



Resiwise P/L  
Building Surveyors  
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Name of agency	Resiwise Pty Ltd
Title and version number	Complaints Handling Policy (CHP) – 2021
Effective date	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2021
Responsible officer	Daniel Cullen
Review date	Annually
Relevant legislation	<i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)</i> <i>Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 (Vic)</i> <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)</i> <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 (Vic)</i>
Related policies	<i>Code of Conduct for Building Surveyors In Victoria</i>



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## **Introduction**

*As per the Code of Conduct for Building Surveyors in Victoria, a building surveyor must take reasonable steps to minimise the potential for complaints and have a process in place to address problems or issues of non-compliance brought to their attention as soon as possible.*

*We have introduced this formal Complaints Handling Process (CHP) document in order to outline our processes when dealing with complaints received.*

## **Objectives**

*This policy aims to:*

- *put in place an open and transparent complaint handling system*
- *specify the key performance indicators to which we will hold ourselves accountable*
- *establish our timeframes for resolving complaints*
- *clarify the roles and responsibilities of organisation staff*
- *ensure staff handle complaints fairly and objectively*
- *set out how staff record and analyse complaint data to identify where we can improve our services.*



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## Guiding principles

This policy is based on seven principles.

- **Commitment**  
We are committed to resolving complaints and have a culture that recognises an individual's right to complain. We value complaints and recognise them as being part of our business and improving service delivery.
- **Accessibility**  
People with a range of needs can easily complain and staff actively assist them to navigate the complaints process.
- **Transparency**  
We make it clear how to complain, where to complain and how the complaint will be handled. The steps taken to respond to a complaint are recorded and will stand up to scrutiny.
- **Objectivity and fairness**  
Complaints are dealt with courteously, impartially, within established timeframes and are assessed on merit.
- **Privacy**  
Complaint information is handled according to privacy laws and other relevant legislation. We provide clear information about how we handle personal information. Complaint data is de-identified if reported on more widely.
- **Accountability**  
We are accountable internally and externally for our decision making and complaint handling performance. We provide explanations and reasons for decisions, and ensure that our decisions are subject to appropriate review processes.
- **Continuous improvement**  
Acting on, learning from and using complaint data helps us identify problems and improve services.

## Scope

This policy applies to all organisation staff. It also applies to third party contractors carrying out services on the organisation's behalf.



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## Definitions

**Complaint:** an expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of an action taken, decision made, or service provided by an organisation or its contractor, or a delay or failure in providing a service, taking an action, or making a decision by an organisation or its contractor.

## Roles and responsibilities of agency staff and contractors

### Frontline staff

**Anette Johannessen**

**Jonathon Jefferson**

### Senior staff

**Daniel Cullen**

## How to make a complaint

A person can make a complaint in a number of ways.

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## Accessibility

Anyone who has been affected by a decision or action (including a failure to make a decision or take action) can make a complaint.

We accept and respond to anonymous complaints, provided we have received enough information to do so.

## Complaint handling procedure

### Overview

We take a three-tiered approach to complaint handling, as follows:

- 1. Frontline resolution:** frontline staff receive the complaint, assess it, and resolve it immediately, if possible
- 2. Internal review:** if the complainant is aggrieved with the process or outcome of the frontline resolution/investigation, they can request an internal review
- 3. Access to external review:** if the complainant is aggrieved with the process or outcome of the internal review, we inform them of any available external review options, for instance the Victorian Building Authority, Relevant Municipality, Ombudsman etc.

### **Frontline resolution**

- *Frontline staff will receive the complaint.*
- *Frontline staff will clarify the complaint and the outcome the complainant is seeking.*
- *Frontline staff will assess the complaint to determine how it should be dealt with.*
- *If the organisation is not the right organisation to respond to the complaint, frontline staff will advise the complainant of an organisation that may be able to help.*

### **Investigation**

- *The staff member handling the complaint will advise the complainant who the contact person is and how long it will take to respond to the complaint.*
- *Complaint handling staff will aim to resolve all complaints within 28 days.*



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- *If it takes longer than 28 days to resolve a complaint, the contact person will contact the complainant prior to or at this time and explain why.*
- *Complaints that are not resolved within 28 days may be escalated if necessary to ensure that a resolution is expedited.*
- *The staff member responsible for handling the complaint will write to the complainant to advise them of the outcome. The outcome letter/report will contain reasons for the decision made and the contact information for the responsible officer.*
- *The staff member handling the complaint may contact the complainant to discuss the outcome of their complaint prior to sending the outcome letter.*

### **Internal review**

An outcome letter signed by the senior officer responsible for the internal review will be provided to the complainant at the conclusion of every internal review.

The outcome letter will advise the complainant of any avenues of external review available in relation to the matter, such as the Victorian Ombudsman.

### **Remedies**

Where we have found that we have made an error, we will take steps to redress the situation.

Possible remedies include, but are not limited to:

- *an explanation of why the error occurred and the steps taken to prevent it happening again*
- *a reversal of a decision*
- *disciplinary action taken against a staff member*
- *providing the means of redress requested by the complainant.*

Where we identify an error, we will consider offering a genuine apology to the complainant, in addition to any other remedies offered, irrespective of whether the complainant specifically requests this.



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## Privacy

When gathering information to respond to a complaint, we will only:

- use it to deal with the complaint or to address systemic issues arising from the complaint
- disclose it in a de-identified format when disclosing data to the public
- share it with staff on a need to know basis.

## Recording complaints

All complaints are recorded in our "PermitPro" database

Through our building permit program "PermitPro" we have a dedicated record keeping section with respect to complaints handling that has the capacity to record all details of a complaint, including complainants details, description of complaint, desired outcome, details of any responses made by our office, and a follow up function to ensure all complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and/or diarised for a follow up.

Details of any phone calls will be recorded within our building permit program software.

We analyse our complaint data and provide annual reports to on how we can reduce complaints and improve services.

Senior management is responsible for acting on the recommendations in these reports.

We record the following information for each complaint:

- the complainant's details
- how the complaint was received
- a description of the complaint
- the complainant's desired outcome (if known)
- the agency officer responsible for handling the complaint
- any action taken, including contact with the complainant, response times and the outcome
- when the complaint was finalised
- relevant demographic information that could help improve services
- any recommendations for improvement, and who is responsible for implementing them.



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## Reporting on performance

To measure our performance, we have the following key performance indicators:

- complaints upheld, partially upheld, not upheld
- performance against timelines set by the agency i.e. average time to respond
- number of changes made to services as a result of complaints
- number of complaint outcomes overturned on internal review
- customer satisfaction with the complaint handling system
- complaints escalated to the Victorian Ombudsman's office where the agency's original decision has been overturned and/or proposals for action have been made by the Ombudsman].

We will report against our complaint handling key performance indicators, where we will also detail any service improvements made as a result of complaints received.