

## SUPPLIER COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

### Overview

Austin Health aims to ensure that all procurement activities are conducted according to procedure in an open and fair manner, represent value for money and occur without bias, favour or prejudice.

All staff involved in procurement activities are governed by Austin Health's Procurement Policy and Code of Conduct Policy to ensure fairness in our dealings with suppliers.

### Our approach

Austin Health applies a three-step approach to managing complaints about a procurement activity process.

#### Step 1. Resolution with the Procurement lead

In the first instance it is recommended that issues are discussed directly with the procurement lead responsible for the procurement project that relates to the complaint. This may result in a swift response that will resolve the complaint.

#### Step 2. Lodging a formal complaint with Austin Health's CPO

If the issue cannot be resolved through dialogue, or the complainant is unhappy with the outcome, or would like to escalate the issue, a formal complaint can be lodged.

The complaint must be submitted in writing to the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO):

- by Letter addressed to **Chief Procurement Officer**  
**Austin Health**  
**PO Box 5555**  
**Heidelberg 3084**; or
- by e-mail to [legal@austin.org.au](mailto:legal@austin.org.au).

The written complaint must set out:

- name of the complainant and/or organisation's contact details;
- the procurement that the complaint relates to;
- the basis for the complaint specifying the issues involved;
- how the circumstances relating to the complaint (and the specific issues) affect the person or organisation making the complaint;
- any relevant background information; and
- the expected corrective outcome.

The CPO will ensure that the complaint is allocated to an authorised staff member, such as the General Legal Counsel, to investigate the complaint or to any other authorised staff member as deemed necessary.

The CPO will ensure that any complaints received relating to a particular staff member are not investigated or responded to by the individual that is the subject matter of the complaint.

All complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner:

- Formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days;
- In the majority of cases, investigation(s) are to be completed within 20 working days; and
- If the investigation is anticipated to take longer than 20 working days, the complainant will be notified of the likely response date.

The investigating officer may throughout the course of their investigation, be required to meet or make contact with the complainant to either clarify any issues or seek further information.

Once the investigation is complete any corrective action required will be brought to the attention of Executive Management where appropriate action(s) will be undertaken to prevent future occurrences which may result in similar complaints.

Upon completion of the investigation and in consultation with the CPO, you will be notified of the outcome in writing.

### **Step 3. Escalation to HSV**

If the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, Austin Health will notify HSV within five working days that the complaint could not be resolved and will advise the complainant that:

- the matter can be referred to the Board of Health Share Victoria (HSV) for their review at the following address;  
**The Chair**  
**HSV Board**  
**Health Purchasing Victoria**  
**Level 34, 2 Lonsdale Street**  
**Melbourne Victoria 3000**
- complainants have 10 days from the date of receipt of notification of the findings by Austin Health to lodge their complaint with HSV; and
- complainants are required to provide the following documentation to HSV:
  - evidence that Austin Health did not correctly apply HSV Purchasing Policies in relation to a procurement activity;
  - evidence that Austin Health's complaints management procedures were not applied correctly; and
  - a copy of all relevant correspondence between the complainant and Austin Health in relation to the nature of the complaint.

### **Complaints record**

Austin Health will maintain a record of all complaints received relating to any procurement activity indicating whether the complaint was:

- resolved;
- is still under investigation; or
- could not be resolved.

**Appendix 1 – Procurement Complaints Management Flowchart:**

