

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Consumer Rights and Responsibilities Policy</h2>
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Responsible person	Senior Manager of Quality and Compliance
Policy owner	CEO

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the rights and responsibilities of all consumers of Merri Outreach Support Service (MOSS).

MOSS is committed to providing accessible, safe, respectful and person-centred services that uphold the dignity, privacy, participation, cultural safety, choice and self-determination of consumers.

This policy also outlines the responsibilities of consumers in contributing to a safe, respectful and effective service environment for consumers, staff, volunteers, students, contractors and visitors.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All consumers accessing or seeking to access MOSS programs and services.
- Children and young people receiving or affected by MOSS services.
- Family members, carers, advocates and support persons involved in service delivery with the consumer's consent or other lawful authority.
- All MOSS employees, volunteers, students and contractors.
- All MOSS programs and services, including housing, homelessness, community support, aged care, youth and family services, and other funded services.

Where additional rights apply under legislation, regulation, funding agreements or program standards, those rights must also be upheld.

Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Consumer	A person who accesses, receives or seeks to access services provided by MOSS. This may include a child or young person where the service relates to them.
Advocate	A person who supports a consumer to understand and exercise their rights, communicate their views and interests, participate in decisions or raise concerns. An advocate may be a family member, friend, carer, independent advocate or another person chosen by the consumer.
Cultural safety	A service environment that respects and supports a person's identity, culture, values, beliefs and experiences and recognises the impact of discrimination, racism, exclusion and structural inequality.
Informed consent	Voluntary agreement provided after a person has received information they can understand about the proposed action, its purpose, potential consequences, available choices and their right to refuse or withdraw consent.
Personal information	Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable, whether the information is true or recorded in material form.
Self-determination	The right of a person to make decisions and choices about their own life and circumstances, with appropriate information and support where required.
Support plan	A documented plan developed collaboratively with a consumer that identifies the consumer's goals, needs, preferences, agreed supports and actions.
Support person	A person chosen by the consumer to provide emotional, practical, communication or decision-making support.
Unsafe behaviour	Behaviour that creates or may create a risk to the physical or psychological health, safety, dignity or wellbeing of another person. This may include aggressive, abusive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing or sexualised conduct.

Policy

MOSS supports and adheres to the Consumer Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for consumers of community-managed housing and homelessness services.

Consumers have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness and to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Consumers are encouraged to become involved in the running of the service, and their worker can provide information and support to assist with this.

Consumers also have responsibilities that contribute to a safe, respectful and effective service environment for consumers, staff, volunteers and visitors.

Consumer Rights

1. **Right to Self-Determine:** You (and/or your child) are encouraged to make your own decisions about your life. Staff are here to assist you and will not pressure you to go in a particular direction. You are invited to make your own decisions and choices.
2. **Right to an Advocate:** You have the right to an advocate. This is a person who can support you and, where appropriate, act on your behalf. The advocate may be a friend, family member, carer or another person of your choice.
3. **Right to Respect:** You have the right to be treated with respect and to be free from physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse. This includes the right to receive a service free from discrimination. MOSS is committed to providing a safe service environment for all consumers and staff.
4. **Right to Privacy and Confidentiality:** MOSS will provide support in a way that respects your right to privacy and confidentiality. You have the right to access personal information about you held by MOSS and to withdraw consent to release personal information at any time, subject to legal requirements.
5. **Right to Professional Service:** MOSS will endeavour to assist you in accessing services and programs as required. You have the right to be assisted by staff members who have relevant skills, training and experience.
6. **Right to Participate:** You are encouraged to participate in decisions about your support and to provide feedback about MOSS services. We welcome your ideas and suggestions about how services can be improved.
7. **Right to Complain:** You have the right to a good-quality service. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have any other complaint, you have the right to have your complaint heard and dealt with fairly, promptly and without victimisation. You have the right to have an advocate or support person present or acting on your behalf throughout the complaints process.
8. **Right to be Informed:** You have the right to be informed and consulted about available services and other relevant matters. You also have the right to discuss and negotiate changes to your support plan. If you are declined a service, you will be provided with a reason.

- 9. Right to Have Needs Met:** If MOSS cannot meet your needs, with your consent, we will seek to refer you to an alternative and more appropriate service.
- 10. Right of Refusal:** You have the right to refuse a service. Refusing a service will not affect your future access to MOSS services. If your circumstances change, you are encouraged to contact MOSS again as we may be able to assist at another time.
- 11. Right of Non-Disclosure:** You have the right not to disclose information and still receive a service, understanding that this may affect assessment for a particular service response.
- 12. Right to Cultural Safety:** You have the right to culturally safe and respectful access to MOSS services. MOSS recognises the structural inequalities and discrimination experienced by diverse communities, including First Nations peoples, LGBTIQA+ communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and is committed to providing inclusive and respectful services.

Consumer Responsibilities

- 1. Respect Staff and Others:** You are responsible for treating staff members and other consumers with courtesy and respect and for communicating honestly by sharing information, to the best of your ability, to assist staff in providing appropriate support services.
Aggressive, abusive, discriminatory or sexualised behaviour is not accepted.
- 2. Ensure Safety:** You are responsible for engaging in a manner that does not compromise the physical or psychological safety of staff or other consumers.
- 3. Engage with Your Support:** You are asked to work collaboratively with staff in developing and following your support plan, including attending scheduled appointments or notifying staff if you cannot attend.
- 4. Respect Privacy and Boundaries:** You are responsible for avoiding behaviour that infringes on the privacy, dignity or personal boundaries of staff or other consumers.
- 5. Follow Service Guidelines:** You are asked to comply with MOSS policies, procedures and reasonable service expectations, including those relating to safety and respectful conduct.

Responding to unsafe Behaviour

MOSS is committed to maintaining a safe environment for consumers, staff, volunteers and visitors. Where behaviour creates a risk to the safety or wellbeing of others, MOSS may take reasonable steps to manage risk in accordance with MOSS policies and procedures.

References and Related Documents

Name	Location
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Consumer Complaints Policy and Procedure	MOSS SharePoint Library Policies and Procedures
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	MOSS SharePoint Library Policies and Procedures
Consumer Participation Policy	MOSS SharePoint Library Policies and Procedures
Access and Equity Policy	MOSS SharePoint Library Policies and Procedures
Occupational Health and Safety Policy	MOSS SharePoint Library Policies and Procedures
Occupational Violence Policy	MOSS SharePoint Library Policies and Procedures
Child Safe Policy	MOSS SharePoint Library Policies and Procedures
Consumer Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Community-Managed Housing and Homelessness Services	Relevant sector guidance