

Wongaburra Society

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POLICY – COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION S2-ACP-018	
APPLICATION:	ALL STAFF
VERIFIED BY:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

POLICY STATEMENT

Wongaburra Society recognises that effective complaints management is fundamental to the provision of quality services. Wongaburra Society responds positively to complaints and suggestions, as it endeavours to continually review its performance and improve the service it provides.

Wongaburra Society maintains that complaints can be managed effectively through:

- commitment by everyone in the organisation to the right of individuals to complain either directly or through supporters of individuals;
- complaints being accepted seriously and with respect;
- the provision of support to individuals who may need assistance to make the complaint;
- the observation of the principles of natural justice;
- the protection of complainants against retribution or discrimination;
- the diverse and vulnerable complainants will be supported with the complaint mechanism in their language, with the support of interpreters, and with support of external advocacy services;
- the prompt investigation and resolution of complaints;
- the provision of opportunities for all parties to participate in the complaint's resolution process;
- the acceptance of the organisation and its employees being accountable for actions and decisions taken as a result of the complaint;
- the commitment to resolve problems at the point of service or through referral to alternatives; and
- the practice of open disclosure with all parties involved.

PROCEDURES

1. Individuals, supporters of individuals, aged care workers, volunteers, visiting health professionals and visitors are informed of the complaint's mechanism through:
 - 1.1 notice boards
 - 1.2 brochures
 - 1.3 newsletters
 - 1.4 handbooks
 - 1.5 meetings (Consumer Advisory Body/staff meetings)
 - 1.6 staff orientation/induction sessions
 - 1.7 training and education sessions (mandatory)
2. Complaints and suggestions can be made through:
 - 2.1 utilisation of the 104 AF WGS Communication of Comments Complaints and Feedback form
 - 2.2 contacting the Clinical Care Manager / Clinical Care Coordinator / Charge Nurse verbally or in writing
 - 2.3 emailing the Complaints Officer on complaints@wongaburra.com.au
 - 2.4 responding to questionnaires and surveys
 - 2.5 attending open forums / meetings
 - 2.6 contacting external complaints agencies:

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

GPO Box 9819 In your capital city

Phone: 1800 951 822

online: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/online-complaints-form-open>

Aged & Disability Advocacy Services

121 Copperfield Street, GEEBUNG QLD 4034

Phone: 1800 818 338

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

Phone: 1800 700 600 Mon-Fri 8am – 8pm

Sat 10am – 4pm

online: <https://www.opan.org.au>

Complete form online: <https://www.opan.org.au/contact-us/get-advocacy-support>

3. All aged care workers are expected to attempt resolution of complaints or concerns at the point of service wherever possible and within the scope of their role and responsibility.

4. An aged care worker or volunteer who receives a verbal complaint or concern from an individual or visitor is responsible for documenting the complaint or concern on the Communication of Compliment / Complaint / Feedback form, even if the complaint or concern is resolved.
5. Written complaints will be initially received and recorded in accordance as part of the *Continuous Improvement Framework*. The Quality Compliance and Document Control Officer will be responsible for recording all complaints in the Quality Systems and notifying the appropriate person in accordance with the reporting structure.
6. All written complaints will be acknowledged and/or managed within seven (7) days of the receipt of the complaint by the appropriate person, as applicable.
7. All effort will be made to complete action on complaints within 35 days. In the event that a complaint is received via a State/Federal independent complaints organisation or Government agency all actions will be completed within the designated time periods.
8. The Chief Executive Officer, Clinical Care Manager or Complaints Officer as applicable, will ensure open disclosure to the complainant and keeping them informed of the investigation process, including potential delays to the investigation.
9. Response to a complainant, must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer or Clinical Care Manager and should include:
 - 9.1 information relevant to the complaint;
 - 9.2 the key aspects of the investigation undertaken;
 - 9.3 adequate reasons for any decision made;
 - 9.4 any changes and improvements that have resulted from the complaint;
 - 9.5 an apology where appropriate; and
 - 9.6 acknowledgement of thanks to the complainant for their feedback.
10. If a complaint relates to an adverse event, complainants will initially be provided with an explanation of what happened, based on the known facts. At the conclusion of an investigation, the complainant and the relevant employees will be provided with information which is a frank and an open report on the event.
11. Complaints of a more serious nature, or if unable to be resolved internally, will be forwarded to external services for resolution. The external conciliator will be responsible for making unbiased recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer or Clinical Care Manager for resolution of the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant (where possible). The external conciliator is to be independent of the organisation and to act in an impartial manner.
12. All complainants will be protected from any repercussions, reprisals or victimisation that may arise as a result of making a complaint.
13. Complaints will not be discussed with anyone who does not have a genuine responsibility for resolving the issue.

14. Complainants will be encouraged to participate in the resolution process,
15. Complaints resolution will be monitored, and feedback will be provided to the complainants personally and, where appropriate, through newsletters and open forums.
16. Responsibilities for complaint management resolution are escalated through the organisational structure per the organisation's reporting responsibilities (on a confidential basis) with ultimate responsibility being the with the Chief Executive Officer or Clinical Care Manager to resolve the complaint within a timely manner.
17. All aged care workers will be trained in the complaint resolution system and be confident in the reporting processes at Wongaburra.

COMMUNICATION OF COMPLIMENT / COMPLAINT / FEEDBACK

RESIDENT'S COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

AN OPPORTUNITY

The Management of Wongaburra regards suggestions and complaints as an opportunity to improve service to you and to others. Feedback and complaints are welcome and assist us to make improvements to the care and other services we provide.

1. TALK ABOUT IT

You are encouraged to discuss your concern with the Clinical Care Manager / Clinical Care Coordinator, the Charge Nurse or the Registered Nurse on duty, or at the Residents meeting (Consumer Advisory Body), or through your support person. Your complaint will be followed up promptly and feedback given to you as soon as possible.

2. MAIL BOXES (COMMUNICATION OF COMPLIMENT / COMPLAINT / FEEDBACK)

Using the Communication of Compliment / Complaint / Feedback form (104 AF WGS) located at the Reception Centres, you can write a note about your complaint, comment, suggestion or query and put it in the mail boxes provided. You can be assured that issues raised will be followed up. You will be given personal feedback if you write your name. Otherwise, **depending on the issue**, feedback will be provided in the newsletter or through resident meetings (Consumer Advisory Body).

3. CONTACT THE BOARD OF WONGABURRA

If your problem has not been resolved after using the above methods or if you feel as though the issues are complex, you are welcome to contact members of the Board who will personally investigate the matter and give you feedback, by writing to Wongaburra Society, or emailing society@wongaburra.com.au

THERE ARE NO REPRISALS FOR COMPLAINTS

Complaints and suggestions are ways in which you can help us improve and are very welcomed. There are definitely no reprisals if you share a concern, suggestion or make a complaint to help us to improve our approach.

4. ASK FOR A MEDIATOR

If you are having difficulty resolving a problem you may wish to ask for a mediator to act as a go-between. The mediator will be chosen by mutual agreement between the management and you.

5. INTERNAL MECHANISMS

Compliments and Complaints internal mechanism via forms:

104 AF WGS	Communication of Compliment / Complaint / Feedback Form
003 WI WGS	Compliments / Complaints / Feedback Work Instruction

6. EXTERNAL AGENCIES

If the matter cannot be resolved within Wongaburra you are free to contact the following organisations for assistance:

1. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Phone: 1800 951 822

Online: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au>

Write: Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
GPO Box 9819
In Your Capital City

2. Aged & Disability Advocacy Services Australia

Phone: 1800 818 338

Write: 121 Copperfield Street
GEEBUNG QLD 4034

3. Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

Phone: 1800 700 600 Mon-Fri 8am – 8pm
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Complete form online: <https://www.opan.org.au/contact-us/get-advocacy-support>

RELATED AGED CARE QUALITY STANDARDS

- Standard 2 – The Organisation

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Aged Care Act 2024
- Privacy Act 1988 (amended by the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000)

RELEVANT GUIDELINES

- Standards Australia AS/ISO 10002-2018 – Customer Satisfaction Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations
- Commonwealth Ombudsman 2023 – Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide