



Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation Inc. Out-of-Home Care Policies and Procedures

Children and Young People – Care and Wellbeing

Complaints Policy

*This policy relates to the following standards:
NSW Standards for Statutory Out-of-Home Care:*

Standard 20 – Record Keeping, Privacy, Confidentiality and Complaints for Carers and Staff

Standard 6 – Participation in Decision Making

Disability Service Standards – Standard 4

Policy

Burrun Dalai welcomes and encourages information and feedback, including complaints. This will enable Burrun Dalai to respond to issues and improve the quality of our service delivery.

All clients, families and carers will be made aware of their right to complain and should fully understand the complaints procedure and the use and availability of advocates. Information on the complaint's procedure of Burrun Dalai is posted on the Burrun Dalai website and presented to and explained to clients at the time of assessment and at regular intervals such as during case reviews. Information should be provided in a format that respects a client's communication, cultural and age needs (for example provided verbally or using illustrations).

Clients have a right to complain about the service they are receiving without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with fairly and promptly. They have a right to have a system that is easy to use, timely and effective.

The Chief Executive Officer will take steps to ensure that clients feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.

The client has the right to pursue an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf with the staff and/or the CEO of Burrun Dalai.

Clients have the right to choose when, where and how a complaint is made, who they make the complaint to, and who their contact person at Burrun Dalai will be regarding the complaint (this may be a different person to who manages the complaint or does the investigation for example).

All complaints are to be recorded on the Complaints Record Form by the person taking the complaint. The form is then to be forwarded to the CEO for investigation and resolution and added to the Database system.

Burrun Dalai staff affected by the complaint will be fully informed of the complaint. The staff member will be given the opportunity to discuss and resolve the complaint.

Procedure

- 1) Clients are encouraged to raise their complaints with the staff member concerned in the first instance.

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- 2) If the client is not satisfied with the outcome, or not happy to discuss the issue with the staff member concerned, they should contact the staff member's immediate manager, then Executive Officer or CEO. Individuals can use an advocate to discuss their concerns on their behalf (Advocate forms can be obtained from Burrun Dalai).

The person taking the complaint will work with the complainant to define their desired goal and will fully brief the complainant on the complaint process, what to expect and timeframes. This will include working with the person to identify the person they want as their key contact within the organisation regarding the complaint.

- 3) If the issue is still not satisfactorily resolved within 21 working days the Chief Executive Officer will raise the issue with the Board of Governance. The Board of Governance will try to resolve the issues of concern.
- 4) If after approaching the above people, the issue is still not resolved, the client is informed of their right to complain to the NSW Ombudsman and/or NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal (NCAT).
- 5) If the complaint is resolved, the client must be informed of the outcome of their complaint and asked for their feedback on the complaints procedure.
- 6) Burrun Dalai will ensure that the service:
 - Views complaints as a useful form of feedback
 - Investigate all complaints
 - Allow appropriate staff members to resolve complaints quickly
 - Ensure clients, families and carers have access to a support person if needed
 - Differentiate more serious complaints which must be dealt with by the Board of Governance of the service
 - Ensure allegations of criminality (not related to child protection) are referred for investigation by the police or where protection issues are involved, are reported to the Family and Community Service and/or the Police
 - Ensure complainants are not victimised as a result of making a complaint
 - Monitor and record all complaints and their outcomes
 - Seek complainant's views on their desired outcome of the complaint and inform them of action that has been taken.
 - Provide an opportunity for complainants to give feedback on the organisation's complaints handling policy and process.

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- Provide clear timeframes for complainants for investigating and resolving complaints
 - Referring where appropriate to an external body
- 7) Burrun Dalai will ensure that children, young persons, people with a disability and their families or carer/s are encouraged to access the complaints systems. Burrun Dalai recognises that where clients and their carer/s and families are actively involved in case planning or case conferences, that formal complaints would be less likely. Burrun Dalai must ensure that the Service actively promotes the complaints system by placing information in their services pamphlet or posters or signs in the waiting area, and also includes such information in the initial training for foster carers and in staff orientation packages. Clients will be provided with their complaint's options in written form, where age appropriate.
- 8) Burrun Dalai will ensure that when a client makes a complaint, that they have access to a support person or an advocate (forms for advocates can be obtained at Burrun Dalai). Burrun Dalai must assist clients to identify someone they would like to act as a support person or advocate. Clients have the right to nominate who at Burrun Dalai will act as their contact person for the complaint.
- 9) Burrun Dalai will ensure that clients and their families and carer/s are informed of their rights to appeal against any decisions that they are not happy with. Burrun Dalai will ensure that the Service supports and assists them to access the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal (NCAT) and/or the NSW Ombudsman.
- 10) For Out of Home Care clients, Burrun Dalai will investigate any allegations of misconduct or criminality against a carer. The Service will:
- Ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person in Out of Home Care until the allegation is investigated and resolved
 - Inform the carer/s of the allegation and obtain their account of the situation or an immediate report is to be made to Family & Community Services (FACS) Helpline (Allegation Against Employees Procedures) or to the Police if it is a criminal allegation
 - Allowing the carer/s and their family to have an independent person or advocate present when interviewed
 - Ensure that there is a fair, competent and speedy assessment of the allegation
 - Linking the carer/s and their family to support services while the allegation is under investigation
- 11) Burrun Dalai will ensure that when allegations are not substantiated, the Service takes steps to repair any damage that has been caused to the carer/s reputation or family relationships through the investigation processes. Burrun Dalai will ensure that the carer/s and their family are:



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- Provided with a briefing session as required by the carer/s
- Provided with counselling services as required by the carer/s
- Provided with a clear statement of the allegations and their lack of substance, also making the statements public if needed or desired by the accused

12) Burrun Dalai will ensure that the Service regularly reviews the complaints and the outcomes to assess the need for changes in Burrun Dalai Policies and Procedures.

- Burrun Dalai will ensure all staff, management and volunteers are provided with information and training as part of their induction on complaints handling. Refresher training will be provided every three years.
- Once a complaint is received the details are recorded on a Complaints Register. This will be maintained by the Chief Executive Officer
- Information regarding complaints is collated and provided to the Board of Directors at each regular Board meeting unless the CEO considers that it is to be communicated to the Board urgently. Complaints are a standing item on the Board meeting agenda.
- The CEO will analyse complaints for trends and lessons learned and determine recommendations for action to be taken.
- Complaints involving a Board Member will be referred to the Board Chair. The Board Chair or a delegate will attempt to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant. Where the Chair is subject to a complaint the complaint should be referred to another member of the Board.

Contact Information

Office	Phone	Address
Kempsey Executive Officer: Casework Managers:	02 6562 1913 Norma Kelly Annette Toomey, Kiralee Davis	Level 1, 21-23 Clyde Street, Kempsey 2440
Tamworth Executive Officer: Casework Managers:	02 6761 3436 Mykol Paulson Gaye Green, Tjanara Corbett	Unit 3, 180-182 Peel Street, Tamworth 2340
Taree Executive Officer: Casework Managers:	02 6552 4194 Amanda Bridge Brett Cook, Riahannon Paulson	86-88 Albert Street, Taree 2430