

PRIVACY POLICY

Policy Statement:

The Beaudesert and District Community Meals on Wheels Services Association Inc., is committed to protecting and upholding the right to privacy of clients, staff, volunteers, Management Committee members and representatives of agencies we deal with. In particular the Service is 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.

The Service requires staff, volunteers and the Management Committee members to be consistent and careful in the way they manage what is written and said about individuals and how they decide who can see or hear this information.

The Service is subject to legislation applying to the organisation and/or its client group. The Service will follow the guidelines of the *Australian Privacy Principles* in its information management practices.

The Service will 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, Management Committee and volunteers understand what is required in meeting these obligations.

This policy conforms to the *Federal Privacy Act (1988)* and the *Australian Privacy Principles* which govern the collection, use and storage of personnel information.

(Note: The Federal Privacy Act applies to organisations with an annual turnover over \$3m or organisations that are health service providers, operators of a residential tenancy database, a contractor that provides services under a Commonwealth contract, an organisation that is related to a larger organisation or one which trades in personal information

Many funding contracts may require that funded organisations comply with the *Australian Privacy Principles*).

This policy will apply to all records, whether hard copy or electronic, containing personal information about individuals, and to interviews or discussions of a sensitive personal nature.

Procedures

Dealing with personal information

In dealing with personal information, the Service staff will:

- ensure privacy for clients, staff, volunteers or Management Committee members when they are being interviewed or discussing matters of a personal or sensitive nature
- only collect and store personal information that is necessary for the functioning of the organisation and its activities
- 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 purpose it is held 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.

Responsibilities for managing privacy

- All staff are responsible for the management of personal information to which they have access, and in the conduct of research, consultation or advocacy work
- The Secretary/Coordinator is responsible for content in the Services publications, communications and web site and must ensure the following:
 - appropriate consent is obtained for the inclusion of any personal information about any individual including the Service personnel
 - information being provided by other agencies or external individuals conforms to privacy principles
 - that the website contains a Privacy statement that makes clear the conditions of any collection of personal information from the public through their visit to the website.
- The Secretary/Coordinator is responsible for safeguarding personal information relating to the Service staff, Management Committee members, volunteers, contractors and the Service members.
- **The Privacy Contact Officer:** The Privacy Contact Officer will be the Secretary/Coordinator.

The Secretary/Coordinator will be responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff are familiar with the Privacy Policy and administrative procedures for handling personal information
- ensuring that clients and other relevant individuals are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy
- handling any queries or complaint about a privacy issue

Privacy information for Clients

At 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 and staff when discussing sensitive or personal matters, the organisation will:

- Have regard to likely sensibilities and anxieties
- Ensure that the location and environment/aesthetics are appropriate
- Ensure that in so far as is practicable the location is, or is sufficiently distant from others to minimise actual or perceived interference
- Ensure that client preferences for the interview/discussion are taken into consideration in so far as is practicable, prior to and throughout the interview or discussion and at all times with the consent of the client.

Participants in research projects

People being invited to participate in a research project 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 identified in the Service research, unless the nature of a particular project required anonymity or an organisation specifically requests it.