



ACHVL Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy (Version 6.1)

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1. Introduction

Aboriginal Community Housing (Vic) Limited (ACHVL) aims to provide a high standard of service in all areas of our operations. We recognise however that there will be occasions when customers and others receiving services from us, providing services to us or significantly affected by ACHVL's operations may wish to compliment, comment on or complain about an aspect of our service. ACHVL appreciates any feedback that our customers and communities choose to provide and aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner.

This policy describes our overall arrangements for responding to comments and complaints. It is supported by detailed operational procedures. The policy and procedure applies to any person[s] who receives, requests or provides a service from or to us, or is significantly affected by ACHVL service delivery operations.

2. Policy Application

This policy and related procedures are applicable to Aboriginal Community Housing (Vic) Limited (ACHVL)

3. Aim

The aim of the policy is to ensure that:

- All comments on the standards of services are considered and where appropriate acted upon, with a response provided to the person providing the feedback.
- All complaints are dealt with in a timely manner within the prescribed timeframes, and where possible to the satisfaction of both the complainant and ourselves.
- Any improvements to our policies and procedures identified as a result of a comment or complaint are implemented.
- We perceive comments and complaints as an opportunity for positive action.

4. What is a complaint?

A complaint is a registered expression of dissatisfaction with a service, lodged by a complainant or their representative. It must relate to a specific occurrence or episode, including the non-delivery of service, which has an impact in the individual complainant. It may be lodged verbally, in writing via post, email or by completing a form available from our office, or online by visiting the website, or over the telephone, or in person.

The subject of the complaint may include:

- a policy or decision made by ACHVL staff about a rental housing matter;
- the quality of an action, decision or service provided by ACHVL staff;
- a delay by ACHVL staff in taking an action, making a decision or delivering a service.

5. Who can make a complaint?

A renter or a prospective renter may make a complaint to ACHVL about its products, services, staff, or the handling of a complaint. A representative of a renter or a prospective renter (such as an advocate or a family member) may also make a complaint on a complainant's behalf. The term 'complainant' is used to refer to the individual or organisation that makes a complaint.

ACHVL is committed to being accessible and responsive to all complainants regardless of ethnic identity, national origin, religion, linguistic background, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical ability or other cultural or personal factors.

Please see ACHVL's renter assistance information sheet that lists advocates and supports that may be able to assist a complainant with the complaints process.

6. How to make a complaint?

A complainant who is affected by decisions of ACHVL on matters relating to rental housing, can ask for the complaint to be dealt with under the complaints and appeals procedure.

Complaints can be made by:

- Telephone: 1300 245 468
- Online: www.achl.org.au
- Email: admin@achl.org.au
- Post: ACHVL 19-23 Prospect street, Box Hill VIC 3128
- In person: 19-23 Prospect street, Box Hill VIC 3128

ACHVL is committed to ensuring a navigable and culturally safe complaints process that is accessible to everyone. If a complainant has specific communication needs or barriers, the complainant can communicate this to ACHVL so assistance can be provided by:

- using an assistance service, such an interpreter or TTY (for free);
- assistance with reading or writing; and
- communicating with another person acting on the complainant's behalf.

7. How a complaint will be handled?

ACHVL will acknowledge a complaint within 3 business days of receiving the complaint.

An ACHVL staff member will contact the complainant to discuss the complaint within 7 business days. ACHVL will also take whatever steps are necessary to try to resolve the complaint. This may include:

- taking direct action to resolve the complaint; and
- referring the complaint to the relevant team or manager for investigation

ACHVL will try to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible. Where this is not possible, ACHVL will inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint and provide reasons in writing within 30 calendar days of receiving the complaint. If there is any reason for a delay, ACHVL will contact the complainant and advise when a response can be expected, and the reason for the delay.

A complainant can check the status of the complaint by contacting their Housing Officer or **1300 245 468**

7.1 Complaint conduct

The success of the complaints process depends on:

- the health, safety, and security of ACHVL staff
- ACHVL's ability to allocate resources fairly across all complaints received.

ACHVL requires staff to be respectful and responsive in all of their communications. Where a complainant's behaviour or conduct raises health, safety, resource, or equity issues, this may significantly affect the complaint handling process. ACHVL will act proactively and decisively to manage unreasonable complainant conduct and will support staff to do the same in accordance with this policy. ACHVL may adjust its communication method/s to minimise any adverse impacts for staff and complainants.

7.2 The outcome of a complaint

ACHVL will contact the complainant to advise the outcome of the complaint and provide details of:

- actions taken in response to the complaint;
- the reasons for the decision made;
- where ACHVL has made an error, the steps that will be taken to redress the situation; and
- information on options for internal or external review if the complainant is not satisfied with the decision.

A complaint outcome will be made in writing with written reasons to the complainant. Once a decision is made in relation to the complaint, the details of the complaint will be recorded on the ACHVL Complaints Register and closed.

It is a regulatory requirement for ACHVL to record the complaint on a Complaints Register and provide it to the Housing Registrar on an annual basis for regulatory purposes.

8. Principles of ACHVL Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy

8.1. GENERAL

ACHVL is committed to the efficient, equitable and fair resolution of all comments and complaints lodged.

The management of complaints will meet all legislative requirements, industry standards and guidelines and comply with any specific program requirements.

8.2. VISIBILITY

Information on how to provide feedback and/or make a complaint will be available in the form of brochures located at all ACHVL offices, in the renter/tenant handbook received at sign-up of new tenancies, promoted via the ACHVL Customer Promise, from any ACHVL operational staff member and on the ACHVL website at www.achl.org.au.

The ACHVL Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy will be published on the organisation website and can be requested to be viewed by a customer at any time. This will include information on external bodies that customers can contact to assist in resolving the complaint.

8.3. RESPONSIVENESS

All complaints will be dealt with courteously. We will aim to respond within specified timeframes which are detailed in the Complaints Indicative Timeframes document and in the ACHVL Customer Promise.

8.4. CONFIDENTIALITY

ACHVL staff members shall respect the privacy of complainants and treat all documentation as confidential. A customer's personal information will not be given to another person unless there is lawful reason to do so and/or with consent. Wherever possible, we will respect the confidentiality of complainants and those being complained about. Where it is necessary to reveal the name, we will only do so with the individual's consent.

8.5. OBJECTIVITY

ACHVL seeks to provide customers with the opportunity to have their feedback received by ACHVL and any complaint to be reviewed and investigated in a fair and equitable way, and to encourage continual improvement in the operational policies and practices of ACHVL.

8.6. ACCOUNTABILITY

The complaint handling procedure must follow due process and be just to all parties. All complaints will be dealt with fairly and professionally, without consequence to the customer or to their status as a ACHVL customer.

8.7. ACCESSIBILITY

We will, where necessary, assist those wishing to make a comment or complaint by arranging translation facilities or providing help for those with hearing or sight impairment. An advocate can assist a customer during the complaints procedure.

The person making the complaint may advise ACHVL in writing if they wish to authorise a particular person to act on their behalf. The authority will include the advocate's name, contact number and relationship to the customer.

Staff acknowledge that some complainants may only wish to make a verbal complaint and in those instances, they will be treated no differently to complaints lodged in writing via post, email or by completing a form available from our office, or online by visiting the website or over the telephone.

8.8. APPEAL

A person making a complaint has the right to pursue a formal Appeal Process if they are dissatisfied with the ACHVL Customer Feedback Process and subsequent outcome. Any complaint received from a customer that fails to be resolved within the ACHVL Customer Feedback Process will be referred to the internal appeal process with the permission of the customer.

Should the customer still not be satisfied with the outcome of this process, they will be referred to an appropriate external Appeal Body for their State and requirements in which ACHVL has operational presence. ACHVL will inform the complainant of the outcome of the internal review and provide reasons in writing within 14 calendar days of the request. A list of agencies that may assist in resolving the complaint is detailed in the External Avenues of Appeal document.

A complainant can request copies of documentation related to their tenancy or complaint as well as copies of relevant policies. ACHVL will respond to a request for documentation related to the complaint with copies of documents or clear reasons why any documents have not been provided (e.g., documents belong to a third party, or documents that contain another person's private/sensitive information). Please also refer to ACHVL privacy policy.

8.9. STAFF

If a complaint involves investigations into staff conduct, ACHVL Disciplinary Procedures may be applicable. In the case of complaints being made against the Managing Director, the Board of Management will undertake the investigation.

8.10. ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

ACHVL acknowledges that there may be occasions when a complainant wishes to remain anonymous. In these circumstances, the feedback will be registered in the ACHVL Feedback Register as a comment. It will be investigated and assessed by ACHVL operational teams and action taken as deemed appropriate by the nature of the information received. Communication regarding the process and outcome of the complaint will not be made due to the anonymity of the complainant.

8.11. NDIS PARTICIPANTS

NDIS recipients living in ACHVL accommodation may use ACHVL's Customer Feedback and Complaints processes, or may also contact the NDIS complaints line on 1800 800 110 or complete an online form (<https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints>).

They may also call the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission on 1800 035 544..

9. How ACHVL aims to achieve these policy principles

9.1. RESPONSIBILITY

The Manager of each business unit is responsible for ensuring this Policy is implemented. They must:

- Ensure the Customer Feedback and Complaints Procedure is adhered to, and
- Ensure that all complaints received are entered into the *ACHVL Feedback Register*.

9.2. MONITORING

ACHVL will:

- Record and respond to all customer feedback received and ensure it is operating effectively and responding to changing needs and circumstances.

- Monitor compliance with policy and procedure.
- Make changes to policies and procedures if this is recommended as a result of feedback received.

9.3. STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

ACHVL will:

- Ensure all staff understand its policies and procedures.
- Ensure all staff regularly participate in sector and internal training opportunities regarding the management of customer feedback and complaints.
- Ensure all staff are equipped with the skills to receive and respond to feedback appropriately and diligently.

10. Related legislation, industry frameworks and standards, ACHVL policy and procedures

10.1. EXTERNAL LEGISLATION AND FRAMEWORKS

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|--|
| National Regulatory Community Housing Standards |
| Victorian Community Housing Regulatory Framework |
| Western Australian Community Housing Regulatory Framework |
| Housing Assistance Act 1996 (COM) |
| State Housing Acts (NSW 2001, NT 1982, QLD 2003, SA 1995, TAS 2022, VIC 1983, WA 1980) |
| State Residential Tenancy and Rooming Acts (NSW 2010, NT 1999, QLD 2008, SA 1995, TAS 1997, VIC 1997, WA 1987) |
| Community Housing Providers National Law Acts 2013 (NT, NSW, QLD, SA and TAS) |
| The National Affordable Housing Agreement |
| NRSCH National Regulatory Code |
| Consumer Charter for Community Managed Housing and Homelessness Services (VIC) |
| NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework |
| National Disability and Insurance Scheme Act 2013 |
| NDIS Code of Conduct and Rules |
| The Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter Act 2006 (VIC) |
| Human Rights Act 2019 (QLD) |
| Privacy Act 1988 (COM) |
| NSW Housing Appeals Committee Charter |

10.2. ACHVL RELATED POLICIES AND PROCESSES

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|-------------------------------------|
| ACHVL Customer Promise |
| ACHVL Appeals Policy and Procedure |
| ACHVL Privacy Policy and Procedures |
| ACHVL Code of Conduct |

11. Monitoring and review

This policy should be periodically reviewed and revised. Revisions should be made as and when required. The period between reviews must not exceed two years. The date for review of this policy is on or before August 2024. This policy remains valid until such time that a new version is published.

Review history

| Document reference | Date and version | Reason for review | Review frequency | Owner | Approver |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| POLHOUAUSNATCFM202206 | Version 6.0, August 2022 | Scheduled review | Every two years | National Manager | Managing Director National Manager |
| POLHOUAUSNATCFM202005 | Version 5.0, May 2020 | Scheduled review | Every two years | National Manager Operations | Managing Director National Manager Operations |
| POLHOUAUSNATCME201704 | Version 4.0, November 2017 | Scheduled review | Every two years | National Manager Operations | Managing Director National Manager Operations |

* External Complaints policy superseded by Customer Feedback policy.

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