

The Victorian Lyric Opera Company Sexual Harassment Policy

Objective

Victorian Lyric Opera Company (VLOC) is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. All members are to be treated with dignity, decency, and respect. In order to ensure this goal, sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. All members are covered by and are expected to comply with this policy.

Prohibited Conduct Under This Policy

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that could be reasonably expected to make someone* feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

In a theatrical context, harassment can be additionally defined as one or a series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or sexual nature outside the boundaries of consent or production content, which is known or ought reasonably known to be unwelcome/unwanted, offensive, intimidating hostile, or inappropriate.

This may include (but is not restricted to):

1. Any unwelcome sexual advance
2. The distribution, display or discussion of any sexually explicit material
3. Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes, or taunts about a person's body, attire, gender, or sexual orientation outside the boundaries of consent or production content
4. Unwelcome inquiries or comments about a person's sex life or sexual preference
5. Leering, whistling, or other suggestive or insulting sounds outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
6. Sexually explicit comments, stories, or jokes
7. Invitation/suggestion to take relationships of a sexual nature beyond the stage;
8. Attempting to engage in sexual behaviors offstage that are choreographed for the stage; or inviting an actor to rehearse sexual content outside of scheduled rehearsals
9. Any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact such as touching, kissing, massaging, patting, hugging, or pinching outside the boundaries of consent or production content
10. Improvising sexual content without expressed consent
11. Requests or demands for sexual favors, especially those that include, or imply, promises of rewards for complying (e.g. casting or job advancement opportunities) and/or threats of punishment for refusal (e.g. denial of casting or job advancement or opportunities)
12. Intentional failure to observe the dressing room standards laid out in this document

13. Retaliation against any individual who complains of or reports sexual harassment;

*It should be noted that a person does not have to be a direct target to be adversely affected by a negative environment. It is understood that creative atmospheres are not always “emotionally sanitary”—they can safely be bawdy, profane, vulgar, and challenging. We assert that having (a) a practice of building consent and (b) an environment that allows for response to clear boundary violations can broaden our opportunity to be challenging and fearless in our work. Concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative environment should also be reported.

Distribution of Policy

This policy shall be posted on VLOC’s website, distributed at the production meeting of each show, and at the first rehearsal for each production.

Complaint Process

A member who believes that they have been the victim of sexual harassment should follow the concern resolution path outlined on page 3.

A member who becomes aware that prohibited conduct has likely occurred must report the conduct using the Level 2 or Level 3 of the Concern Resolution Path on page 3. They can raise concerns or make reports without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

Procedure

Any member of the production team or VLOC Board of Directors who receives a complaint or is advised that a violation of this policy has occurred shall immediately bring the matter to the attention of the President of the Board of Directors, who shall commit the substance of the complaint in writing.

The President shall then engage one or more members of the Board to conduct an investigation as to whether prohibited conduct has occurred. The investigation shall be prompt, thorough, and to the greatest extent possible, confidential, and will include separately interviewing relevant witnesses, including the complainant and the person alleged to have engaged in harassment, and gathering and reviewing any relevant documentary evidence.

The Board member(s) conducting the investigation will submit a written report of findings, including whether there is credible evidence that a violation of this policy occurred, to the Board of Directors. Under normal circumstances, this report should be completed within one week of the submission of the complaint.

Upon receipt of the report, the Board of Directors will collectively determine appropriate action, based on the severity, frequency, and pervasiveness of the conduct. Appropriate action could range from counseling and reprimand to removal from the show or removal from the company.