

## PRIVACY POLICY

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The Northern Community Legal Centre is committed to protecting and upholding the right to privacy of clients, staff, volunteers, Board members and representatives of agencies we deal with. In particular we are committed to protecting and upholding the rights of our clients to privacy in the way we collect, store and use information about them, their needs and the services we provide to them.

This policy conforms to the Federal Privacy Act (1988) and the Australian Privacy Principles which govern the collection, use and storage of personal information. This policy applies to all records, whether hard copy or electronic, containing personal information about individuals, and to interviews or discussions of a sensitive personal nature.

**The organisation will follow the guidelines of the Australian Privacy Principles in its information management practices to ensure that:**

- it meets its legal and ethical obligations as an employer and service provider in relation to protecting the privacy of clients and organisational personnel
- clients are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy
- clients and organisational personnel are provided with privacy when they are being interviewed or discussing matters of a personal or sensitive nature
- all staff, Board members and volunteers understand what is required in meeting these obligations

**In dealing with personal information, the Northern Community Legal Centre staff will:**

- only collect and store personal information that is necessary for the functioning of the organisation and its activities
- ensure privacy for clients, staff, volunteers or Board members when they are being interviewed or discussing matters of a personal or sensitive nature
- use fair and lawful ways to collect personal information
- collect personal information only by consent from an individual

- ensure that people know what sort of personal information is held, what purposes it is held it for and how it is collected, used, disclosed and who will have access to it
- ensure that personal information collected or disclosed is accurate, complete and up-to-date, and provide access to any individual to review information or correct wrong information about themselves
- take reasonable steps to protect all personal information from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure
- destroy or permanently de-identify personal information no longer needed and/or after legal requirements for retaining documents have expired

### **Privacy information for clients**

At their initial assessment clients will be told what information is being collected, how their privacy will be protected and their rights in relation to this information.

### **Privacy for interviews and personal discussions**

To ensure privacy for clients or staff when discussing sensitive or personal matters, the organisation will provide clients with private spaces to talk with their lawyer and minimise the risk of being overheard as much as possible within service limitations.

### **Participants in research projects must be:**

- given a choice about participating or not
- given the right to withdraw at any time
- informed about the purpose of the research project, the information to be collected, and how information they provide will be used
- given copies of any subsequent publications

The collection of personal information will be limited to that which is required for the conduct of the project. Individual participants will not be identified.

Organisational participants in research projects will generally be de-identified in Northern Community Legal Centre research, unless the nature of a particular project requires identification and the client has provided informed written consent for this to occur.