



Rural Outreach & Support Service

POL106	Privacy
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Controls:

Policy context – this policy relates to:	
Standards	C.2.2 Policy and Procedures
Legislation	<u>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) (PIIP Act)</u> <u>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Regulation 2014 (NSW) (PIIP Regulation)</u> <u>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Regulation 2005 (NSW) (PIIP Regulation) repealed on 1 September 2014 (NSW Legislation website)</u> <u>Privacy Codes of Practice made under PIIP Act (exemptions)</u> <u>Privacy Code of Practice (General) 2003 (NSW)</u> <u>Public Interest Directions made under PIIP Act (exemptions)</u>
Forms, record keeping, other	QF008, QF022, QF041

Introduction:

The following Policy describes the guidelines for upholding right of privacy throughout the service delivery and operations of the Rural Outreach & Support Service (ROSS). This Policy should be read in conjunction with QPOL104 - Service Support and SHS Guidelines and Policy 113 Client Records Management and Documentation Control.

Responsibility: Management Committee, Staff and Volunteers

Objective:

To ensure that personal information is collected, managed and discussed in accordance with NSW Privacy Legislation.

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Policy Statement:

ROSS is committed to protecting and upholding the right to privacy of clients, staff, volunteers, Board/Management Committee members and representatives of agencies we deal with. In particular ROSS 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.

ROSS requires staff, volunteers and Board/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.

ROSS is subject to legislation. The organisation will follow the guidelines of the Australian Privacy Principles in its information management practices.

ROSS 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, Board/Management Committee members 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 personal 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.

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Procedure:

In dealing with personal information, ROSS will:

- ensure privacy for clients, staff, volunteers or Board/Management
- 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 purposes 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 Manager is responsible for content in ROSS 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 ROSS 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 Manager is responsible for safeguarding personal information relating to ROSS staff, Board/Management Committee members, volunteers, contractors and ROSS members.

The Manager 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

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Privacy information for clients

At intake, initial assessment clients will be told by staff 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 an interview room for discussions/meetings.

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 ROSS research, unless the nature of a particular project requires anonymity or an organisation specifically requests it.

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