

Responding to your concerns



Latrobe City Council acknowledges the right of community members to make a complaint about Council without fear or retribution. Our ***Citizen Complaints Policy*** ensures that complaints are managed efficiently, effectively and fairly from inception through to final determination.

What is a complaint?

According to the Citizen Complaints Policy, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with Council's level and quality of service, policies or procedures. Dissatisfaction may arise from the service provided by Council staff, councillors, contractors and systems or from the impact of a particular policy or procedure.

A complaint is deemed:

- A request for service which is not responded to in a proper and timely manner by council
- A request for information, documentation or explanation of policies or procedures or decisions of council not responded to in a proper and timely manner by council
- A report of damage or faulty infrastructure not responded to in a proper and timely manner by council
- A report of a hazard not responded to in a proper and timely manner by council
- A report concerning neighbours or neighbouring property not responded in a proper and timely manner by council
- The lodgement of an appeal in accordance with a procedure or policy not responded to in a proper and timely manner by council

How do I make a complaint?

Complaints must be submitted in writing and will be accepted through any of the following channels:

- At the front desk of a Latrobe City Council Service Centre
- Through the Latrobe City Council website
- Via a letter, email or fax
- Handed to a Latrobe City Council staff member within working hours

To make the process simpler for community members, there is a ***Citizen Complaint Form*** which can be completed and submitted. Copies of the form can be obtained from any Latrobe City Council Service Centre or from the Latrobe City Council website:

www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Feedback

What if I am complaining about a Councillor?

A complaint about a Councillor must be made in writing and addressed to the Mayor who will be required to undertake an investigation.

A complaint about the Mayor must be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer who will be required to undertake action as deemed appropriate.

A complaint about a Councillor may result in a decision by Council to refer the complaint to a Councillor Conduct Committee.

What if I am complaining regarding a decision or action of the Chief Executive Officer?

A complaint about the Chief Executive Officer must be made in writing and addressed to the Mayor for investigation and action as deemed appropriate.

How will my complaint be processed?

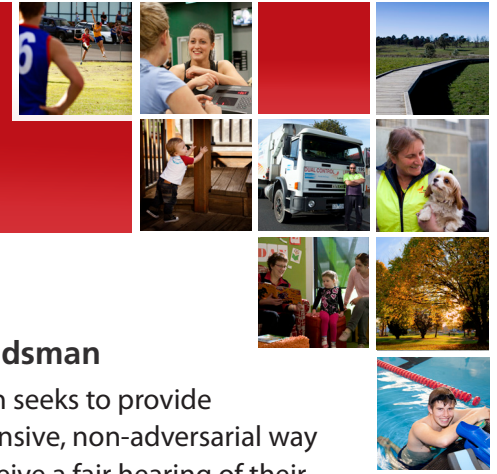
Written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within three working days of receipt, identifying a set time by which Council will provide a more detailed response. The complainant will then be kept up to date throughout the resolution process. All contact with complainants shall be noted on Council's customer contact system.

Complaints that will not be investigated

The Chief Executive Officer may determine that a complaint will not be investigated where:

- The matter is considered frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith
- Involves a matter where an adequate remedy or right of appeal already exists, whether or not the complainant uses that remedy or right of appeal
- Relates to a decision of Council or a matter awaiting determination by Council

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- Relates to conduct before a court, coroner or tribunal
- Relates to a matter under investigation by the Minister for Local Government or any other government department including the Victorian Police Service
- Relates to the appointment or dismissal of any employee or an industrial or disciplinary issue;
- Relates to the actions or conduct of a private individual
- There is insufficient information available, including situations where the complainant declines or refuses to provide further information
- Where there are threats made against Council or council staff
- Where the Chief Executive Officer determines that a complaint will not be investigated, the complainant will be advised accordingly in writing.

What if I am unhappy with the outcome of my complaint?

If a complaint cannot be resolved, then the complainant has the right to request an Internal Review. This will then entail an investigation by either Council's General Manager Governance, a General Manager of the appropriate division or a delegated Senior Officer. The complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the Internal Review.

If the complaint still remains unresolved then the complainant may wish to escalate a complaint further to an appropriate body.

Local Government Victoria – LGV

Part of the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), it supports and advises the Minister for Local Government in regards to the administration of the Local Government Act 1989. LGV may make enquiries into possible breaches of the Local Government Act and may assign an Inspector of Municipal Administration to investigate a matter if it is considered that there is sufficient evidence of a substantial breach. Complaints about possible breaches of the Local Government Act may be directed in writing to Local Government Victoria or to the Minister for Local Government.

www.localgovernmentvictoria.vic.gov.au

Victorian Ombudsman

The Ombudsman seeks to provide a speedy, inexpensive, non-adversarial way for people to receive a fair hearing of their grievances with government administrations. The Ombudsman can help when your complaint is about an administrative action taken by any council employee, but not those of a councillor when acting in the role of a councillor or of a council acting as a decision making body.

www.victorianombudsman.vic.gov.au

Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria

The Commission's role is to ensure the basic right of all people to fair treatment no matter what their circumstances or background. Decisions made by Council may not use gender, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, breastfeeding, age, race, impairment, religion, political beliefs, trade union activity, or sexual preference as the basis for disadvantaging you or treating you differently from the rest of the community.

www.equalopportunitycommission.vic.gov.au

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal – VCAT

VCAT deals with disputes between people and government in areas like:

- Planning and environment
- Land valuation
- Licences to carry on business
- State taxation
- Many other government decisions.

www.vcat.vic.gov.au

Complaint Monitoring

Council will monitor customer complaints and trends. This information will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and used to identify areas for improvement in Council's service delivery and activity.