

# Consumer Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

## Introduction

It is the fundamental right of consumers of the services of the Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) to compliment, comment and complain about the service they have received. ARAS welcomes all feedback.

ARAS is committed to continually improving the quality of its service, and to being open and responsive to any complaints from consumers, their supporters or by members of the wider community. Consumer feedback provides valuable information on what areas need to be changed and improved. ARAS will at all times seek an outcome to a complaint which is satisfactory to all parties and commit to improve its performance when relevant.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- establish the principles to govern ARAS' response to feedback, particularly complaints
- ensure there is an open and transparent procedure through which consumers, their supporters and members of the community can convey their satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding ARAS' services, functions or operations
- enable ARAS to benefit from all feedback through ensuring it is recorded, considered, resolved, monitored and used to improve ARAS' processes and procedures
- ensure that our staff, volunteers, consumers, their supporters and the wider community are aware of the content of this policy and relevant procedure.

## Compliments

ARAS welcomes compliments about our service. We encourage anyone using our service to provide feedback via our website, or directly to the Advocacy Operations Manager via mail, email or telephone as set out below.

## Comments

ARAS welcomes comments about how we can improve service delivery or related areas such as our promotional materials, website or any other suggestion. Feedback can be provided via mail, email or telephone as set out below.

## Complaints

ARAS is committed to giving complaints a high priority and responding efficiently, fairly and promptly.

If a consumer or consumer representative feels dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, we actively encourage for the issue to be raised. Complaints or compliments regarding advocacy services will be directed to the Advocacy Operations Manager.

ARAS recognises that some complainants will wish to express their dissatisfaction informally, and in that case we will endeavour to resolve the matter quickly.

However, where concerns cannot be resolved informally, a formal approach to addressing and resolving the concerns will be undertaken, using the process outlined below. If required, ARAS will arrange access to an independent interpreter service, and honour a consumer's right to be supported by an advocate (e.g. family, friend, carer). Assurance is provided that all complaints will be treated confidentially, fairly and consistently at no cost.

### **Internal process**

The Advocacy Operations Manager will acknowledge all complaints received, listen carefully and ask questions in order to gain a clear understanding of the issue. Details of the complaint will be recorded. Complainants will be given an indication as to how long the investigation will take. It is ARAS' policy to investigate all complaints promptly, thoroughly and objectively. During this process open and transparent dialogue will be maintained to keep consumers and/or their representatives informed of the progress and then of the outcome, including any remedial actions.

To lodge a complaint, contact the Advocacy Operations Manager at ARAS on the following email address: [aras@agedrights.asn.au](mailto:aras@agedrights.asn.au)

### **External process**

ARAS acknowledges that concerns about the service may also be raised with external agencies, such as:

OPAN (Older Persons Advocacy Network) [opan@opan.com.au](mailto:opan@opan.com.au)

Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner <http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/>

A copy of the HCSCC Code of Conduct is displayed in the foyer of ARAS office. The Code of Conduct, which is also available in languages other than English, can also be accessed at <http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/frequently-asked-questions/>

### **Unreasonable Complainants (Conduct)**

ARAS is aware that anger is understandable and, to some degree, an acceptable emotion among frustrated complainants, as long as it is not expressed through aggression, threats or violence toward our staff.

Staff safety and wellbeing are paramount when dealing with unreasonable complainant conduct.

Should conduct expressed through aggression, threats or violence be directed to ARAS, its staff or volunteers, ARAS will terminate contact to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its staff.

**Contact details**

Aged Rights Advocacy Service Inc.

Visit:  
16 Hutt Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

Post:  
PO Box 7234  
Hutt Street SA 5000

Phone:  
1800 700 600 (free call in Australia)  
+61 8 8232 5377

Fax:  
+61 8 8232 1794

Email:  
[aras@agedrights.asn.au](mailto:aras@agedrights.asn.au)

**Associated documents**

ARAS Service Charter  
ARAS Privacy Policy

**References**

Health & Community Services Complaints Act 2004  
Code of Conduct for Unregistered Health Professionals  
Aged Care Act 1997  
Retirement Villages Act 2016  
Privacy Act 1988 (Australian Privacy Principles)

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**MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

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