



Commissioner for Complaints

Quarterly Report Statistical Data

1 January 2003 – 31 March 2003

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National Statistics

The statistical information for the following graphs is derived from various reporting elements of the CRS database.

Total Number of Calls

During this reporting period the scheme dealt with a total of 1910 calls. The following figure shows the breakdown of calls recorded in each jurisdiction during the reporting period, that is the number of complaints, information and feedback calls, shown as a percentage of the total 1910 calls recorded nationally.

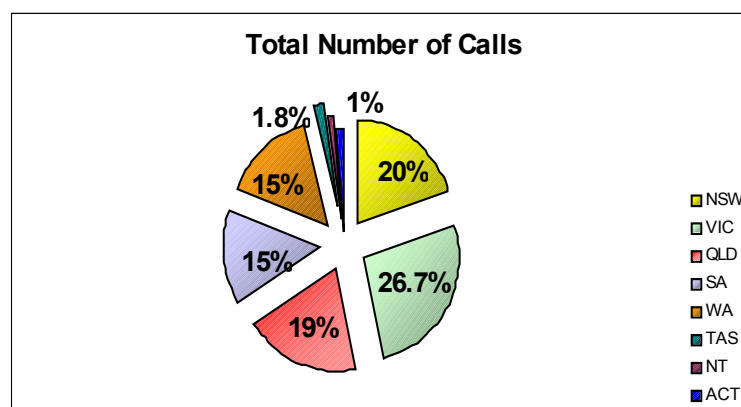


Fig 1: Total Number of Calls by Jurisdiction

Of the 1910 calls recorded, 360 (19 per cent) were registered as complaints and 1548 (81 per cent) were registered as information calls.

Recorded Complaints

The majority of the 360 complaints recorded during the reporting period related to aged residential care services, however, three complaints (1 per cent) related to Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) and one complaint was associated with flexible care services [Extended Care at Home]. As in previous reports, the relatives of residents (61 per cent) lodged the majority of complaints recorded nationally. Across Australia 14 per cent of complaints were lodged by staff of aged care services and 9 per cent by residents or care recipients. Three per cent were lodged by ex-staff. Friends lodged three per cent of complaints. Together, advocates and legal representatives lodged 1 per cent of complaints. Four per cent of complaints were listed as being lodged by 'others', and 'unknown' respectively.

Site Visits

During the reporting period the database records that officers undertook a total of 144 site visits either as part of the preliminary assessment or ongoing management of the issues raised. A total of 122 facilities were visited and issues relating to 145 individual complaints were discussed.

Complainant Type

Of the 360 complaints recorded nationally during the reporting period, 236 (66 per cent) were registered as open complaints, 66 (18 per cent) as confidential complaints and 58 (16 per cent) as anonymous complaints.

Note that a proportion of complainants who initially lodge a confidential complaint with the Scheme subsequently amend the status of their complaint and request that the issues being dealt with are managed as an open complaint.

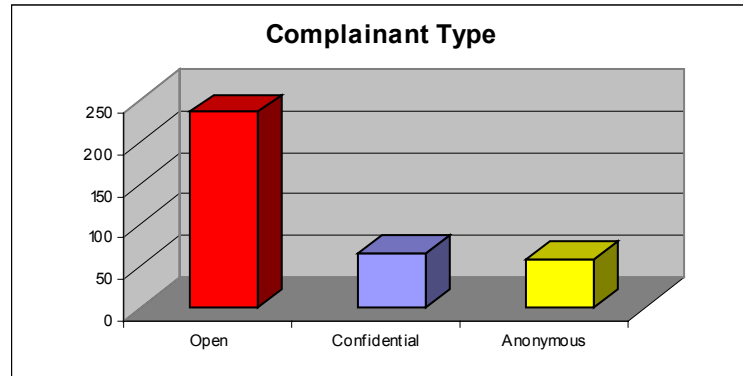


Fig 2: Complainant Type and Volume

Issue Priorities

Complaints are assessed as either urgent or standard (complex). During the reporting period nine issues were assessed as urgent. A further 249 complaints were assessed as complex.

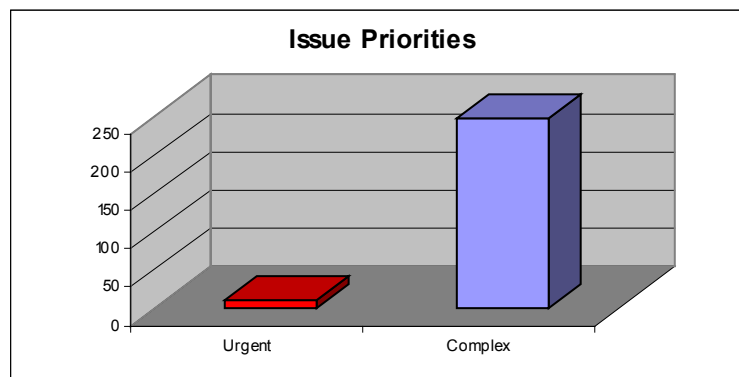


Fig 3: Issue Priorities

Average Time to resolve Complaints

The database provides information regarding new cases both received and finalised within a period. During the reporting period the Scheme finalised 131 cases. The average number of days to finalise complaints received within the reporting period was 23.7 days.

At the end of the reporting period the data show that, nationally, 24 per cent of cases were incomplete, 26 per cent were ongoing, 41 per cent had been finalised and 9 per cent had been withdrawn.

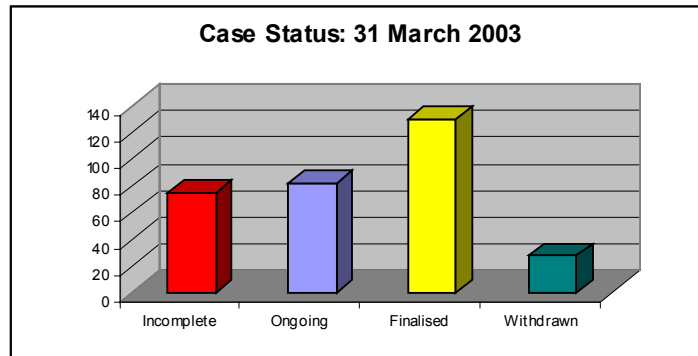


Fig 4: Case Status: End of the Reporting Period

Complaint Issues

The Complaints Resolutions Scheme (the Scheme) has identified 58 common issues that can be recorded in four main clusters, those being: Administration, Consumer Rights, Environment and Level of Care. The following tables show the seven top complaint issues in each category as a national percentage of the total. It should be noted that the tables do not equal 100 per cent but are presented in this manner for ease of viewing. The groupings do not vary significantly from previous reporting periods.

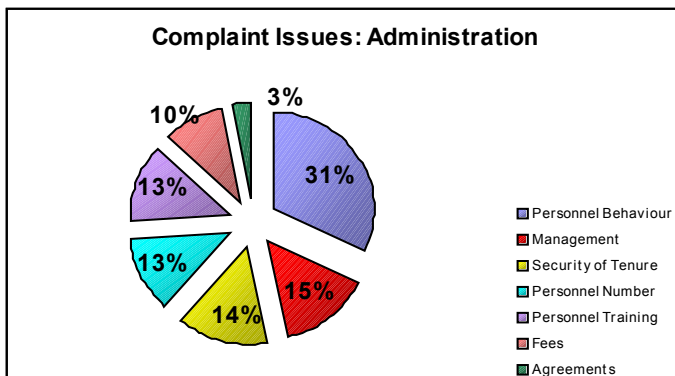


Fig 5: Complaint Issues: Administration

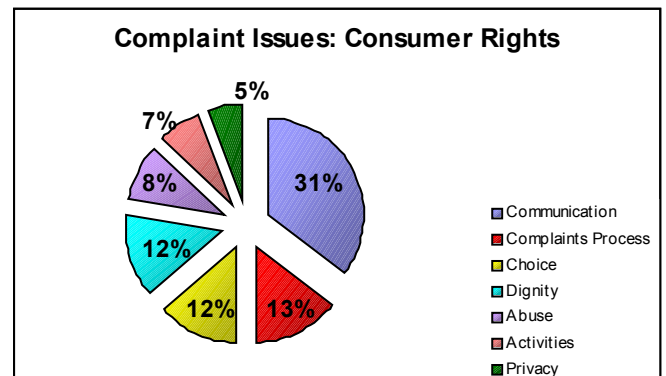


Fig 6: Complaint Issues: Consumer Rights

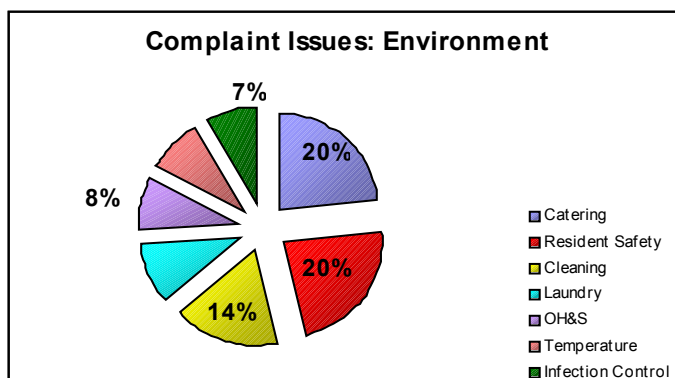


Fig 7: Complaint Issues: Environment

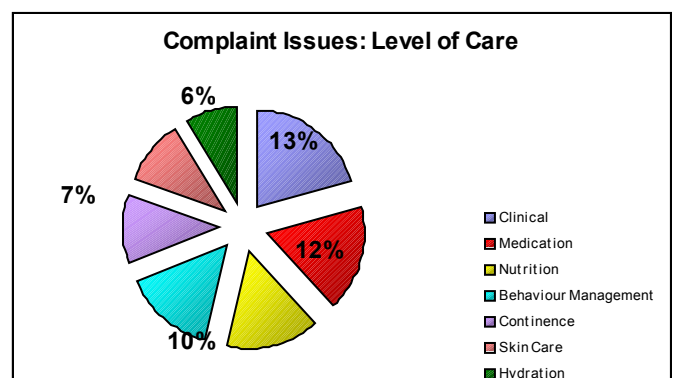


Fig 8: Complaint Issues: Level of Care

Fifty-seven per cent of the total issues recorded under the Administration heading related to personnel behaviour, number and training issues. Communication issues made up 31 per cent of all issues lodged under the Consumer Rights heading and issues related to the safety of care recipients and catering respectively accounted for 20 per cent of issues raised within the Environment grouping. A total of 294 issues were recorded under the heading Level of Care. Twenty-five per cent of these issues related to clinical care and medication. Figure 9 shows the most frequently recorded complaint issues across the four groups during this reporting quarter.

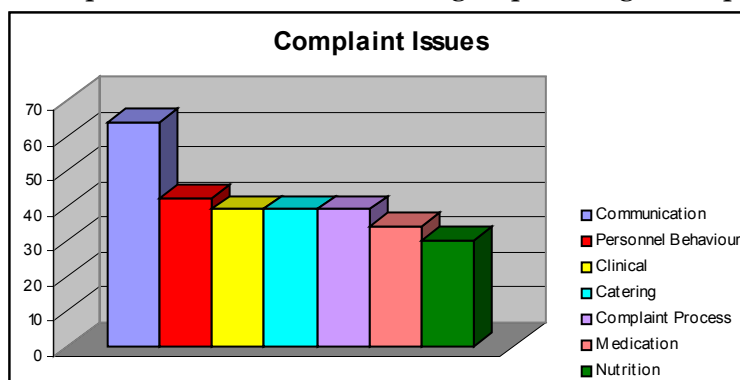


Fig 9: Most frequently recorded Complainant Issues

Non-acceptance of Complaints and Appeals

Based on *last status change* the database indicates that, across Australia, a total of 57 complaints were not accepted by the Scheme during the period ending 31 March 2003. Twelve of these complaints were received prior to 1 January 2003.

Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory did not record any non-accepted complaints. Seventy-five per cent of the total complaints not accepted originated in Victoria, 14 per cent in Tasmania, 5 per cent in New South Wales and 1.7 per cent each in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. The following figure shows the breakdown by jurisdiction, including those complaints that were received prior to 1 January and not accepted during this reporting period.

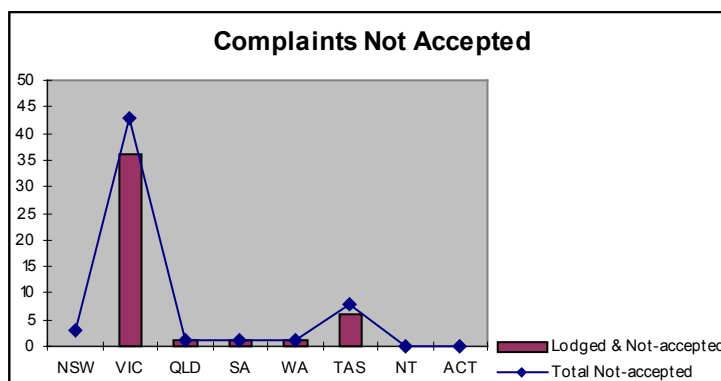


Fig 10: Total Number of Complaints Not Accepted

During this quarter, the Commissioner was asked to provide advice in relation to six appeals against the non-acceptance of a complaint. Two appeals originated in New South Wales and the Commissioner recommended that these decisions be confirmed. One appeal was lodged in Tasmania. The Commissioner recommended that this decision be set aside. Three appeals were received in Victoria. The Commissioner recommended that one decision be set aside. In the other

two appeals nine issues were assessed. In relation to these complaints the Commissioner recommended that the decision to not accept four issues be confirmed and the decision be set aside in relation to five issues.

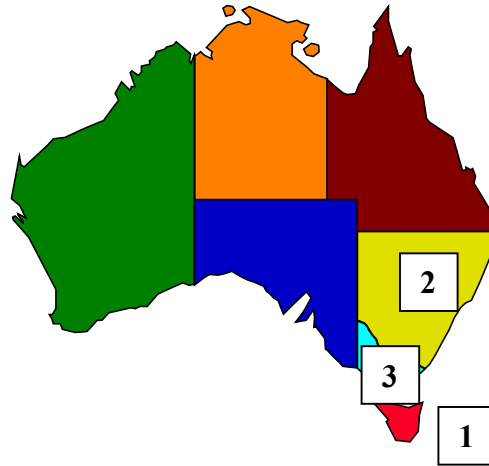


Fig 11: Appeals Against Non Acceptance

Committee Hearings by State and Territory

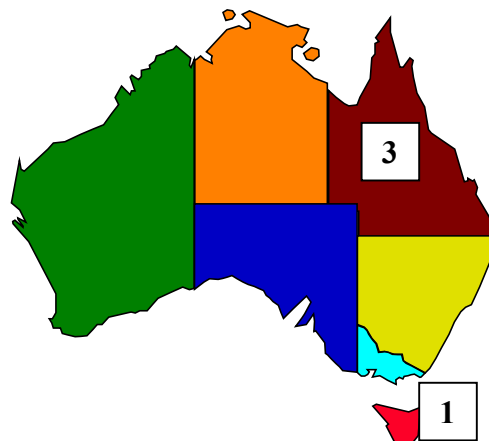


Fig 12: Committee Hearings

Four cases were scheduled to be heard by Complaints Resolution Committees during the reporting period (three in Queensland and one in Tasmania). One complaint in Queensland was withdrawn prior to the hearing and a second case was withdrawn at the hearing. The third case proceeded as scheduled, as did the hearing in Tasmania. The complaints involved a range of issues including restricted access, resident rights, communication, choice and decision making, clinical care and the accommodation of personal furniture items.

A further four hearings have been arranged for April and May 2003.

Determination Reviews by State and Territory

During the reporting period one Determination was reviewed. The complaint originated in Western Australia. The decision was confirmed with minor variations. Another application for review has been received from Tasmania and will be undertaken during the next reporting period.

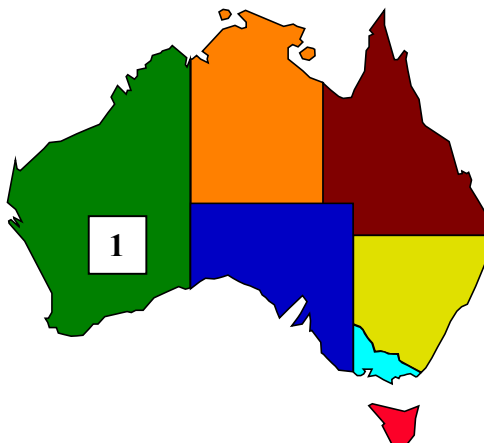


Fig 13: Determination Reviews by State and Territory

Information Statistics

During the reporting period 81 per cent of the calls registered by the Scheme (1548) were recorded as information calls. All jurisdictions, except Tasmania, recorded a higher percentage of information calls when compared to the number of complaints registered. The following figure shows a percentage breakdown of the total number of information calls received during the period.

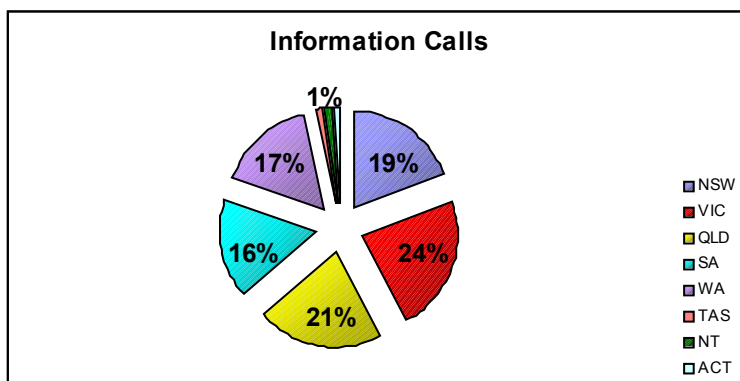


Fig 14: Total Number of Information Calls by Jurisdiction

It should be noted that not all information calls specify an outlet or caller status on the database. However, 97 per cent of calls received and recorded related to residential care. Seventeen calls (3 per cent) were associated with CACPs. The majority of callers (81 per cent) were seeking general information, however, 19 per cent of calls (295) sought information outside the jurisdiction of the Scheme.

At a national level, 62 per cent of the information calls registered were made by relatives, 13 per cent by currently employed staff, 9 per cent by care recipients, 3 per cent by advocates, 2 per cent by friends and 1 per cent by ex-staff. Thirty-one per cent are recorded as 'other' and 1 per cent as 'unknown'.

The database registers the nature of the information calls using the same key words and groupings that are applied in the recording of information about complaints. It is important to note that this data is not recorded in the case of all information calls received, nor is it relevant for those calls seeking information outside the Scheme. Data captured in the following figures shows the top seven issues in each category as a percentage of the total. Figures do not equal 100 per cent but are presented in this manner for ease of viewing.

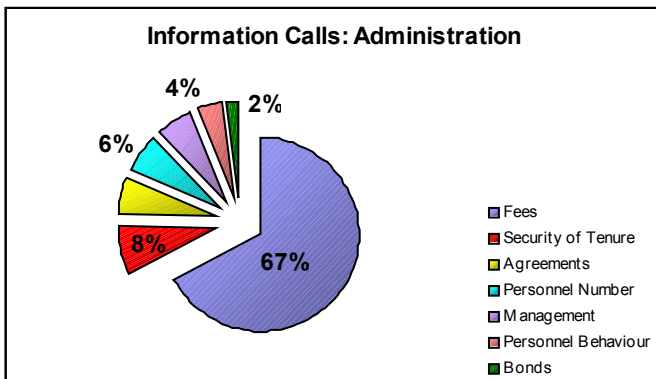


Fig 15: Information Calls – Administration

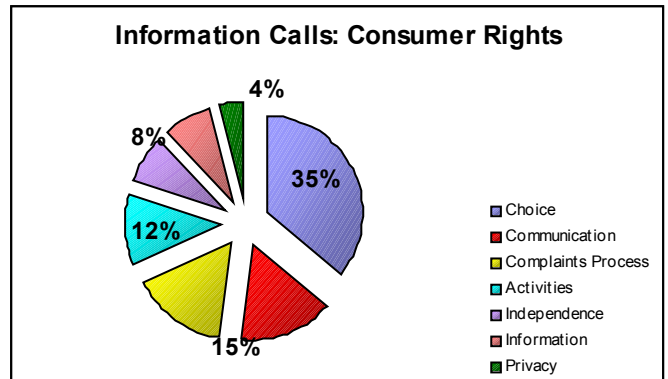


Fig 16: Information Calls – Consumer Rights

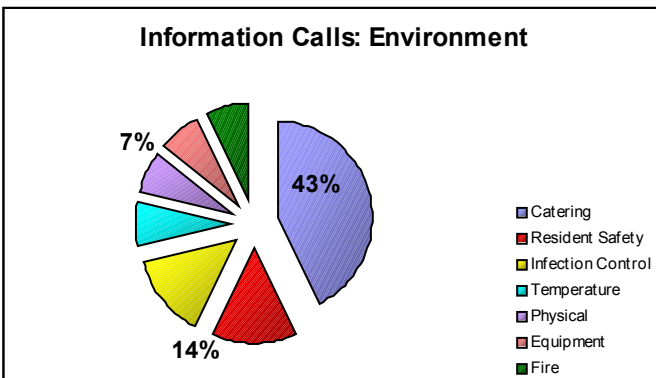


Fig 17: Information Calls – Environment

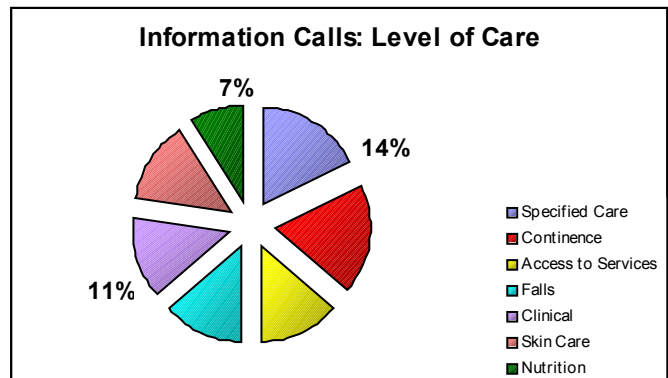


Fig 18: Information Calls – Level of Care

Figure 19 shows the most significant issues for people seeking information during this reporting period.

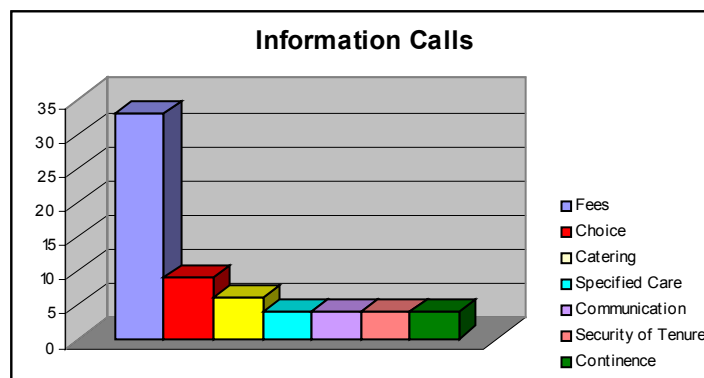


Fig 19: Frequent information sought