

Privacy and Dignity Policy and Procedure

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1.0 PURPOSE

Cootharinga North Queensland will manage and ensure that our organisation provides the customer access to services and supports that respect and protect their dignity and right to privacy.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Staff.

3.0 POLICY

Cootharinga North Queensland is committed to protecting and upholding all stakeholders right to privacy and dignity; including customers, staff, management and representatives of agencies, we deal with.

Cootharinga North Queensland is committed to protecting and upholding the customers right to privacy and dignity as we collect, store and handle information about them, their needs and the services provided to them.

Cootharinga North Queensland requires Frontline Staff and management 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.

Cootharinga North Queensland is subject to NDIS (Quality and Safeguards) Commission rules and regulations. Cootharinga North Queensland will follow the guidelines of the Australian Privacy Principles in its information management practices.

Cootharinga North Queensland will ensure that each customer understands, and agrees to, what personal information will be collected and informed of the reason for the collection.

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Cootharinga North Queensland will advise each customer of privacy policies using the language, mode of communication and terms that the customer is most likely to understand. (Easy Read documents are made available to all customers).

Cootharinga North Queensland will ensure that:

- It meets its legal and ethical obligations as an employer and service provider in relation to protecting the privacy of customers and organisational personnel.
- Customers are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy and confidentiality.
- Customers and organisational personnel are provided with privacy, and confidentiality is assured when they are being interviewed or discussing matters of a personal or sensitive nature.
- All staff, management and volunteers understand what is required in meeting these obligations.
- Customers are advised of Cootharinga North Queensland's confidentiality policies using the language, mode of communications and terms that are most likely to be understood. Cootharinga North Queensland will attempt to locate interpreters and will use easy access materials.

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 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.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Dealing with personal information

In dealing with personal information, Cootharinga North Queensland staff will:

- Ensure privacy for the customers, staff, or management 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.

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- Use fair and lawful ways to collect personal information.
- Collect personal information only with consent from the individual.
- Ensure that people know of the type of personal information being held, the purpose of keeping the information and the method 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 the 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.
- Ensure that customers understand and agree with what personal information will be collected and why.
- Ensure customers are informed when any recordings occur in either audio and/or visual format. The customer's involvement in any recording must be agreed to in writing.

4.2 Customer Records

Customer records will be kept confidential and only handled by staff directly engaged in the delivery of service to the customer. Information about customers may only be made available to other parties with the consent of the customer, their advocate, guardian or legal representative. A written agreement giving permission to the recording must be maintained in the customer's file.

All hard copy files of customer records will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet.

4.3 Responsibilities for Managing Privacy

All staff are responsible for the management of personal information to which they have access. Executive Officer is responsible for the content in Cootharinga North Queensland publications, communications and on the website and must ensure the following:

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- Appropriate consent is obtained for the inclusion of any personal information about any individual, including Cootharinga North Queensland personnel (Consent Policy and Procedure)
- 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 Quality and Business Compliance Officer is responsible for safeguarding personal information relating to Cootharinga North Queensland's staff, management and contractors. The Quality and Business Compliance Officer will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that all Staff are familiar with the Privacy Policy and administrative procedures for handling personal information.
- Ensuring that customers and other relevant individuals are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy and dignity.
- Handling any queries or complaints about a privacy issue.

4.4 Privacy Information for Customers

At the first interview, customers will be notified of the type of information that is being collected about them, how their privacy will be protected, and their rights in relation to this data. Information sharing is part of our legislative requirements. Customers must give consent to any information sharing between our organisation and government bodies.

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4.5 Privacy for Interviews and Personal Discussions

To ensure privacy for customers or Staff when discussing sensitive or personal matters, Cootharinga North Queensland will only collect personal information which is necessary for the provision of supports and services and which:

- Is given voluntarily; and
- Will be stored securely on the Cootharinga North Queensland database.

When in possession or control of a record containing personal information, Cootharinga North Queensland will ensure that the record is protected against loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure, by such steps as it is reasonable in the circumstances to take. If it is necessary for that the record be given to a person in connection with the provision of a service to Cootharinga North Queensland, everything reasonable will be done to prevent unauthorised use or disclosure of that record.

Cootharinga North Queensland will not disclose any personal information to a third party without the individual's consent unless that disclosure is required or authorised by or under law

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Code of Ethics and Conduct Staff and Volunteer Agreement (FRM001)
- Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement (FRM017)
- Policies and Procedures

6.0 REFERENCES

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018
- Privacy Act (1988)