

External Complaints and Grievances Resolution

ARV Corporate Policy

1. Statement

ARV is committed to ensuring our process of handling external complaints has integrity and is clear and transparent to stakeholders and the public. We have a culture of responsiveness and continuous improvement across ARV.

2. Scope

This policy guides managing complaints from parties external to ARV. It applies to and is binding upon all ARV:

- employees, including volunteers
- contractors, consultants and labour hire employees whose contract requires them to comply with this policy
- Board members.

This policy does not cover internal staff complaints, which are managed according to the ARV Staff Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy.

3. Requirements

3.1. Receiving Complaints

Members of the public are encouraged to attempt to resolve any grievance directly with the resort or ARV in the first instance using the contact details available on our Contact Us website at <https://www.alpineresorts.vic.gov.au/contact-us>.

If there is an unresolved concern the best method of lodging a formal complaint is to use our online [complaint form](#) (which is also available at the above link). ARV will also accept complaints made in person, in writing, by email, via telephone, referred by another organisation or received by the ARV Board.

Complainants are encouraged to provide contact details so that they can be provided with information on the management of their complaint. However, anonymous complaints can be made. As far as possible, anonymous complaints will be managed in the same way as identifiable complaints.

ARV will not accept, consider or respond to complaints that are “rumours”. Staff who are made aware of “rumours” should encourage the person/s involved to formalise their concern in writing or in a face-to-face meeting.

Complaints made on social media platforms are not considered formal complaints and will not initiate a complaint management response in accordance with this policy. ARV may monitor and respond to commentary on social media platforms.

3.2. Conduct & Behaviour

All ARV staff must:

- Respect - treat every Complainant and complaint with respect.
- Communicate - provide clear communication on what action can be taken, the indicative timeframes, and the outcome and reason for our decision, once resolved.
- Integrity - handle assigned complaints objectively, fairly, and confidentially, with outcomes and opportunities for review explained to the Complainant.
- Timely - handle assigned complaints in a timely manner.

All Complainants should act reasonably and responsibly in their dealings with ARV. Unreasonable, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour is that which, because of its nature, raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for our organisation, our staff, other services users, and/or the Complainant themselves. Unreasonable behaviour will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with our Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy.

The substance of a complaint dictates the level of resources allocated to it, not the Complainants' wishes, demands or behaviour. A Complainant whose conduct is unreasonable may still have their legitimate complaint resolved.

3.3. Recording & Transparency

All formal complaints must be registered in the ARV Complaint Register.

Staff should record, in the Register, the following information for each complaint:

- the Complainant's details (where Complainant has not elected to be anonymous)
- how the complaint was received
- a description of the complaint
- the Complainant's desired outcome (if known)
- relevant demographic information that could help improve services (where relevant)
- any actions, changes in circumstances or new developments
- record of all communication related to the complaint
- the outcome and date of resolution.

Trends regarding complaints are reported to:

- ARV Executive Team monthly
- Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC) quarterly.

Keeping accurate records assists ARV in responding promptly and accurately to complaints and allows ARV to analyse and report on trends. Specifically, ARV is interested in whether issues are systemic or recurring allowing improvements to processes and operations to reduce future complaints.

3.4. Privacy & Confidentiality

When gathering information to respond to a complaint, ARV:

- use the information to deal with the complaint or to address systemic issues arising from the complaint
- disclose it in a de-identified format when disclosing.

3.5. Complaint Management Process

ARV takes a four-tiered approach to handling complaints:

1. Level 1 - Frontline resolution: staff receive the complaint and resolve it immediately, if possible.
2. Level 2 - Investigation: if staff cannot resolve the complaint, they will refer it to the most appropriate Manager/General Manager for investigation.
3. Level 3 - Internal review: if the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they can request an internal review.
4. Level 4 - External review: if the Complainant is not satisfied with the process or outcome of the internal review, they are informed of any external avenues where they can pursue their complaint.

3.5.1 Level 1 Frontline resolution

Staff receive the complaint and try to resolve the matter immediately where possible.

The complaint item must be recorded in the ARV Complaints Register through the Intranet portal.

ARV will acknowledge a Complainant by mail or email no later than ten working days or by phone in one working day. If possible, we will clarify the complaint and the outcome the stakeholder is seeking.

Where possible, the Complainant will be advised of the process timeframe for progressing and/or completing the enquiry if relevant.

If ARV is not the right organisation to respond to the complaint, staff will advise the Complainant of an organisation that may be able to help.

3.5.2 Level 2 Investigation

When a complaint cannot be resolved by frontline staff, the complaint will be escalated to the most appropriate Manager/General Manager.

If the complaint is in relation to staff or contractor conduct it will go directly to that person's manager and People and Culture Coordinator. If the complaint is in relation to a policy or the quality or timeliness of service delivery, it will go to the relevant service manager, policy owner or their delegate.

The Manager/General Manager handling the complaint will contact the Complainant to acknowledge the complaint and where possible provide a timeframe for progressing and/or completing the enquiry if relevant.

ARV will aim to resolve all complaints within 28 days.

If it takes longer than 28 days to resolve a complaint, the Manager/General Manager handling the complaint will contact the Complainant prior to this time and provide an explanation and revised timeframe.

Complaints that are not resolved within 28 days may be escalated to the CEO if necessary to ensure that a resolution is expedited.

The responsible Manager/General Manager for handling the complaint will write to the Complainant to advise them of the outcome. The outcome correspondence will contain reasons for the decision made and the contact information for the responsible Manager/General Manager.

The Manager/General Manager handling the complaint may contact the Complainant directly to discuss the outcome of their complaint prior to sending the outcome letter/email.

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the response or the way in which their feedback or complaint has been handled, they can ask for their complaint to be referred for an internal review.

3.5.3 Level 3 Internal Review

If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the process or outcome of the investigation, they can request an internal review.

The internal review will be completed by the Head of Governance & Risk.

If the complaint is in relation to the actions of the CEO or a Board member, the Board Chair (or delegate) will undertake the internal review.

If the complaint is in relation to the actions of the Board Chair, a forum of two Board members and the CEO will undertake the internal review.

The Head of Governance & Risk will undertake a review of the complaint and gather information and expert advice where necessary.

An outcome letter signed by the person responsible for the internal review will be provided to the Complainant at the conclusion of every internal review.

The outcome letter will advise the Complainant of any avenues of external review available in relation to the matter, such as the Victorian Ombudsman.

3.5.4 Level 4 External Review

If a Complainant is not satisfied with ARV's final response, they can contact the Ombudsman's Office (www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au) and/or other external agencies to request an independent review.

3.6. Outcomes & Closure

A complaint is considered closed when:

- All reasonable action has been taken, including (where appropriate) a letter of response from the ARV or the organisation to the person making the complaint
- It is anticipated that no further action will take place in relation to the complaint
- The complaints register is updated.

Where ARV has found to have made an error, steps will be taken to redress the situation, possibly including an apology or other agreed remedy.

Where a remedy is required for consideration, this will be managed by the relevant General Manager and/or CEO.

3.7. Conflict of Interest

It is important for the Complainant to feel confident in:

- being heard fairly
- an unbiased decision-making process.

Should a conflict of interest arise during a grievance or complaint that involves a staff member responsible for the service and managing the complaint, the conflict must be declared and another staff member will be nominated as an alternative mediator. ARV may engage an independent complaint resolution service to assist with the mediation of a dispute.

3.8. Notifiable Complaints

ARV has legislative obligations to notify external agencies when complaints relate to certain aspects of service provision, including:

1. **Corruption, misconduct or serious maladministration.** A complaint may be notifiable to the Independent Broad based Anti-corruption Commission (**IBAC**) if it involves:
 - a. corrupt conduct
 - b. serious professional misconduct
 - c. serious maladministration
 - d. misuse of public resources
 - e. conduct that could constitute a criminal offence by a public officer.

Complaints made directly to IBAC may also benefit from Public Interest Disclosure (PID) protections.

2. **Privacy complaints or data breaches.** A complaint may be notifiable to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (**OVIC**) where it involves:
 - a. serious privacy breaches
 - b. information security incidents affecting public sector information.
3. **Serious safety incidents.** A complaint may be notifiable to **WorkSafe Victoria** if it involves:
 - a. a death
 - b. serious injury or illness
 - c. dangerous incidents
4. **Environmental & Pollution Incidents.** A complaint may be notifiable to Environmental Protection Agency (**EPA**) Victoria if it involves:
 - a. actual or potential material harm to human health or the environment
 - b. spills, leaks, escapes, or unauthorised discharges
 - c. even if contained on-site and no harm has yet occurred.
5. **Biosecurity incidents.** A complaint may be notifiable to the Agriculture Victoria (**AGVIC**) where it involves notifiable diseases, pests, or contamination.
6. **Criminal offences.** A complaint may be notifiable to **Victoria Police** if it involves a criminal offence including (but not limited to):
 - a. offences against the person (e.g. assault, threats, harassment)
 - b. offences against property (e.g. theft, fraud, damage)
 - c. public order or safety offences

If the complaint relates to a serious indictable offence it must be referred to **Victoria Police**.

7. **Child safety.** A complaint involving allegations of child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect), or misconduct towards a child by an ARV worker, volunteer or contractor must be notified to:
 - a. **Victoria Police** where criminal conduct is suspected
 - b. The **Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)**, where applicable, to comply with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

4. Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
All staff	Apply this Policy in all complaints management activity, including through investigating, resolving or escalating complaints. Interact with the public appropriately.
Head of Governance & Risk	Maintain this Policy. Monitor the complaints management function. Undertake Level 3 Internal Reviews, as required.
ELT	Oversee the complaints management system.
CEO & Board members	Undertake Internal Reviews, as required.
FRAC	Approve this Policy. Oversee the complaints management system.

5. Legislation

- Ombudsman Act 1973
- Public Administration Act 2004
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2020
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- Privacy and data protection Act 2014
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012

6. Related Documents

- Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy

7. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction or constructive feedback made to or about ARV, related to its services, staff, infrastructure, or management. A complaint may also be made about the complaints management process of ARV.
Complainant	The individual/s, entity or organisation making the complaint.
Feedback	Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern made directly or indirectly, explicitly, or implicitly to or about ARV, its services, staff, or handling of a complaint.
Frontline	First point of contact between the public and ARV.

8. Approval and implementation

Policy Custodian	Policy contact details	Approval Date	Approver
General Manager Central	HOG geoff.fallon@alpineresorts.vic.gov.au	May 2026	FRAC

9. Version Control

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