owners, tenants, neighbours, and building industry professionals to the VBA.

The VBA is the state regulator responsible for overseeing building and plumbing work in Victoria. Its main role is to ensure that building and plumbing work complies with safety, quality, and legal standards. The VBA investigates complaints about defective or non-compliant building and plumbing work, misconduct by registered practitioners, and illegal work by unregistered individuals. It enforces compliance through investigations, disciplinary action, and directions to fix breaches.

The VBA does not resolve private disputes over money, contracts, or planning approvals. These are handled by other bodies like Consumer Affairs Victoria, VCAT, or local councils.

Legislation and Key Terms

Relevant Legislation:

- [Building Act 1993 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Building Regulations 2018 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Plumbing Regulations 2018 \(Vic\)](#)

Key terms:

Adjoining property: A neighbouring property that may be affected by building work (e.g., excavation next door).

Building practitioner: A person or company registered or licensed to perform building work in Victoria, including builders, building surveyors, inspectors, and related professionals.

Complainant: A person making a complaint to the VBA about building or plumbing work, or practitioner misconduct.

Compliance: Meeting the legal standards set by the Building Act, Building Regulations, Plumbing Regulations, and relevant Australian Standards.

Defective building work: Building work that does not meet minimum standards of safety, quality, or code compliance.

Misconduct: When a registered practitioner breaches their legal obligations, such as working without permits, falsifying documents, or failing to follow professional standards.

Plumbing practitioner: A person or business licensed or registered to carry out regulated plumbing work in Victoria (e.g., drainage, gas fitting, roofing).

Protection work: Measures taken to protect adjoining properties from damage during building work, as required by law.

Rectification: Actions taken to fix defective or non-compliant building or plumbing work, either by order or voluntary agreement.

Unregistered work: Building or plumbing work carried out by a person who is not registered or licensed to do so, in breach of Victorian law.

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

<p>You can make a complaint to the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) if building or plumbing work breaches legal safety and quality standards, or if a registered practitioner has acted improperly. The VBA investigates issues like non-compliant work, practitioner misconduct, and illegal unregistered building or plumbing activity. This includes:</p>	
Sub-category	Example
<p>Non-compliant or Defective Building Work</p>	<p>You should make a complaint if building work does not meet the minimum legal standards or requirements set out in the Building Act 1993, the Building Regulations 2018, or the National Construction Code and relevant Australian Standards. This includes any construction that is structurally unsound, unsafe, or not built according to approved plans or code requirements, resulting in breaches of building legislation.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A wheelchair user finds that the new access ramp to their home is built much steeper than the legal gradient, making it dangerous and not compliant with the accessibility standards in the building code. The ramp's non-compliance with required safety specifications is a breach of the building regulations.</i> • <i>A family discovers that the fire-rated wall supposed to separate their townhouse from the neighbour's property was not installed. The builder used standard plaster instead of the required fire-resistant material, which violates fire safety provisions of the Building Code.</i>
<p>Building Practitioner Misconduct or Offences</p>	<p>You should make a complaint if a registered building practitioner (such as a builder, building surveyor, or building inspector) has breached their legal obligations or engaged in misconduct under building laws. This category covers any improper or illegal conduct by licensed building professionals. For example, failing to obtain required permits, falsifying documents, or not performing their duties to the professional standards required by the Building Act and Regulations. Essentially, if a builder or other practitioner isn't following the rules that govern their work (aside from the quality of the work itself), the VBA can investigate.</p> <p><i>Example: A couple hires a registered builder to add a second storey to their home, and later learn the builder never obtained a building permit before starting the work. Carrying out major building work without a valid permit is an offence under the Building Act.</i></p>
<p>Failure to Protect Adjoining Property (Protection Work Issues)</p>	<p>You should make a complaint if you are an adjoining property owner and the building works next door endanger your property or cause damage because required protection measures were not implemented. Victorian law requires that before certain building work near a boundary begins, the person doing the work must take "protection work" measures to safeguard neighbouring properties (such as underpinning foundations or erecting temporary supports). If your neighbour's construction has commenced (or is about to start) and they have not taken steps to protect your property as legally required, it falls under the VBA's</p>

	<p>jurisdiction. This type of complaint usually involves situations where excavation, demolition, or construction on one property is compromising the structural integrity or safety of the adjoining property.</p> <p><i>Example: An owner of an older home notices new cracks forming in their walls after the property next door began excavating for a basement. The neighbour failed to carry out any underpinning or other protection work to support the shared boundary, and now the stability of the older home is at risk.</i></p>
<p>Siting and Setback Non-compliance (Impacts on Neighbours' Privacy or Light)</p>	<p>You should make a complaint if a new building or addition on a neighbouring property doesn't comply with "siting" rules in the building regulations. For example, if it exceeds height limits, has inadequate boundary setbacks, or lacks required privacy measures, and as a result it significantly affects your privacy or access to daylight. Victoria's building regulations include specific requirements for how far structures must be from property boundaries, how tall they can be, and how to prevent undue overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring homes. If a structure has been built (or approved) in breach of these siting requirements, the VBA can investigate the potential regulatory breach (after you have attempted to resolve it with the building surveyor).</p> <p>Note: If the issue turns out to relate to a town planning permit rather than building standards, it may be a council matter, but the VBA can help determine the correct avenue.</p> <p><i>Example: A retiree is concerned that his neighbour's newly built second-storey extension is towering over his backyard and directly overlooks his living areas, even though the building regulations require privacy screens for such situations. The addition also appears to be closer to the side boundary than the minimum setback allowed. His backyard has lost most of its midday sun due to the extension's height and position. This could indicate that the extension was not built in accordance with the siting requirements (e.g. maximum height and setback rules) in the Building Regulations.</i></p>
<p>Unregistered or Unqualified Person Doing Building Work (Illegal Building Work)</p>	<p>You should make a complaint if someone is carrying out building work that requires a registered building practitioner, but that person is not registered, or if an individual falsely claims to be a registered builder when they are not. Under Victorian law, domestic building work over a certain value must be done by a registered builder (unless you are an owner-builder for your own property), and it is illegal for unqualified people to take on such projects. The VBA can directly investigate and prosecute cases of unregistered building work. In practice, this might involve a tradesperson or company doing major building or renovation work without the proper licence or registration. (Note: This is distinct from general poor workmanship or disputes. It specifically concerns the legal status of the person doing the building work.)</p> <p><i>Example: An elderly couple hires a man advertising as a cheap renovator to build a \$20,000 extension to their kitchen. Partway through the project, they discover he isn't a registered builder. He has no licence and is not listed on the VBA's register. In Victoria, any domestic building job over \$10,000 in value must be carried out by a registered building practitioner.</i></p>
<p>Non-compliant or Defective</p>	<p>You should make a complaint if plumbing work has been done in a way that does not meet the Plumbing Regulations 2018 or the relevant</p>

Plumbing Work	<p>Australian Standards, resulting in defective or unsafe plumbing. This includes any plumbing installation that fails to comply with legal requirements. For example, faulty drainage, improper gas fitting, substandard roofing (stormwater) work, or any other plumbing work that doesn't meet the prescribed standards and codes. The VBA is the regulator for plumbing in Victoria and can investigate licensed plumbers for breaches of plumbing laws, as well as take action if the work is non-compliant. (Typically, the VBA will also direct the plumber to fix the issues if possible as part of resolving the complaint.)</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A homeowner discovers that every time it rains, water leaks through the ceiling around the new skylight that was installed by a plumber. An inspection reveals the flashing and roof plumbing were not installed to the required standard, causing water ingress.</i> • <i>A family starts feeling dizzy and finds out that a recent gas heater installation was done incorrectly, leading to a minor gas leak.</i>
Plumbing Compliance Certificate Not Provided or Incorrect	<p>You should make a complaint if a licensed plumber fails to issue a compliance certificate when required, or if the certificate provided contains incorrect information. In Victoria, for any significant plumbing work (costing more than \$750) or certain types of work like gas fitting, the law obliges the plumber to give the person who requested the work a compliance certificate on completion. This certificate is the plumber's legal declaration that the work complies with all standards and regulations. The plumber must also lodge a copy with the VBA. If you didn't receive a compliance certificate for eligible plumbing work, or the certificate is wrong (e.g. it lists the wrong address, scope, or plumber details), the VBA can investigate and take enforcement action to ensure the certificate is issued correctly. (Missing compliance certificates are serious because they affect your warranty and insurance coverage on the plumbing work.)</p> <p><i>Example: A small business owner pays a licensed plumber \$1,200 to install a new commercial gas stove in her café. The plumber completes the job, but never provides a compliance certificate for this gas fitting work. By law, any gas installation must be certified, and any plumbing job over \$750 requires a compliance certificate.</i></p>
Unlicensed or Unregistered Person Doing Plumbing Work	<p>You should make a complaint if an unlicensed or unregistered individual is performing plumbing work, which is illegal in Victoria. All plumbing work must be carried out by someone with the appropriate plumbing licence or registration in each class of plumbing. For example, drainage, gas fitting, roofing (stormwater) and other plumbing categories each require the person to be registered or licensed with the VBA. If someone who is not authorised is doing this work, or if a tradesperson misrepresents themselves as a licensed plumber when they are not, the VBA can investigate and potentially prosecute them. (Note that electrical or gas appliance work by unlicensed people falls under Energy Safe Victoria, but plumbing aspects like pipe installation for gas or water are within VBA's jurisdiction.)</p> <p><i>Example: A homeowner hires a cheap handyman to install a new hot water system and some gas piping, only to later find out that the individual does not hold any plumbing licence. Because the work involves regulated</i></p>

	<i>plumbing (water supply and gas fitting), this situation is an offence as an unlicensed person is performing plumbing work.</i>
Exclusions	<p>The VBA does not consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money and contract problems: The VBA does not deal with payment issues, refunds, contract disputes, or disagreements about quotes or changes to the job. • Bad customer service or rude behaviour: If a builder or surveyor is rude, slow to respond, or unprofessional (but follows the law), the VBA won't investigate. • Delays in starting or finishing the job: The VBA can't help if a builder takes too long to start or finish work unless they've broken a building law. • Planning and design complaints: Problems with how a building looks, fits in with the neighbourhood, or follows council planning rules are not for the VBA. • Architect problems: The VBA does not handle complaints about architects or poor building designs. • Private building inspections: If you're unhappy with an inspection by a private building surveyor, the VBA can only help if laws were broken. • Insurance and warranty claims: The VBA doesn't handle problems with building insurance, warranties, or claims for fixing defects. • Real estate, strata, and body corporate disputes: Issues with property managers, strata fees, or shared building repairs are not for the VBA. • Rental property repairs and landlord issues: The VBA can't help with rental property repairs, mould, or problems with landlords. • Health, safety, and environment concerns: Things like asbestos, mould, pests, noise, or pollution are usually council or EPA matters, not VBA. • Electrical and gas appliance issues: The VBA does not deal with electrical work or gas appliances. • Faulty products and building materials: The VBA does not handle consumer complaints about refunds or warranties. However, the VBA may take action where non-compliant or banned building products (such as certain types of cladding) are used in building work.
Additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try resolving it first: Always contact the builder, plumber, or surveyor to fix the issue before complaining to the VBA. • Private surveyors handle most approvals: Councils don't manage most building approvals. Private surveyors do. The VBA only steps in if they breach laws.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VBA doesn't resolve money disputes: The VBA can fine or discipline practitioners but can't order refunds, fix work, or settle contract disputes. • Owner-builders are responsible too: If you're an owner-builder, you must meet building standards. The VBA enforces this. • Some problems involve other bodies: You might need to contact Consumer Affairs, councils, or others for issues outside VBA's role. • Check if your practitioner is registered: Use the VBA register to confirm your builder or plumber is licensed before hiring them.
--	---

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

Jurisdiction	Description
State	The VBA enforces Victorian building and plumbing laws under the <i>Building Act 1993</i> , <i>Building Regulations 2018</i> , and <i>Plumbing Regulations 2018</i> . It only handles complaints within Victoria.
Geographical Scope	The VBA can only investigate complaints about building or plumbing work carried out in Victoria, or misconduct by practitioners registered or licensed in Victoria. If the work happened interstate or the practitioner is not registered in Victoria, the VBA cannot investigate.
Time Limitations	There is no strict legal time limit for lodging complaints. However, the VBA expects complaints to be made as soon as possible after becoming aware of the issue. Delays may affect what action the VBA can take, especially if evidence is harder to obtain.
Exclusions	<p>VBA cannot handle complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside Victoria: The VBA cannot investigate building or plumbing work done outside Victoria. Its powers only apply within the state. • Practitioners not registered in Victoria (when required): The VBA can only act against practitioners who are required to be registered or licensed in Victoria. If someone is unregistered and not required to be under Victorian law, or only registered in another state, the VBA has no jurisdiction. • Matters regulated by other authorities • Private disputes with no breach of building or plumbing laws: The VBA does not handle private disagreements about service quality, communication, payment disputes, or project delays unless there is a clear breach of the Building Act, Building Regulations, or Plumbing Regulations. • Matters already before a court or tribunal: If the same issue is being decided by a court or tribunal (such as VCAT), the VBA will generally not investigate it at the same time.
Exercise of discretion	The VBA has discretion to decline complaints if:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have not tried to resolve the issue with the builder, plumber, or surveyor first. The complaint lacks enough information or evidence. The matter is considered trivial or does not involve a breach of building or plumbing laws. The VBA believes another body is better suited to handle the complaint.
Additional information	The VBA's role is to ensure building and plumbing work meets safety and quality standards, and that registered practitioners follow the law. It does not resolve personal disputes or manage compensation claims.

Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

Respondent	Description
Individuals	<p>You can make a complaint against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered or licensed building practitioners in Victoria, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builders Building surveyors (private or municipal) Building inspectors Draftspersons (building design) Engineers (in building work context) Quantity surveyors (building work context) Licensed or registered plumbers in Victoria, across all plumbing classes (e.g., gas fitting, drainage, roofing, water supply). <p>The individual must be registered or licensed with the VBA (or required to be under Victorian law) and carrying out work in Victoria.</p>
Companies or Organisations	<p>You can complain about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered building companies or partnerships carrying out building work in Victoria. Licensed plumbing businesses operating in Victoria. Building practitioners acting through a company, where the company holds the relevant registration. <p>The business must be registered or licensed with the VBA (or required to be under Victorian law).</p>
Owner-Builders	<p>You can make a complaint about an owner-builder who has obtained an owner-builder certificate of consent from the VBA and has failed to comply with building laws while carrying out building work on their own property.</p>

Exclusions	<p>You cannot make a complaint about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builders, plumbers, or businesses not required to be registered/licensed: If a person or business is doing work that legally does not require VBA registration (e.g., minor works under threshold limits), the VBA cannot investigate them. • Practitioners registered only in other states or territories: The VBA has no power over practitioners who are not registered or licensed in Victoria, unless they are doing regulated work within Victoria where registration is required. • Real estate agents, strata managers, or property managers • Architects: Complaints about architects' conduct or services are handled by the Architects Registration Board of Victoria (ARBV), not the VBA. • Unlicensed electrical or gasfitters (appliance-related work) • Councils and council officers (except municipal building surveyors acting as practitioners): Council planning decisions, council building maintenance, or general council conduct are outside VBA jurisdiction.
Additional information	<p>Unregistered builders or plumbers doing illegal work: If someone is doing building or plumbing work without the required registration or licence (and should be registered), the VBA can investigate this as illegal work.</p> <p>Multiple respondents possible: You can make complaints about both individuals (e.g., a builder) and companies (e.g., the building company they work for) if both are involved.</p>

Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
Who can make a complaint?	<p>Anyone can make a complaint to the VBA if the issue involves building or plumbing work in Victoria, or the conduct of a practitioner registered or licensed in Victoria.</p> <p>You do not need to be the property owner. Complaints can come from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property owners • Tenants • Neighbours • Occupants • Builders, surveyors, or plumbers reporting other practitioners • Concerned members of the public (e.g. safety hazards) <p>There are no age, residency, or citizenship restrictions, but the complaint must relate to Victorian building or plumbing work.</p>

Pre-requisite steps	<p>You are expected to try to resolve the issue first with the builder, plumber, or practitioner before contacting the VBA.</p> <p>For siting, setbacks, or boundary concerns, you should also raise the issue with the relevant building surveyor first.</p> <p>If the complaint relates to damage or private disputes, other dispute resolution avenues (e.g., Consumer Affairs Victoria) might be more appropriate.</p>
Can complaints be made on behalf of someone?	<p>Yes. You can make a complaint on behalf of someone else, but the VBA may require evidence of your authority to act (e.g., written consent, proof of relationship).</p> <p>Advocates, support persons, legal representatives, and carers can assist with complaints.</p>
Exclusions	<p>These group cannot make a complaint to VBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People complaining about work outside Victoria (even if affected). • Complainants raising issues not connected to building or plumbing work (e.g., neighbour disputes, service complaints). • People who are not directly affected may still raise safety concerns, but the VBA might prioritise complaints from those directly impacted. • Complaints made long after the issue occurred may not be investigated if evidence is no longer available or practical to obtain.
Additional information you need to know	<p>Protections apply to complainants: The VBA treats complaints confidentially and has protections against victimisation.</p> <p>Anonymous complaints can be made, but they may limit what action the VBA can take if follow-up information is needed.</p> <p>Making a complaint does not give you the right to compensation or remedies for personal loss: the VBA's role is regulatory enforcement, not dispute resolution.</p>

Step 5: What remedies are available at this body?

Power	Description
Investigations and Disciplinary Action	<p>The VBA can investigate and take action against registered builders, plumbers, and other practitioners who breach the law.</p> <p>Possible outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal warnings • Fines (infringement notices) • Licence or registration suspension • Licence or registration cancellation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions placed on a practitioner's licence or registration • Referral for prosecution (court action for serious breaches) <p>This applies when there is evidence of misconduct, non-compliant work, or unlicensed/unregistered work.</p>
Directions to Fix Defective Work (Rectification Orders)	<p>The VBA can direct practitioners to fix defective or non-compliant building or plumbing work.</p> <p>This is not automatic. It depends on the severity of the breach, safety risks, and whether the practitioner is still in business.</p> <p>If the practitioner refuses, the VBA can escalate the matter and take disciplinary action.</p>
Public Register Updates	<p>The VBA can update its public register to reflect disciplinary action taken against a practitioner.</p> <p>This allows future consumers to see warnings, suspensions, or cancellations linked to the practitioner.</p>
Prosecutions and Penalties	<p>For serious breaches of the law, the VBA can take court action. This might result in court-imposed penalties, including large fines and orders against practitioners or businesses.</p>
Exclusions	<p>The VBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot order refunds, compensation, or damages. • Does not mediate or resolve private disputes (e.g. contract disagreements, payment issues). • Cannot force a builder to complete unfinished work through private agreements.
Additional information you need to know	<p>The VBA's role is to protect public safety and uphold building standards, where its remedies are about compliance and enforcement, not financial dispute resolution.</p> <p>The VBA can require practitioners to fix their mistakes, but cannot guarantee a personal remedy for the complainant (like compensation).</p> <p>Taking action is at the VBA's discretion. It depends on evidence, severity, and public interest.</p>

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

Requirement	Description
Format	<p>Complaints should be made in writing using the VBA's online complaint form (preferred method).</p> <p>You can also submit complaints by email or post if needed.</p>

	<p>For complex issues, a written complaint is best as it allows for clear explanation and supporting documents.</p> <p>Verbal complaints (e.g., phone calls) are not accepted as formal complaints.</p> <p>Interpreters and translators are available if you need assistance making a complaint.</p>
Personal Details	<p>You must provide your full name, address, phone number, and email.</p> <p>Anonymous complaints are allowed, but if you choose not to give your details, it may limit what the VBA can do (e.g., follow-up questions, evidence checks).</p> <p>Your identity is kept confidential, but in some cases, the respondent may be able to infer who made the complaint based on the issue raised.</p>
Respondent's Details	<p>You need to provide details of who you're complaining about, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their full name (or business name) • Address of the building site or business • Contact details if known <p>If you don't have all these details, you should provide as much information as possible to help the VBA identify them.</p>
Relevant Facts	<p>Your complaint should clearly explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened (describe the issue in simple terms) • When it happened (dates, times) • Where it happened (property address or site location) • Who else was involved or witnessed the issue • What impact it has had on you or others (e.g., safety risk, financial impact) • What you have already done to fix it (e.g., contacted the builder) • What outcome you are seeking (e.g., rectify work, disciplinary action) • You should attach supporting documents like contracts, photos, emails, inspection reports. • There are no strict limits on document size, but keep it relevant and clear.
What NOT to include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not include false or misleading information. • Avoid personal attacks, emotional rants, or unrelated grievances. • Focus only on facts and breaches related to building or plumbing laws.

Additional information you need to know	<p>The respondent (e.g., builder) may be told about the complaint and given a chance to respond.</p> <p>The VBA will assess if your complaint falls within its powers before starting a formal investigation.</p> <p>Support is available: you can get help from a representative, advocate, or interpreter if needed.</p> <p>Minors can make complaints but may need a parent or guardian's authority depending on the circumstances.</p> <p>If your complaint is delayed (e.g., years after the event), you should explain why. This helps the VBA decide if it can still investigate.</p>
---	--

Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	<p>Online form: VBA Complaint Form</p> <p>Email: complaints@vba.vic.gov.au</p> <p>Post:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Victorian Building Authority GPO Box 536 Melbourne VIC 3001</p> <p>Telephone (for help, not formal complaints): 1300 815 127. Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm (excluding public holidays)</p> <p>In person: The VBA does not generally accept in-person complaints but appointments can be arranged for accessibility needs.</p>
Acknowledgement of complaint	<p>You will receive an acknowledgement email or letter once your complaint is lodged.</p> <p>This usually happens within 5 business days of the VBA receiving your complaint.</p>
Assessment and investigation	<p>The VBA will assess if your complaint falls within its powers (jurisdiction).</p> <p>If accepted, the VBA will start a preliminary assessment to gather more information.</p> <p>Timeframes vary, but you can expect an update within 20 business days.</p> <p>The VBA may request further documents, contact the respondent, or conduct a site inspection if needed.</p>
Compliance action or disciplinary process	<p>If there is evidence of a breach, the VBA can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct the practitioner to fix the issue. • Take disciplinary action (warnings, fines, suspension). • Escalate serious matters to prosecution.

	You will be kept informed about the progress of your complaint.
Additional information you need to know	<p>Keep a copy of your complaint and all supporting documents.</p> <p>Tell the VBA if your situation changes, such as if the issue is resolved or gets worse.</p> <p>Provide all relevant information upfront. Sending bits and pieces later slows down the process.</p> <p>Making a complaint to the VBA does not replace your right to take legal action elsewhere (e.g., VCAT).</p>

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

Avenue	Description
Internal review opportunities	<p>The VBA does not have a formal internal appeals process for complaint outcomes.</p> <p>However, you can request the VBA to reconsider its decision if you believe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint was misunderstood. • New, relevant evidence has become available. • There was a procedural error in handling your complaint. <p>Requests for reconsideration should be made as soon as possible after you receive the outcome, ideally within 30 days.</p> <p>The VBA has discretion whether to revisit the complaint.</p> <p>There is no legislative right to an internal review under the Building Act 1993 for complaint outcomes (disciplinary decisions may have separate processes).</p>
External review/remedies	<p>You can complain to the Victorian Ombudsman if you believe the VBA mishandled your complaint (e.g., poor process, unfair treatment, delay). The Ombudsman reviews how the complaint was handled, not the actual building issue. No strict time limit.</p> <p>Certain VBA decisions (e.g., practitioner registration, disciplinary actions) can be appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). This mostly applies to practitioners, but consumers can take separate claims (e.g., damages, refunds) to VCAT for civil resolution.</p> <p>For serious legal errors, you can seek judicial review of a VBA decision in the Supreme Court of Victoria. Strict time limits (usually 60 days) apply, and legal advice is strongly recommended.</p>
Other option	<p>Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV): If your complaint involves defective work, payment disputes, or warranties, you can seek help from CAV for dispute resolution. You may then escalate to VCAT if unresolved.</p>

	Private legal action: You can always seek independent legal advice and pursue civil remedies through the courts if appropriate.
Additional information you need to know	<p>Keep all communication and documents related to your complaint for future reference.</p> <p>Getting legal advice is important if you are considering appeals to VCAT, judicial review, or private legal action.</p> <p>The VBA's role is focused on public safety and practitioner compliance, not resolving private financial disputes.</p>

Step 9: Other bodies that handle complaints about building 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>
Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV)	<p>CAV handles disputes about contracts, payments, warranties, defective building work, and domestic building insurance.</p> <p>If your complaint involves money disputes or contractual issues with a builder or tradesperson, CAV is the correct body.</p>
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)	<p>VCAT resolves disputes about building defects, contract breaches, insurance claims, and consumer complaints.</p> <p>If you are seeking compensation, refunds, or orders to fix defective work, VCAT is the main forum for legal resolution.</p>

Local Councils	<p>Local councils enforce planning permits, zoning rules, building overlays, and manage neighbourhood disputes (e.g., fences, overshadowing not covered by building regulations).</p> <p>For issues relating to planning approval or design non-compliance, contact your local council.</p>
Energy Safe Victoria (ESV)	<p>ESV handles complaints about electrical work, gas appliances, and energy safety.</p> <p>If your complaint involves faulty electrical installations or unsafe gas appliance connections, ESV is the responsible body.</p>
Environment Protection Authority (EPA Victoria)	<p>The EPA deals with environmental issues like dust, noise, odours, waste, and pollution from building sites.</p> <p>If a building site is causing environmental harm, contact the EPA.</p>
Architects Registration Board of Victoria (ARBV)	<p>The ARBV investigates complaints about architects' professional conduct and competence.</p> <p>If your issue relates to an architect's services or misconduct, the ARBV is the correct body.</p>
Additional information you need to know	<p>The VBA focuses on building and plumbing compliance and practitioner misconduct.</p> <p>Many building-related issues overlap with other bodies depending on whether the complaint is about safety, money, planning, or professional behaviour.</p> <p>If unsure, you can contact the VBA or Hear Me Out for help finding the right complaint body.</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
Victorian Ombudsman	Website: https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/ Email: complaints@ombudsman.vic.gov.au Telephone: 1800 806 314	You can contact the VO directly if you have any further questions or need assistance with 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
Where to Make a Complaint	A list of complaint services depending on your complaint type from the VO.
How to Make a Complaint	Guidance from the VO on how to make a complaint.
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.