FV-21 | Grievance Policy

APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE
Reviewed November 2026

Scope

Employees and volunteers; participant concerns use External Concerns and Complaints Policy.

Purpose and responsibility

Resolve concerns fairly, promptly and safely while respecting external rights. The EO manages ordinary grievances; the President handles grievances about the EO; an unconflicted Committee member handles those about the President. A decision maker must declare conflicts and step aside where needed.

Raising a concern

Raise a concern verbally, in writing, using the Grievance Form or through a representative/support person. Anonymous reports are accepted, though limited information may affect the response. A person need not confront the respondent or show that the grievance is "genuine" before it is heard. Informal discussion is optional and only appropriate if safe. Provide accessible communication and reasonable adjustments.

Triage and response

Immediately assess safety, child protection, alleged crime, discrimination, sexual harassment, OHS, privacy and any required external report. Follow specialist policies; a grievance process must not substitute for them. Call 000 for immediate danger. Explain who will handle the matter, information sharing, support and likely steps. Acknowledge within five working days as Fishcare's service target, sooner for urgent concerns, and arrange updates at least every ten working days while open. These targets do not extend statutory deadlines.

Identify the issue and desired outcome, secure evidence and assess an appropriate independent response. Give the respondent sufficient particulars and a meaningful opportunity to respond, subject to safety and authority directions. Interview separately where appropriate, consider relevant material impartially and keep factual records. Do not guarantee anonymity where fair process or legal reporting requires disclosure; discuss limits and protection options first where safe.

Resolution and review

Options include clarification, an apology, changed practice, training, voluntary mediation where suitable, independent investigation and proportionate disciplinary or safeguarding action. Not all outcomes require agreement by every

party; Fishcare may need to make a lawful management decision. Do not force joint meetings or mediation for abuse or harassment.

Advise parties of findings and relevant actions to the extent lawful, reasons and review options. A person may request an unconflicted Committee review of process, evidence or outcome. The Committee may use an external reviewer where internal independence is unavailable. External legal rights and time limits remain unaffected by an internal decision.

Protection, external action and records

No retaliation, victimisation or disadvantage for a lawful complaint or participation. An unsubstantiated complaint is not automatically malicious. Monitor safety, wellbeing and agreed actions after closure. Continue necessary safety and support measures even if a person goes to an external body; coordinate with Police or regulators rather than automatically abandoning the complaint.

Keep records in restricted organisational storage, share only where necessary and lawful and apply retention and legal holds. People may contact a union, legal adviser, Police, WorkSafe, Fair Work bodies, VEOHRC or another relevant authority at any time without approval.

References and review

Reviewed November 2026. Review again in November 2027, or earlier after a relevant legal, service or risk change.

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic): workplace rights and positive duty
https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/employment/

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth): positive duty
https://humanrights.gov.au/know-your-rights/rights-of-individuals/workplace-rights/positive-duty-sex-discrimination-act

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025 (Vic)
https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/psychological-health-regulations-frequently-asked-questions

Victorian Child Safe Standards; Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards