

MANAGING COMPLAINTS

Applies to: Staff and volunteers
Specific responsibility: Principal Lawyer

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POLICY STATEMENT

Inner Melbourne Community Legal (**IMCL**) is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation using IMCL services or affected by its operations has the right to lodge a complaint and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

IMCL will provide a complaints procedure that:

- is simple and easy to use
- is effectively communicated to all clients and stakeholders
- ensures complaints are fairly assessed and responded to promptly
- is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice
- complies with legislative requirements.

PRINCIPLES

IMCL will:

- acknowledge all complaints it receives
- treat all complainants with respect, recognising that the issue of complaint is important to the complainant
- maintain confidentiality of parties involved
- keep parties to the complaint informed of progress of the complaint
- ensure that a complainant is not penalised in any way or prevented from use of services during the progress of an issue
- ensure that feedback data (both positive and negative) is considered in organisational reviews and in planning service improvements
- ensure that staff and volunteers are given information about the complaints procedure as part of their induction and are aware of procedures for managing client feedback and complaints.

PROCEDURES

Making a complaint

A person wishing to make a complaint may do so in writing or verbally to the Principal Lawyer. If the complaint is about the Principal Lawyer, the complaint should be made to the Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**).

Written complaints may be sent to PO Box 512 North Melbourne Vic 3051 or email to the Principal Lawyer, or the CEO.

Procedure for complaints management

The person managing the complaint will be responsible for:

1. Processing the complaint:

- registering the complaint in the complaints register
- informing the complainant that their complaint has been received and providing them with information about the process and time frame¹.

2. Investigating the complaint:

- examining the complaint within a reasonable time of the complaint being received
- investigating the complaint and deciding what needs to be done
- informing the complainant within a reasonable time of the complaint being received of what is being done to investigate and resolve it, and the expected time frame for resolution.

3. Resolving the complaint:

- making a decision within a reasonable time of the complaint being received and informing the complainant of the outcome:
 - upheld (and if so what will be done to resolve it)
 - resolved (and how this has been achieved); or
 - if no further action can be taken, the reasons for this.
- informing the complainant of any options for further action if required.

Record keeping

The register will be maintained by the Principal Lawyer and CEO and will record the following for each complaint:

- Date lodged
- Category of complainant
- Nature of complaint
- Status of complaint
- Outcome
- Complainant advised
- Any further action.

Copies of all correspondence will be kept electronically.

¹ The time frame will depend on the nature of the complaint. However, IMCL will endeavour to resolve complaints within 5 working days.

The complaints register and files will be confidential and access is restricted to the Principal Lawyer and CEO.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, complaints can also be made to:

Victorian Legal Services Commissioner

Website: <http://lsbc.vic.gov.au/>

Phone: 1300 796 344

Office of the Australia Information Commissioner

Website: www.oaic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 363 992

Health Complaints Commissioner

Website: <https://hcc.vic.gov.au>

Phone: 1300 582 113