

Policy OPS.005

Complaints management

Carry On (Victoria) Ltd and its subsidiaries. Operating as Veteran Housing Australia (VHA).

Contents

1	Purpose.....	2
2	Policy Responsibility.....	2
3	Definitions	2
4	Principles	3
5	Visibility	3
6	Responsiveness.....	3
6.1	Indicative timeframes (complaints).....	3
7	Confidentiality.....	4
8	Objectivity and accountability	4
9	Accessibility.....	4
10	Staff.....	4
11	Appeal.....	4
11.1	Indicative timeframes (appeals).....	5
11.2	Decisions that can be appealed.....	5
11.3	Grounds for appeal.....	5
12	Review & Approval	6

1 Purpose

Veteran Housing Australia (VHA) recognises that there will be occasions when tenants or those receiving services from us, providing services to us, or significantly affected by VHA's operations, may wish to compliment, comment on or complain about an aspect of our service. VHA appreciates any feedback 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 other operational procedures. This policy and procedure apply to any person[s] who receives, requests or provides a service from or to us, or is significantly affected by VHA.

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.

2 Policy Responsibility

General Manager – Responsible for overall operational service delivery and execution of this policy and complaints register.

CEO – Review of complaints and overseeing response

3 Definitions

Term/ Abbrev.	Meaning
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.
Appeal	A user of our service asks for a decision we made to be reviewed
Complaint	A user of our service tells us they are dissatisfied with our service, standards, practices or policies
Tenant	VHA uses the term 'tenant' throughout our policies and procedures as an all-encompassing term for anyone accessing our services including renters, tenants, applicants and those accessing crisis services

Stakeholder	A person or organisation other than a tenant that may be impacted on by the services delivered by VHA
--------------------	---

4 Principles

VHA is committed to the efficient 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.

5 Visibility

Information on how to provide feedback and/or make a complaint will be available on the VHA website at www.veteranhousing.org.au

This policy will be published on the website and can be requested to be viewed by a tenant at any time.

Compliments, comments and complaints can be mailed or emailed into VHA, or lodged directly on the website.

6 Responsiveness

All complaints will be dealt with courteously. We will aim to respond within specified timeframes. The current timeframes are recorded below.

6.1 Indicative timeframes (complaints)

Complaint received	
1 business day	Recorded on tenant feedback register
2 business days	Receipt is acknowledged in writing
3 – 13 business days	Complaint is investigated by VHA
14 business days	Progress report or outcome and intent to close letter sent
28 business days	Closure letter sent with information on appeals process, should tenant not be satisfied with the outcome

7 Confidentiality

VHA staff members shall respect the privacy of complainants and treat all documentation as confidential. A tenant'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 Objectivity and 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 tenant or their status as a VHA tenant.

9 Accessibility

VHA 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 tenant during the complaint's procedure. The person making the complaint may advise VHA 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 tenant. Staff should also acknowledge that some complainants may only wish to make a verbal complaint and in those instances, they should be treated no differently to complaints lodged in writing via post or email or online.

10 Staff

If a complaint involves investigations into staff conduct, VHA Disciplinary Procedures may be applicable. In the case of complaints being made against the Chief Executive Officer, the Board of Directors will undertake the investigation.

11 Appeal

A person making a complaint has the right to pursue a formal Appeal Process if they are dissatisfied with the VHA Complaints Process and subsequent outcome. Any complaint received from a tenant that fails to be resolved within the complaints inductive timeframe will be referred to the internal appeal process with the permission of the tenant.

Should the tenant 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 VHA has operational presence.

A person can contact the Victorian Housing Registrar on (03) 7005 8984 or via email on housingregistrar@dtf.vic.gov.au.

11.1 Indicative timeframes (appeals)

Appeal received	
1 business day	Recorded on tenant feedback register
2 business days	Receipt is acknowledged in writing
3 – 13 business days	Appeal of decision is considered and original decision reviewed If grounds for appeal are sufficient, appeal panel is convened
14 business days	Outcome and advice on external avenues of appeal provided to tenant
21 business days	Appeal panel investigates and reviews the decision
28 business days	Appeal panel reaches an outcome Tenant advised

11.2 Decisions that can be appealed

The types of decisions that can be appealed include (but are not limited to):

- Rental rate assessment
- Rejection for rehousing
- Not eligible for housing
- Not selected for housing
- Allocated inappropriate property
- Request for property improvements rejected
- Complaint handled poorly

11.3 Grounds for appeal

The grounds for making an appeal are that VHA have not followed their policies and procedures or an applicable regulation or requirement, that our policies and procedures are not fair, or that we decided without the right information.

12 Review & Approval

Action	Date
1 st Issue	2023
Review	April 2026
Next Review	April 2027