

Local Professional Standards Committees

Context

Victoria Police is moving from a sanctions based approach to professional standards and discipline to one that is focused on rehabilitation, restorative justice and performance management. This shift supports recommendations from the former Office of Police Integrity; Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission, Rush Review and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

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Definitions

Any reference to a command also includes a department or a region.

Policy

Every command will establish a Local Professional Standards Committee (LPSC), to assist in improving professional standards across the command.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Objectives

Local Professional Standards Committees (LPSCs) have a critical role to play in increasing local management decision making and responsibility for professional standards and discipline. LPSCs will aim to:

- improve the professional standards of Victoria Police employees
- increase public confidence in Victoria Police
- to build a corruption resistant workforce
- to drive a culture of early and effective intervention
- to build safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces free of harm.

2. Charter

The LPSC will:

- drive the command to achieve the LPSC objectives by responding to strategic professional standards issues, including:
 - complaint trends
 - at risk employees
 - at risk workplaces
 - at risk behaviours and work practices
 - ensure victims of police misconduct are supported and not subjected to further harm
 - develop and deliver a professional standards communication strategy.
- assist in the management of conflict of interest in the command
- assist in the management of complaint files allocated to the command for investigation and resolution
- identify, promote and implement best practice initiatives
- consider any other matters at the direction of the command head.

3. Membership

The command head will determine the membership of the LPSC. The minimum ranks or levels must be:

Local Professional Standards Committee membership		
Role	Nominee	Responsibility
Chair	Superintendent or VPS equivalent	• Set agenda • Chair meetings
Deliberating members	Two superintendents or VPS equivalents	
Secretariat (must be appointed)	Appointed by the chair	Support the chair with meeting, schedules, agenda, communication, papers, reports and minutes
Advisory members	• Ethics and Professional Standards Officer (EPSO) • Other employees as required	Provide specific subject matter expertise

4. Meetings

4.1 *Frequency*

Meetings will be held monthly or more frequently as required.

4.2 *Agendas and minutes*

- All LPSCs will use the sample agenda in Appendix A.
- The functions of the LPSC are auditable (refer to section 6 of this policy).
- The minutes of meetings must articulate the reason behind decision making.
- Information must be securely stored and be handled according to **VPMP Appropriate use of information**.
- The minutes of any divisional PSC meeting are to be forwarded to the LPSC secretariat and form part of the LPSC minutes.

5. Reporting

- The chair of the LPSC will report to the command head on key issues identified by the LPSC.
- Professional standards will form a standing agenda item on the command management team meetings.
- The chair of the LPSC will also report to the Professional Standards Strategic Advisory Group (PSSAG) as required.

6. Professional Standards Strategic Advisory Group

- PSC will coordinate a quarterly meeting of the chairs of the LPSC. This meeting is the Professional Standards Strategic Advisory Group (PSSAG).
- PSSAG will provide a central coordination role to improve the professional standards of Victoria Police staff.
- The objectives of PSSAG are to:
 - actively share information about complaint trends and patterns
 - share learnings
 - pro-actively address emerging organisational ethical health risks
 - identify and implement strategic responses to ensure victims of police misconduct are supported and not subjected to further harm
 - develop strategies to improve ethical health across Victoria Police.
- The PSSAG meetings will be co-ordinated by the Superintendent, Conduct and Professional Standards Division, PSC.
- Each LPSC will develop an annual business plan with key performance measures. The LPSC annual business plan will be approved by the command head. The new annual business plan will be tabled at the first PSSAG after the beginning of the financial year. The results of the previous annual business plan will be tabled at the same meeting.

7. Professional Standards Committees at other levels

- Larger commands, may establish professional standards committees at divisional level.
- Smaller commands may establish a LPSC combined with other commands. A superintendent or VPS equivalent from each command must sit on the combined LPSC.
- A command may choose to align the name or roles of their LPSC to the specific business needs of that command.

8. Professional Councils

8.1 *Convening a Professional Council*

A Professional Council is formed as required on the recommendation of the LPSC or the direction of the command head. The LPSC or command head will determine the composition and purpose of the Professional Council.

8.2 *Role*

The terms of reference of a Professional Council will be determined by the circumstances that give rise to the convening of the council. A Professional Council will have the ability to function independently to address and support the command in addressing specific and systemic issues and may:

- provide specialist advice and assistance to the LPSC and managers in relation to a specific complaint, incident or issue involving a subject employee, workplace, or division
- provide specialist advice and assistance to the LPSC and managers in relation to specific behaviours
- assist in the development and implementation of the strategic response to the terms of reference.

8.3 *Composition*

Professional Councils must have the ability to function independently. As such, the chair should not be the command head or managers directly involved in the issue.

8.4 *Minutes and records*

Professional Councils must maintain records of decisions and minutes of meetings. These will be stored with the LPSC. The council must compile a final report to the command head.

Related documents

- VPMP Complaints and discipline
- VPM Conflict of interest

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this policy, contact your supervisor or local EPSO.

Update history

DATE OF FIRST ISSUE	06/11/2017	
DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
06/11/2017	Standalone LPSC policy created, and policy updates as per VEOHRC Recommendations.	FF-102046
01/07/19	Instrument names amended to reflect updated conflict of interest policy	FF-135496

Appendix A – Sample Agenda

1. Date, location and time
2. Welcome and apologies
3. Minutes from last meeting
4. Outstanding action items
5. Reports
 - Divisional professional standards committees
 - PSSAG
6. Strategic issues
 - complaint trends
 - at risk employees
 - at risk workplaces
 - at risk behaviours and work practices
 - victims of police misconduct report
7. Professional standards communication strategy
8. Conflict of interest
 - secondary employment and outside interests
 - declarable associations
 - gift, benefits and hospitality
 - other conflicts of interests
9. Complaint files
10. Best practice initiatives
 - honours and awards
 - other
11. Operational issues
 - pursuit reviews
 - traffic camera files
 - court costs
 - use of force reviews
 - other
12. Other matters at the direction of the command head