

Complaints policy

July 2022 (for review in July 2025)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-Operative (VINC) complaints policy and procedure.

2. Policy

- VINC acknowledges the importance and value of listening and responding to concerns and complaints and providing a mechanism for people to lodge complaints.
- All complaints will be treated as important and handled with respect and understanding.
- All complaints are taken seriously and responded to within appropriate timeframes.
- Best endeavours will be made to acknowledge written complaints within 5 business days of receipt.
- VINC aims to resolve complaints within 30 business days unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the complaint is not resolved within 30 business days, VINC will inform the complainant and keep them updated of its progress regularly.
- VINC may request additional information to support the investigation, if required.

3. SCOPE

- This policy applies to all VINC board members, staff, contractors, volunteers and members when performing activities for VINC.
- This policy refers to complaints originating from VINC board members, staff, volunteers, the general public, external agencies, providers and partners and other stakeholders.

4. Procedure

4.1 Who can lodge a complaint:

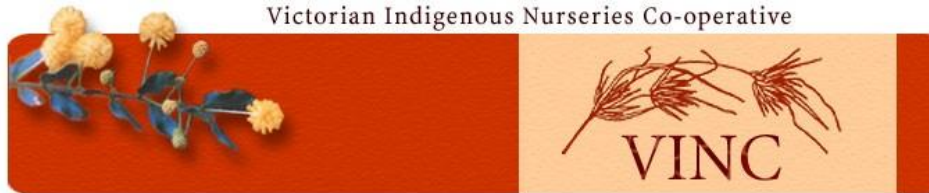
- Anyone who is subject to, or has witnessed someone being subject to, inappropriate conduct by a VINC board, staff, contractors, volunteers and members.
- A reporter (also known as whistleblower) can be a VINC employee, contracting party, volunteer, member, board member, or an external stakeholder, or customer of VINC.

4.2 Lodging a complaint:

- Complaints may be lodged in writing or verbally to the Manager of VINC, or to the Chair of the VINC.

4.3 What to expect when you submit a complaint:

- The VINC representative taking the complaint will:
 - Listen carefully and advise that accurate records will be taken (focusing on facts, dates, times and people involved);
 - Treat the information given confidentially;
 - Thank the complainant for bringing the issue to VINC's attention;
 - Acknowledge the problem, empathise and avoid attributing blame; and



- Advise the complainant that issues will be taken seriously and handled quickly in the strictest confidence.

4.4 Investigation and resolution

- We will rapidly assess your complaint and let you know whether a formal investigation will occur.
- If we decide to start a formal investigation, we will provide you with an investigation report upon completion. Depending on the nature of the complaint, this report may be verbal or written, and confidential information will be protected.

4.5 Escalation Process:

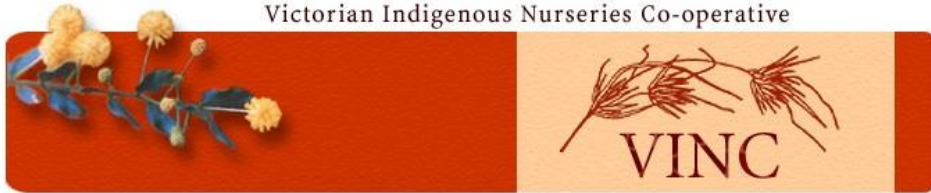
- The complaint will be investigated by the Manager, unless the complaint involves the Manager or the Board, in which case it will be investigated by the Chair.
- If the complaint involves the Chair, it will be investigated by the Secretary.
- If the resolution provided by the Manager is not acceptable to the complainant, the complaint can be escalated to the Chair of VINC.
- If the resolution provided by the Chair/Secretary is not acceptable to the complainant, the complaint can be escalated to the full Board of VINC.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied, it will be referred to the relevant external authority (as relevant to the nature of the complaint).

5. Promotion of the complaints policy

- Information on the complaints policy and process will be posted on the VINC website using the following text:

Compliments and complaints

- *We want you to tell us about the service you have received, so we know what works and what doesn't work.*
- *Speak to any VINC staff member first. If you feel that your concerns have not been properly acted on, please speak to the VINC Manager.*
- *Best endeavours will be made to acknowledge written complaints within 5 business days of receipt. VINC aims to resolve complaints within 30 business days unless there are exceptional circumstances.*
- *The complaint will be investigated by the Manager, unless the complaint involves the Manager or the Board, in which case it will be investigated by the Chair.*
- *If the complaint involves the Chair, it will be investigated by the Secretary.*
- *If the resolution provided by the Manager is not acceptable to the complainant, the complaint can be escalated to the Chair of VINC.*
- *If the resolution provided by the Chair/Secretary is not acceptable to the complainant, the complaint can be escalated to the full Board of VINC.*
- *If the complainant is still not satisfied, it will be referred to the relevant external authority (as relevant to the nature of the complaint).*



Contacts

For questions about this policy, contact the board secretary secretary@vinc.net.au