

# Complaints handling policy

## Introduction

### Role of the VLSB+C

The Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (VLSB+C) are independent statutory authorities responsible for the regulation of the legal profession in Victoria. We work to ensure that legal services in Victoria are provided by competent and ethical professionals, and meet the needs of consumers.

We regulate the Victorian legal profession under the Legal Profession Uniform Law (the Uniform Law), which gives us powers to:

- Handle disputes between clients and lawyers
- Investigate and discipline lawyers for their conduct, where appropriate.

The way we regulate lawyers and handle complaints is also governed by our obligations under administrative law, the [VPS Code of Conduct](#), and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. We are also guided by the human rights set out in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

You can find more information about our approach to regulation in our [Strategy](#) and our [Regulatory Approach Statement](#), including how we learn from our complaints data to improve the quality of our service, and educate lawyers on ways to provide better services for consumers. Our [Service Charter](#) explains our commitment to interact with you in a respectful, open and professional manner when we handle a complaint, and our expectations of you when you interact with us.

### Purpose of this policy

This policy explains how we manage complaints about lawyers, and what people can expect if they make a complaint to us. We have developed this policy to make our complaint handling system transparent; to help us handle complaints fairly, objectively and consistently; and to set timeframes for handling complaints. It includes information about:

- What complaints we consider
- Who can make a complaint
- How to make a complaint
- How we handle complaints
- The potential outcomes of a complaint
- How you can challenge our decisions or complain about our service.

This policy applies to all VLSB+C staff and any third-party contractors carrying out services on our behalf.

Complaints about the VLSB+C or one of our staff members are managed under our separate [Complaints About Us](#) policy.

## Making a complaint about a lawyer

### Types of complaints we consider under the Uniform Law

We handle complaints about lawyers who hold (or held) Victorian practising certificates, and law practices (including law firms) in Victoria.

We can also handle complaints about the conduct of lawyers who have been admitted to practise law in Victoria but do not hold a practising certificate or work as a lawyer, and foreign lawyers who have been registered to work in Victoria.

We can consider complaints about three types of issues. A complaint about a lawyer can include more than one of these types of issues:

- **Complaints about service** involve issues with the quality of legal services provided by a lawyer. Examples of these include complaints about:
  - Delays in progressing a matter
  - Not providing documents in a timely manner
  - Poor communication
  - Rudeness
  - Mistakes in legal documents
- **Complaints about costs** involve issues with a lawyer's bill or the costs they charge. Examples of these can include complaints about:
  - Not disclosing estimated costs or total estimated costs
  - Costs which are more than the estimates given
  - Charging more than is fair and reasonable, or for unnecessary work
  - Not giving notice to the client about their rights relating to costs
  - Direct financial losses caused by a lawyer
- **Complaints about conduct** involve issues with the way a lawyer behaves, both during legal practice and outside of their work. Examples of these can include complaints about:
  - Behaviour that is dishonest, misleading or criminal
  - Breaking the law, especially breaches of the Uniform Law or conduct rules made under that Law
  - Falsely witnessing documents
  - Not complying with court orders or undertakings
  - Mishandling of trust money and poor trust accounting
  - Sexual harassment or workplace bullying
  - Not keeping client information confidential
  - Charging more than fair and reasonable costs, or gross overcharging
  - Acting against a former client, or acting for opposing parties in a matter
  - Acting without client instructions

- Improperly refusing to hand over a client's legal file
- Directly communicating with an opposing client instead of their lawyer
- Significant, multiple or repeated instances of poor service or incompetence.

## Complaints we can't consider

We cannot consider complaints about judges, except in extremely limited circumstances. We also cannot consider complaints about how tribunal members and government officials have performed their official duties. We have no power to consider complaints about other service-providers who provide legal help but are not lawyers, such as conveyancers or migration agents.

For complaints about costs, there are **dollar limits** set out in the Uniform Law. Those dollar limits are indexed each year and you can find the [current limits on our website](#). If a complaint is about legal costs which are more than those dollar limits, we cannot consider it under the Uniform Law. We also do not consider complaints about costs if the complaint has been made after the lawyer has started taking action in a court to recover the costs.

We still consider complaints that involve disputes about costs above the dollar limits in the Uniform Law, or that were made after the lawyer started taking action in a court to recover their costs, if the complaint is also about a lawyer's conduct. We may consider a complaint about costs that are above the dollar limits, if we think the costs are so unfair and excessive that they could represent a serious problem with the conduct of the lawyer charging them.

In some cases, we may be able to help consumers and lawyers resolve disputes about costs that are above the dollar limits using our [Early Resolution](#) process instead of our Uniform Law powers. If we cannot help to resolve a dispute about costs, we will give the consumer information about their rights to make an application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), or to the Costs Court.

If someone makes a complaint that we cannot help with, we will provide them with information about other rights, options or agencies they might be able to access for help with their problem.

## Who can make a complaint

Anyone can make a complaint about a lawyer's conduct. Complaints about a lawyer's conduct can also be made on behalf of someone else (with their consent).

A complaint about costs or a complaint about service can only be made by:

- The client who received the legal services
- Someone authorised by the client to make the complaint on their behalf, or
- The person who is legally responsible for payment of the legal costs

If someone wants to make a complaint to us about a lawyer under the Uniform Law, they cannot remain anonymous. We can accept an anonymous tip-off about a lawyer's conduct, but we cannot treat it as a complaint. Whether or not we can investigate a lawyer's conduct or take any action based on an anonymous tip-off will depend on the information disclosed to us.

## How to make a complaint

If someone has concerns about the conduct of a lawyer, the quality of legal services they have received, the legal costs they have been charged, or a combination of these concerns, we encourage them to talk to us so we can understand their situation and assess how we may be able to assist. This allows us to explain all the options that may apply in their specific circumstances, and help them decide how to proceed. We may also be able to help resolve their concerns about a lawyer's service or costs informally through our [Early Resolution](#) process, without the need for a complaint.

If someone wants to make a complaint about a lawyer, they can do so by contacting us using our [online web form](#), by phone, by email, by mail or in-person. Complaints made under the Uniform Law must:

- Be in writing
- Identify the person making the complaint
- Identify the lawyer or law firm being complained about
- Describe the conduct or issues being complained about.

If someone needs help making a complaint, or cannot use our online webform, they can contact our office for assistance using the contact details in the '[How to contact us](#)' section below. We will also provide reasonable adjustments to people who need them to make a complaint.

## Time limits for making complaints

Complaints must be made to us within time limits set out in the Uniform Law. There are different time limits for making a complaint depending on whether it includes a complaint about costs, and if so, whether the consumer has requested an itemised bill.

### Complaints about service and conduct

Complaints about service and complaints about conduct must be made within **3 years** of the issue occurring.

We can extend this time limit in circumstances where it is just and fair to do so, or where the complaint involves potential professional misconduct by a lawyer and it is in the public interest for us to deal with the complaint.

### Complaints about costs

Complaints about costs must be made within **60 days** of the bill becoming payable (usually the date the bill was issued by the lawyer).

If a consumer receives a bill and then requests an **itemised bill** from their lawyer (i.e. a bill that lists the cost and time spent for each task), we can accept a complaint about those costs within **30 days** after the lawyer provided the itemised bill.

We can extend the time limit for complaints about costs by up to 4 months, provided the lawyer has not taken action in court to recover the costs. We can only do this in circumstances where it is just and fair, taking into consideration the reasons for the delay.

## When someone contacts us about making a complaint

When someone contacts us about making a complaint, our staff will talk to them to understand their concerns. Depending on the outcome they are seeking, and the nature of the issues they raise, our staff will determine how we will handle their matter.

If someone contacts us about a matter that is appropriate for us to handle as a complaint, the matter will be referred to one of our case handlers as a complaint made under the Uniform Law. Some types of complaints will be referred directly to a team at the VLSB+C which specialises in them. For example, complaints about costs will be referred directly to our Costs Disputes and Compliance Team, while reports of sexual harassment by a lawyer will be referred directly to specialist officers in our Discipline and Suitability Team who are trained to handle those cases.

Other matters that are raised with us aren't appropriate to be treated as complaints under the Uniform Law. We may be able to help with these matters using our [Early Resolution](#) process.

## Preliminary assessment of Uniform Law complaints

All matters that we handle as a complaint under the Uniform Law need to go through a 'preliminary assessment' before we can take any further steps. Once the preliminary assessment is complete, we will either continue to handle the complaint or [close the complaint](#).

| What it involves                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Timeframe                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>As part of the preliminary assessment, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the information provided</li> <li>Request further information (if necessary) from the person making the complaint, the lawyer or law firm being complained about, or anybody else with relevant information</li> <li>Confirm whether we are authorised to handle the complaint under the Uniform Law.</li> </ul> | <p>We aim to complete preliminary assessments within <b>90 days</b>. However, for complaints that are very serious or complex, this may take significantly longer.</p> |

## Early Resolution and requests for information

Many people who contact us need support to deal with simple or minor issues with their lawyer. We don't treat these matters as complaints under the Uniform Law, but will instead try to help address their issue quickly and informally using our Early Resolution process, rather than our Uniform Law powers. Early Resolution is an informal process similar to alternative dispute resolution.

Examples of situations where we use Early Resolution are where:

- We don't have the authority to consider it as a complaint – for example, if the person contacting us:
  - Wants us to provide legal advice or representation
  - Has concerns about a judicial officer or someone who is not a lawyer
  - Is not eligible to make the complaint
- We have limited authority to consider it as a complaint – for example, if the person contacting us:
  - Is raising an issue that is currently before a court, or has already been determined by a court
  - Has not yet provided the information needed to make a complaint, e.g. the name of the relevant lawyer
  - Raises issues that don't meet [time limits](#) and [dollar limits](#) required for us to consider them under the Uniform Law
- Someone comes to us with concerns about the service or costs of someone else's lawyer (i.e. a third party's lawyer).

Using Early Resolution often lets us finalise these types of enquiries without using the complaint process under the Uniform Law (although we may later handle them as a complaint, if appropriate). This allows us to focus the use of those powers on allegations that are serious or could cause significant consumer harm.

We will not always be able to help the person contacting us get the result they were looking for, or resolve all of their concerns, using Early Resolution. If we cannot help someone using our Early Resolution process, or with our complaints handling powers under the Uniform Law, we will refer them to other appropriate options or organisations that might be able to help. Sometimes the only help we can offer is an explanation of our role and our regulatory powers.

People might also contact us for general information and guidance. For example, they may:

- Have questions about our Early Resolution process or our complaints process
- Want to know how to hire or engage a lawyer
- Be seeking general information about the legal profession
- Have questions about lawyers' professional obligations, and what kinds of conduct they can and cannot engage in
- Want to share their experiences with the legal profession with us.

We will respond to these requests by either providing information or referring the person contacting us to appropriate resources.

| What it involves                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Timeframe                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>As part of Early Resolution we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect information and create a record</li> <li>• Answer questions</li> <li>• Provide information or guidance that might help the person contacting us resolve their concerns themselves</li> <li>• Contact the lawyer on behalf of the person contacting us (with their consent) to try and resolve the issue quickly</li> <li>• Refer the person contacting us to a more appropriate body to help them (e.g. Consumer Affairs Victoria, Victoria Legal Aid, a court)</li> <li>• Refer appropriate matters to be handled as a complaint under the Uniform Law.</li> </ul> | <p>We aim to complete Early Resolution within <b>2 months</b>.</p> |

## How we handle complaints about service and complaints about costs

Once we have confirmed that the parties have [attempted to resolve the dispute](#) (if necessary), the team handling the complaint may use [informal resolution](#) or [mediation](#) to attempt to resolve the complaint. They may also complete a [preliminary assessment](#) and use our powers under the Uniform Law to [investigate service and costs](#) or arrange a [costs review](#). Not all of these processes will be relevant to every type of complaint.

We may also decide that we need to begin a separate [investigation into the conduct](#) of the lawyer. Factors we will consider include:

- Any history of non-compliance by the lawyer
- The attitude and co-operation of the parties
- The complexity of the legal or factual issues
- The amount of the costs in dispute
- Any particular vulnerability or disadvantage experienced by the consumer
- Alternative options available to the parties
- Any indication of systemic or recurring issues
- The number or severity of the issues
- If there is a risk of ongoing consumer harm.

## Checking whether parties have attempted to resolve the dispute

Before we can attempt to resolve complaints about service or complaints about costs, we need to confirm that at least one of the parties to the dispute has already made a reasonable attempt to resolve the issue. If neither party has attempted to resolve the dispute, we will not be able to handle the complaint any further until they do.

This requirement only applies to complaints about service and costs, it does not apply to complaints about a lawyer's conduct.

This requirement does not apply if we think it would be unreasonable or unfair for the person making the complaint to attempt to resolve the dispute with the lawyer directly.

## Informal resolution

When we handle complaints about costs and complaints about service, we must attempt informal resolution before we begin any other resolution processes. Informal resolution is a different process to [Early Resolution](#). It is a Uniform Law process, and only applies to complaints made under the Uniform Law. Informal resolution can result in us helping a consumer make a [formal settlement agreement](#) with their lawyer.

Informal resolution can take place by telephone, in writing, by video conference or in person.

| What it involves                                                                                                                                                  | Timeframe                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| As part of informal resolution, we listen to each party and communicate their views, needs and desired outcomes to the other party, to try and resolve the issue. | We aim to complete informal resolution of complaints within <b>3 months</b> . If your issue cannot be resolved in that timeframe, we may <a href="#">close the complaint</a> or consider one or more of the alternative options set out below. |

## Mediation

For complaints about costs and complaints about service, we can also use mediation to help the parties resolve their dispute. Mediation can also result in a [formal settlement agreement](#).

| What it involves                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Timeframe                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mediation is similar to informal resolution, however negotiation takes place on a set date and within a set time period of 2–3 hours. The process is led by an accredited mediator.<br><br>We can order the parties to participate in mediation, if appropriate. | We aim to complete mediation within <b>1 month</b> of identifying a complaint as suitable for mediation. |

## Investigations about service and costs

If we cannot resolve a complaint about service or a complaint about costs using informal resolution or mediation, and we believe further action needs to be taken, we can use our powers under the Uniform

Law to investigate the complaint and collect further information. Investigations can also result in us giving a lawyer a [warning](#) or making a [determination](#) about their service or costs.

| What it involves                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Timeframe                                                                                                                 |
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| <p>We will look at all the information provided by the lawyer and the person making the complaint, and assess whether further information is required.</p> <p>Sometimes we will need to ask the person making the complaint or the lawyer for additional information. Responding to these requests as fully and quickly as possible can reduce timeframes significantly.</p> <p>We may also seek information and documents from other people or organisations who may be able to assist in the investigation, or we may arrange for a <a href="#">costs review</a>.</p> | <p>We aim to complete investigations into complaints about service and complaints about costs within <b>6 months</b>.</p> |

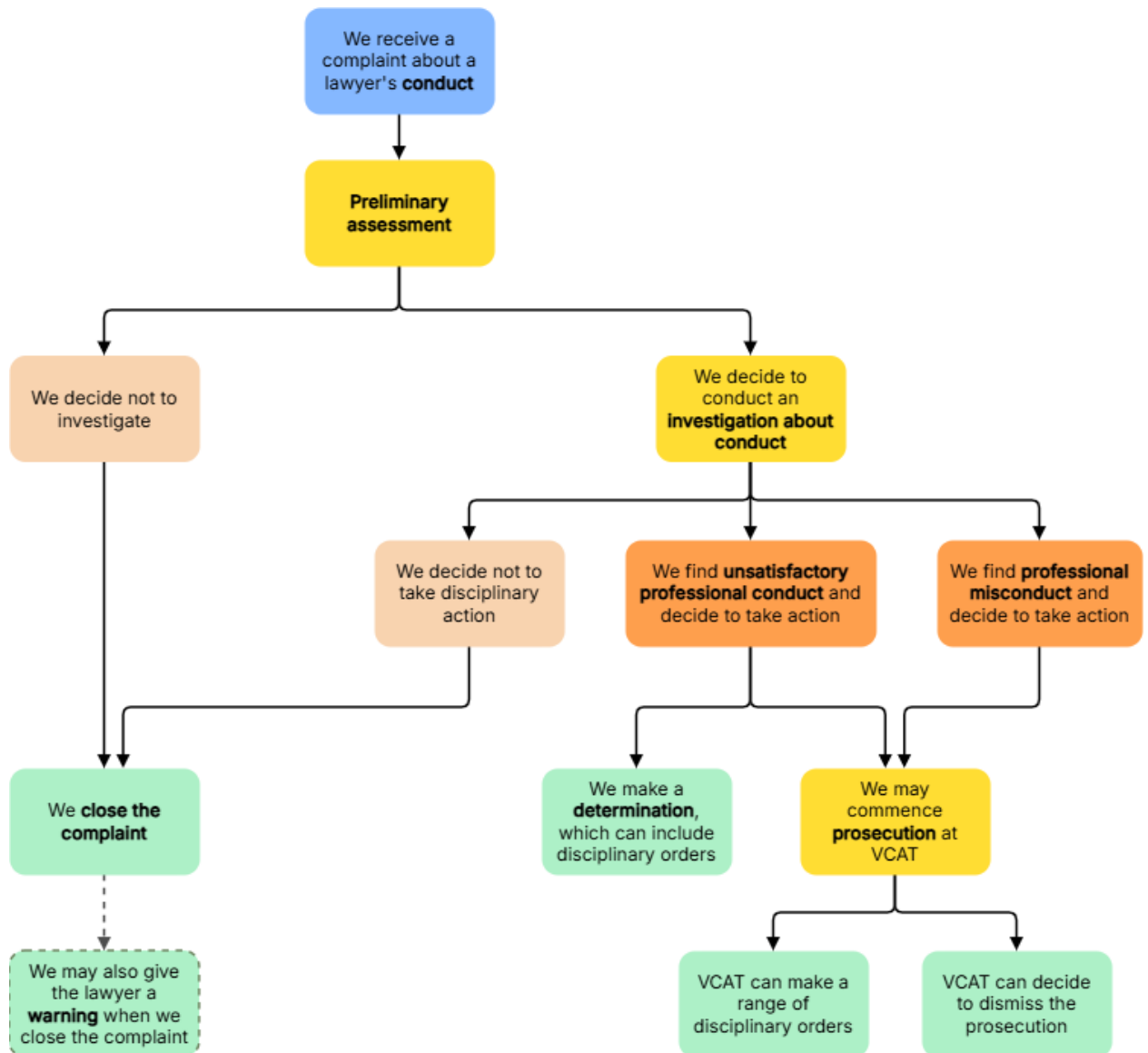
## Costs review

We may arrange for an independent costs review for some complaints about costs, which can result in us making a [determination](#) about the amount that should be charged for a lawyer's work.

| What it involves                                                                                                                                                    | Timeframe                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>We will ask a person with specialist skills in 'costing' to assess the lawyer's work, to determine whether or not the costs charged are fair and reasonable.</p> | <p>We aim to limit the duration of the costs review to <b>1 month</b>.</p> |

## How we handle complaints about conduct

After we complete the [preliminary assessment](#) for a complaint about conduct, we will make a decision about whether to conduct an [investigation](#) or [close the complaint](#). When making this decision we take into account a range of factors including the seriousness of the conduct, the strength of the evidence, degree of harm and whether the harm is ongoing, the lawyer's disciplinary history, the need for specific or general deterrence and resource prioritisation.



## Investigations about conduct

When we investigate complaints about conduct, we are seeking to understand if there is enough evidence available to prove the complaint.

| What it involves                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Timeframe                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>We will look at all the evidence provided and assess whether that evidence supports taking disciplinary action against the lawyer.</p> <p>Sometimes we will need to ask the person making the complaint or the lawyer for additional information. Responding to these requests as fully and quickly as possible can reduce timeframes significantly.</p> <p>We may also seek information and documents from other people or organisations who may be able to assist in the investigation.</p> <p>Sometimes we will need to put our investigation on hold while we wait for something else to happen (e.g. the completion of related court actions or investigations by police or other regulators, such as the ATO or ASIC).</p> | <p>These investigations are often complex and time consuming. We aim to complete standard investigations into a complaint about serious lawyer conduct within <b>24 months</b>. Complex investigations can take longer.</p> |

Once the complaint has been referred to an investigator, they will give the person making the complaint and the lawyer information about the process and next steps. The investigator will provide updates to the person making the complaint and the lawyer at key stages of the investigation.

## Potential outcomes of a complaint

### Closing complaints

In some cases, if we cannot resolve a complaint about service or a complaint about costs, and we do not believe that further investigation is necessary, we will close the complaint. We will aim to make that decision within **6 months**.

We may close a complaint about conduct if we believe there is not enough evidence to support us in either making a [determination](#) about that conduct or commencing a disciplinary [prosecution](#) against the lawyer. We may also decide that our investigation should be closed for other reasons (e.g. because it should be referred to a different law enforcement body or it is not in the public interest for us to proceed any further).

If we decide to close a complaint, we will provide the person who made the complaint with:

- Written reasons explaining how and why we made our decision, and
- Information about other rights they may have.

### Settlement agreements

Through our complaints handling processes, we try to resolve complaints about costs by getting the parties to agree to a resolution, and confirm the outcome in a letter to both parties.

Sometimes we may help the parties enter a formal settlement agreement. The settlement agreement sets out what the consumer and the lawyer (or law firm) must do to bring an end to the dispute. We certify the settlement agreement, which means it can be filed with the court and enforced in the same way as a court order, if either party does not comply with its terms.

The contents of settlement agreements vary, but common items include:

- Requiring money to be refunded or paid as compensation
- Payment plans (e.g. instalments)
- Completing legal work or fixing errors
- Returning documents
- Providing a formal apology.

Settlement agreements are usually confidential.

## Providing warnings to lawyers

For minor or accidental breaches of their professional obligations, instead of taking disciplinary action we may provide assistance and advice to the lawyer about how they can comply in the future, or recommend they do specific training. Sometimes we may give a written warning to the lawyer, or ask the lawyer to provide a written ‘undertaking’ (which they must comply with) that they will not repeat the non-compliance.

We make a record of all our recommendations, advice, warnings and undertakings so that we can identify ongoing problems or patterns of behaviour, and take action as required.

## Determinations

When we make a determination, we are deciding the outcome of part or all of the complaint by making orders under the Uniform Law about the lawyer’s conduct, actions they must take, or what costs are owed to them.

Before we make a determination, we will give both the person making the complaint and the lawyer an opportunity to provide final comments. For complaints about costs, this includes giving both parties an opportunity to resolve the complaint with a formal settlement agreement instead of a determination.

## Complaints about conduct

For complaints about conduct, if we find that a lawyer has engaged in **unsatisfactory professional conduct**, our determination will record that finding. Determinations about unsatisfactory professional conduct can also include orders which:

- Caution the lawyer
- Reprimand the lawyer
- Require the lawyer to apologise
- Require the lawyer to redo the legal work at no cost
- Require the lawyer to reduce or waive the costs for their work

- Order the lawyer to undertake further training, education, counselling or supervision
- Issue a fine of up to \$25,000
- Recommend that a condition is applied to the lawyer's practising certificate.

## Complaints about service and complaints about costs

For complaints about service and complaints about costs, our determination can include orders which:

- Caution the lawyer
- Require the lawyer to apologise
- Require the lawyer to redo the legal work at no cost
- Require the lawyer to reduce or waive the costs for their work
- Require the lawyer to undertake further training, education, counselling or supervision

In some circumstances, require the lawyer to pay compensation of up to \$25,000, if someone has suffered losses as a result of the lawyer's conduct.

For complaints about costs, our determination can also change how much a client needs to pay to the lawyer for their legal services, based on what we think is fair and reasonable in the circumstances. We can only do this if the amount being disputed is less than \$31,440 (this limit is indexed each year — you can find the [current limit on our website](#)).

## Prosecution

Once we complete an [investigation into a lawyer's conduct](#), if we find that the conduct is likely to be **professional misconduct**, we may make an application at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to prosecute that conduct. If we believe that a lawyer's conduct is professional misconduct, we will usually commence proceedings in VCAT. However, in certain circumstances, we may consider exercising our discretion not to commence proceedings. Prosecutions of complex matters are likely to take several years to be finalised.

We can also prosecute unsatisfactory professional conduct at VCAT, instead of making a [determination](#). We may do this if the lawyer's conduct involves both professional misconduct and unsatisfactory professional conduct, or if we think it is important for VCAT to make a decision about the unsatisfactory professional conduct in the circumstances of that conduct.

There are a wide range of sanctions that can be imposed by VCAT on a lawyer who engages in unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct, including all of the orders that we can make in a [determination](#). VCAT can also make orders stopping a lawyer from practising law for a period of time, or recommending that the lawyer is banned from practising law indefinitely.

## Other actions we can take

Sometimes a complaint will raise issues which require us to take other actions, such as:

- Trust account investigations
- Compliance audits

- Management system directions
- Reviewing whether the lawyer is a fit and proper person to continue practising law
- Unqualified legal practise investigations
- Criminal investigations
- Appointing a manager or supervisor to the law firm.

If we can, we will inform the person who has made a complaint of other actions we take as a result of their complaint.

## Register of Disciplinary Action

We publish a [Register of Disciplinary Action](#) on our website, where we record details of the disciplinary action taken against Victorian lawyers.

If we or VCAT make an order (other than a caution) disciplining a lawyer after having made a finding that they have engaged in unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct, that order will be recorded on the Register. Some other actions taken in respect of a lawyer's conduct may also be recorded on the Register.

## If you aren't satisfied with our decision

### Internal review

If you are a party to a complaint, and you are unhappy with a decision we have made about the complaint, you can ask for an internal review of that decision. Whether we will conduct an internal review is up to us.

If you want to request an internal review, you need to make the request within **30 days** of when we made the decision you want us to review. We may extend this time limit by a short period, depending on the circumstances of the request, and why it was delayed. You can find more information about our [internal review process](#), and how to ask for a review, on our website.

## Making a complaint about our staff or service quality

If you are unhappy with the service you have received from a staff member at the VLSB+C, you can make a complaint to us directly. Our [Complaints About Us](#) policy explains what you can complain about, how to make a complaint, and our process for managing complaints about us.

You can also make a complaint about us to the:

- [Victorian Ombudsman](#)
- [Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner](#)
- [Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner](#)
- [Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission](#) (IBAC).

We encourage you to make a complaint to us first, so we can understand your experience, try to address your concerns and improve our service.

## Complaints about serious misconduct and corruption at VLSB+C

We are not authorised to receive public interest disclosures, so we cannot receive a disclosure that one of our staff members has engaged in serious misconduct or corruption. If you want to disclose serious misconduct or corruption by someone at the VLSB+C, you can contact IBAC or another organisation that is authorised to accept public interested disclosures under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*.

Information about public interest disclosures, including the organisations that can receive these disclosures, is available on the [IBAC website](#). Our [Public Interest Disclosure Policy](#) also has more information about how we respond to public interest disclosures and protect whistleblowers.

## Privacy

We value the privacy of the consumers and lawyers who engage with us, and are committed to protecting their personal information, as required by the Information Privacy Principles in Victorian legislation. Our [Privacy Policy](#) explains in detail how and when we collect, use and disclose personal information.

During the course of handling a complaint we may collect personal information about a consumer or a lawyer. We do not usually collect health information or sensitive information, unless it is required to help us manage the complaint.

Any information we collect will only be used or disclosed when it is required to fulfil our functions under the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014* or the Uniform Law. We will only use or disclose someone's information with their consent, or as otherwise allowed by section 462 of the Uniform Law and by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

## How to contact us

You can contact us by:

- Calling us on 03 9679 8001, or on 1300 796 344 (local call cost)
- Using our online web form at <https://lsbc.vic.gov.au/consumers/consumer-enquiry-form>
- Emailing us at [consumerenquiry@lsbc.vic.gov.au](mailto:consumerenquiry@lsbc.vic.gov.au)
- Writing to us at:
 

Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner  
 GPO Box 492  
 MELBOURNE VIC 3001
- Making an appointment to visit us in person at Level 27, 500 Bourke Street, Melbourne. We encourage visitors to book an appointment first, as this helps to make sure the right person is available on the day. You can make an appointment by calling or emailing us.

You can also find all our [current contact details](#) on our website.