

1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines how renters, applicants, and stakeholders can provide feedback, make a complaint, or appeal a decision made by EACH Housing Ltd (EHL).

EHL recognises that complaints and appeals are an essential part of service delivery and a key mechanism for accountability and continuous improvement. They provide EHL with valuable insight into the experiences of renters and stakeholders, enabling EHL to identify issues, rectify problems, and improve service quality.

This policy applies to:

- All current and prospective renters of EHL
- Individuals EHL assists in applying for social housing through the Victorian Housing Register (VHR)
- Stakeholders or community members interacting with EHL services

The policy covers all EHL operations, sites, and staff including contractors, volunteers, and employees acting as agents of EHL, whether work is performed on-site or off-site.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

EHL is committed to:

- Complying with all legal, contractual, and regulatory responsibilities
- Managing complaints and appeals in a fair, respectful, consistent, and efficient manner
- Providing accessible and transparent mechanisms for feedback, complaints, and appeals
- Ensuring that no person is penalised or treated unfairly for making a complaint or appeal
- Using complaints and appeals to inform service planning, risk management, and continuous quality improvement initiatives

We understand that individuals may be reluctant to raise concerns. We aim to create a culture where feedback and complaints are welcomed and treated constructively.

2.1 Making a Complaint or Appeal

Renters, applicants, or stakeholders are encouraged to speak to a staff member as soon as concerns arise. Many issues can be resolved quickly and informally at a local level.

Where issues are not resolved informally, individuals may lodge a formal complaint or appeal. A formal complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about a service, process, staff member, or decision made by EHL. An appeal is a request to reconsider or review a previous decision made by EHL that affects the individual.

Formal complaints or appeals can be made:

- By email, post, or telephone
- In person at an EHL office
- Through the Complaints and Feedback Form available on the EACH Housing Ltd website

Individuals making a complaint or appeal should include:

- A clear description of the concern or issue

- Any actions already taken to try to resolve the issue
- The names of any staff involved (if applicable)
- Supporting documents or evidence (where available)
- The outcome they are seeking

People lodging complaints or appeals may be supported by an advocate, carer, family member, or other representative. EHL can assist individuals to access appropriate support, including interpreter services, if required.

2.2 Complaints and Appeals Process

Acknowledgement:

All formal complaints and appeals will be acknowledged within two (2) business days of receipt.

Assessment and Investigation:

The complaint or appeal will be assigned to an appropriate staff member who was not involved in the original decision or service issue.

All relevant information will be reviewed. This may include discussions with the complainant, staff, or other parties, and review of relevant documents.

Resolution and Response:

A written response will be provided within thirty (30) business days. If more time is required, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with regular updates.

Where appropriate, EHL will offer remedies such as explanation, apology, change of decision, or service improvement.

Record Keeping:

All complaints and appeals will be documented and maintained in a secure register, including outcomes and actions taken.

These records are reviewed regularly to identify trends, systemic issues, and improvement opportunities.

Review and Escalation:

If a person is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or appeal, they may request a review by a more senior staff member.

If still unresolved, individuals may escalate the matter to an external complaints body. (see section 2.5 for further information)

2.3 Feedback

Feedback is any positive or negative opinion, suggestion, or comment about our services, staff, or practices. EHL actively encourages feedback to better understand community expectations and areas for growth.

Feedback can be provided:

- In writing (email or letter)
- Verbally to staff
- Via the Complaints and Feedback Form on our website
- During tenant meetings or surveys

While not all feedback will receive a formal response, we will respond where a reply is requested or appropriate.

2.4 Privacy & Confidentiality

All complaints and appeals will be treated with respect for the privacy and dignity of the person raising the issue. EHL ensures:

- Only staff involved in the resolution process will have access to the complaint details
- Identifying information will not be disclosed to other renters or third parties without consent, unless required by law
- Records are stored securely in line with privacy laws and organisational policy

2.5 External Complaint Bodies

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint or appeal after 30 days, you may contact the following bodies:

- **Victorian Housing Registrar:** For unresolved complaints about EHL as a registered housing agency
- **Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH):** For concerns about VHR housing applications
- **Consumer Affairs Victoria:** For advice on renter rights and dispute resolution
- **Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria:** Free mediation services for neighbour disputes (1300 372 888)
- **Victorian Ombudsman:** Investigates complaints about how public authorities have handled matters
- **Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC):** Handles complaints of discrimination, harassment, and vilification
- **Victoria Legal Aid:** Provides free legal help and information
- **Justice Connect:** Offers legal services for people experiencing disadvantage
- **Tenants Victoria:** Legal advice and advocacy for renters

3.0 DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

Appeal	A formal request to reconsider or review a previous decision made by EACH Housing Ltd
Advocate	A person or organisation that supports a renter or applicant in making a complaint or appeal or expressing their concerns.
Applicant	A person who is applying for social housing with assistance from EACH Housing Ltd

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

Renter	A person who has entered into a rental agreement with EACH Housing Ltd to occupy a property.
Complaint	A formal expression of dissatisfaction with an action, decision, service, or behaviour provided by EACH Housing Ltd
Compliment	Positive feedback acknowledging satisfactory or exemplary service
Dispute	A disagreement between parties, typically between neighbours or tenants, which may not be directly related to a formal complaint.
Feedback	A general comment, compliment, or suggestion regarding services or conduct, which may or may not require a formal response.
VHR	means the Victorian Housing Register, the Statewide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing.
Stakeholder	Any individual, group, or organisation with an interest or concern in the actions of EACH Housing Ltd, including contractors, service partners, and community members.

4.0 DOCUMENT OWNER

The Operations Manager, EHL is the subject matter expert and person responsible for this document review.

5.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- Eligibility Policy
- Tenant Damage and Recharge Policy
- Assessing Requests and matching housing policy
- Rent Setting Policy