

Complaints policy

| Cemetery trust (hereafter referred to as ‘the trust’): |  |
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| Date policy adopted (trust meeting date): |  |

The trust adopted this policy at its trust meeting on the date specified above. This policy will be reviewed two years from the date the policy was adopted.

# Context

The trust recognises that there will be times when a person or group of people will have an issue they wish to raise because their expectations have not been met. This may range from feedback to a more serious complaint and can be internal or external.

# Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the trust and trust members’ concerns or complaints are managed in a prompt, consistent, fair and objective way.

# Scope

This policy applies to all trust members and non-member secretaries who are responsible for resolving complaints.

# Receiving and acknowledging complaints

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing. Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, the complaint will be recorded and include:

* contact information of the person making the complaint (the complainant)
* issues raised by the complainant and the outcome they are seeking
* any other relevant information.

An acknowledgement of the complaint will be given to the complainant by email or in writing, along with an anticipated time for resolving the complaint.

# Assessing complaints

After acknowledging the complaint, the trust will assess the complaint to determine how it will be managed with consideration for:

* the seriousness, urgency and complexities of the complaint
* whether the complaint raises health and safety concerns
* how the complainant is being affected.

# Managing privacy

Information about the complaint and the complainant will only be used to deal with the complaint. It will only be shared with relevant people on a need-to-know basis.

# Internal complaints

Managing complaints raised by a trust members, contractors or employees are the responsibility of the trust chairperson.

Where there is interpersonal conflict, the chairperson will manage the compliant and ensure it does not disrupt the functioning of the trust. This may include reminding members of appropriate behaviour and the *Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities* published on the [Victorian Public Sector Commission website](https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-directors/) <https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-directors>.

If the complaint relates to the chairperson, the complainant should approach the deputy chairperson or another trust member for guidance.

# Providing a response and reason for decision

After considering a complaint and conducting an investigation into the issues raised, the trust will contact the complainant and advise them of:

* the outcome of the complaint and any action undertaken
* the reason for the decision
* the remedy or solution, and options for an external review if required.

# Escalating complaints to the department

If a complainant lodges a complaint directly to the Department of Health and Human Services (the department), generally the department will not get involved and will encourage the trust and complainant to resolve the matter.

If a complainant writes to the Minister for Health and the department is required to prepare a response, the department will seek information from the trust. The trust will provide all relevant information including the trust’s perspective on the situation.

# External complaints agencies

## Victorian Ombudsman

Where a complaint is unresolved it may be referred to the Victorian Ombudsman. The Victorian Ombudsman may look into the complaint or refer the matter to another dispute resolution body.

## Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission

A person may make a report about suspected improper conduct including fraud or corruption concerning the trust to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC). *Guidelines for handling public interest disclosures* are available on the [IBAC website](https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/guidelines-for-making-and-handling-protected-disclosures) <https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/guidelines-for-making-and-handling-protected-disclosures>.

# Relevant documents

* Department of Health and Human Services – Managing complaints: A guide for cemetery trusts
* Victorian Ombudsman – Complaints: Good practice guide for public sector agencies
* Manual for Victorian Class B cemetery trusts
* *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*
* Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2015

VERSION CONTROL

| No. | Date | Comments | Next review |
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