

Commissioner for Complaints

Quarterly Report

Statistical and Comparative Data

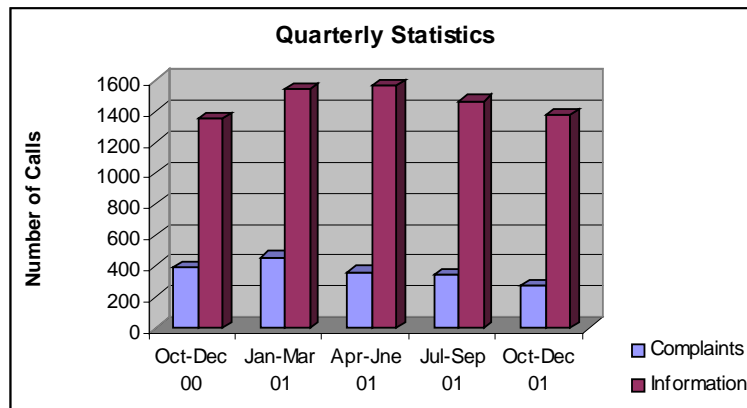
1 October 2001 – 31 December 2001

Contents

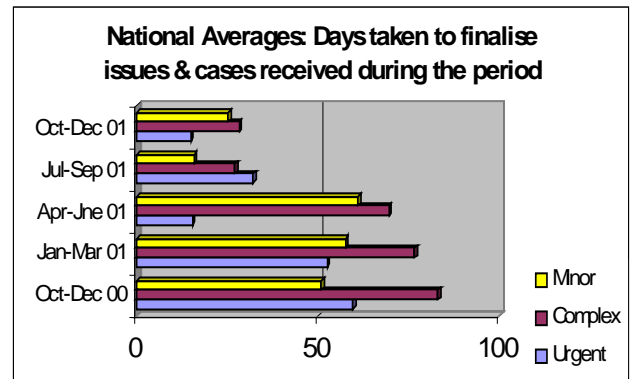
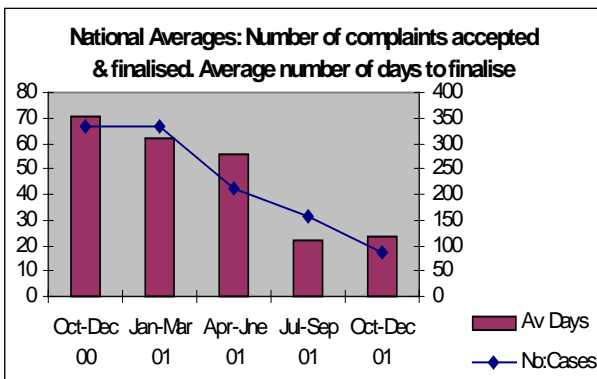
Comparisons in reporting	1
Statistics	2
Recorded Complaints	2
Total Number of Calls	2
Complainant Type	3
Referrals.....	3
Complaint Issues	3
Average Time to Resolve Complaints.....	4
Committee Hearings by State and Territory.....	5
Determination Reviews by State and Territory	5
Non acceptance of Complaints and Appeals	5

Comparisons in reporting

The statistics show a small reduction in the total number of calls sequentially recorded during each reporting quarter in 2001. The number of complaint calls decreased each quarter. During 1 January - 31 March 2001, some 456 complaints were recorded on the database. Between 1 April and 30 June the database identifies 364 complaints. During 1 July - 30 September 344 complaints were documented, with the number falling to 271 complaints in the period 1 October - 31 December 2001.



The following tables shows the average number of days taken to finalise complaints accepted during the reporting periods and the breakdown of urgent, complex and minor complaints during the same periods. The data depicts both a reduction in the number of cases nationally and the average number of days taken nationally to finalise cases.



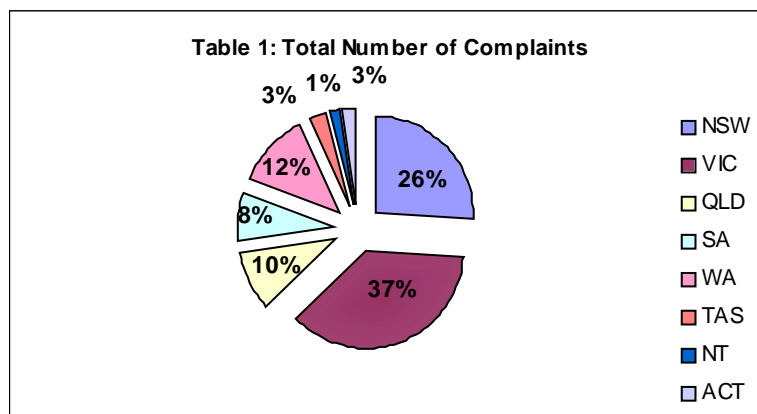
During the reporting period the database records that officers undertook a total of 161 site visits either as part of the preliminary assessment or ongoing management of the issues raised.

Statistics

The following statistical information has been drawn from the Scheme's database. As with all statistics, care should be taken when interpreting these data. It should be noted that changes are currently being made to the database to enhance the capacity of the Scheme to capture, identify and report on information collected as part of its operations. As part of this upgrade, significant attention is being paid to its ability to produce more accurate and meaningful reports suitable to the needs of a broad range of users. As this process is not complete the statistics provided here should be regarded as indicative as opposed to definitive information.

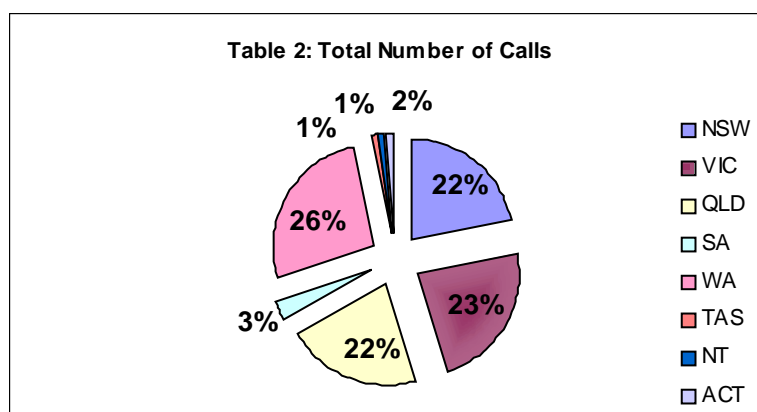
Recorded Complaints

Nationally the Scheme recorded a total of 271 complaints during the reporting period 1 October 2001 to 31 December 2001. Table 1 indicates Victoria recorded the highest number of complaints, 100 or 37% of complaints, followed by New South Wales recording 70 or 26% of the national total. Western Australia recorded 33 complaints, (12%), Queensland recorded 27 (10%), South Australia 22 (8%), Tasmania 8 (3%), the Australian Capital Territory 7 (3%) and the Northern Territory 4 (1%). The majority of complaints related to aged residential care services, however 7 complaints (3%) related to community aged care packages.



Total Number of Calls

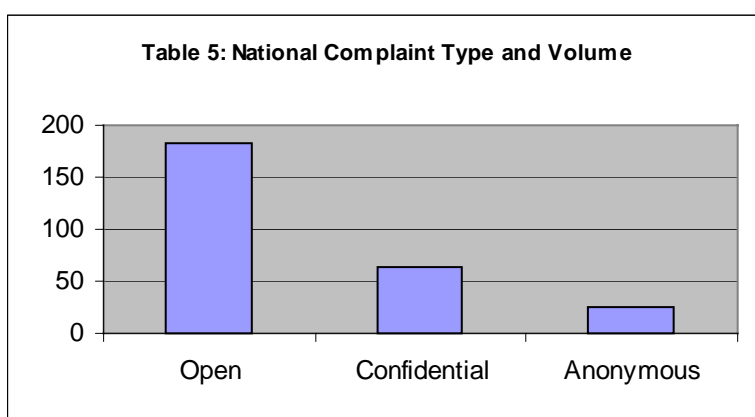
Table 2 shows the breakdown of new cases recorded in each jurisdiction during the reporting period, that is the number of complaints, information and feedback calls shown as a percentage of the total 1643 calls recorded nationally.



Of the 1643 calls taken during the reporting period 271 (16%) were registered as complaints (as above) and 1371 (83%) were registered as information calls. One feedback call was registered.

Complainant Type

Of the 271 complaints recorded nationally during the reporting period, 183 were registered as open complaints, 63 as confidential complaints and 25 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. Table 5 records this information.



As in previous reports, the majority of complaints recorded nationally were lodged by the relatives of residents (53%). Across Australia 17% were lodged by staff of aged care services and 7% by residents. Twelve per cent of complaints were lodged by Others, 6% by friends, and 1% of the complaints were lodged separately by ex-staff members and advocates.

Referrals

During the reporting period a total of 66 complaint issues were referred. It should be noted that a complaint may have a number of elements/issues for resolution and a referral made to an external agency does not necessarily mean that CRS officers take no further action with regard to the complaint. The database identifies that 29 complaint issues were referred to other sections of the Department (predominantly Compliance) for further action and 20 complaint issues were referred to the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency for their consideration. Four were referred to Police and 4 to state health authorities; 1 in the Australian Capital Territory and 3 in New South Wales. Four complaint issues were referred to mediation and 5 were recorded as "Other".

Complaint Issues

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. Tables 7 to 10 show the 7 top complaint issues in each category as a national percentage of the total. It should be noted that the tables do not equal 100% but are presented in this manner for ease of viewing.

The groupings do not vary significantly from previous reporting periods. 76% of the total issues recorded under the Administration heading related to management, personnel behaviour, training and number issues. Issues related to communication account for 33% of all issues lodged under

the Consumer Rights heading and together, matters related to clinical, continence, medication and nutrition comprise 70% of all issues listed under Level of Care.

Table 7: Complaint Issues-Administration

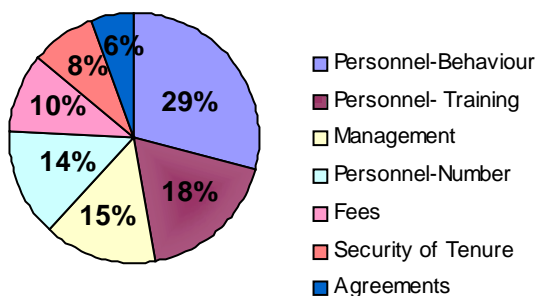


Table 8: Complaint Issues-Consumer Rights

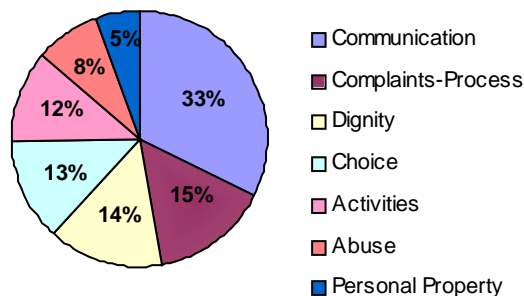


Table 9: Complaint Issues-Environment

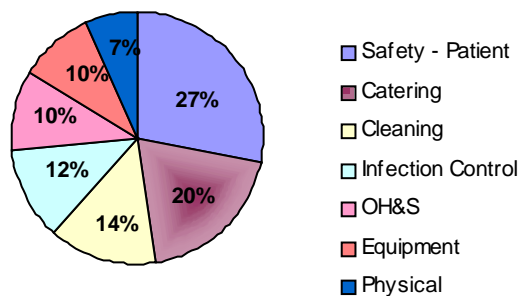
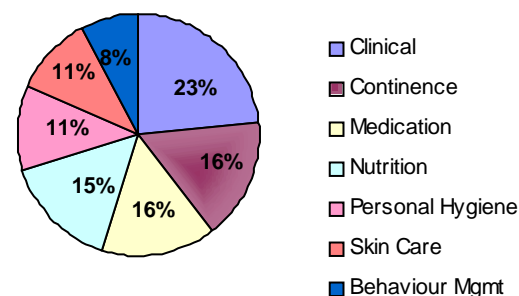


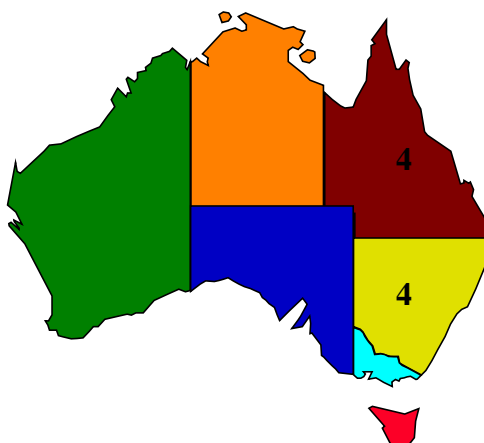
Table 10: Complaint Issues-Level of Care



Average Time to Resolve Complaints

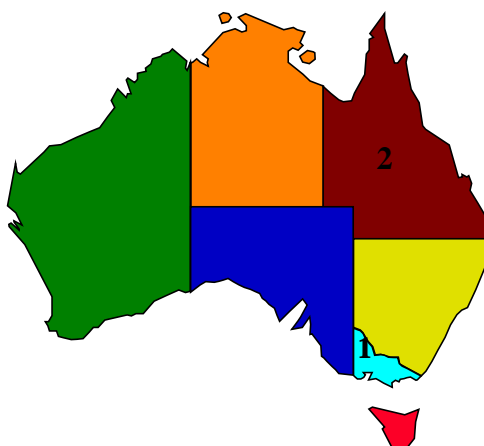
The effective and efficient management of cases is not only dependent on the complexity and number of complaints accepted by the Scheme but also the number and skill base of staff available to complete allocated tasks. The current database does not provide details regarding total cases finalised for a period, however it does provide information regarding new cases both received and finalised within a period. Nationally the average number of days to finalise complaints received within the reporting period was 23.5 days.

Committee Hearings by State and Territory



Complaints Resolution Committees heard a total of 8 cases during the reporting period (4 each in Queensland and New South Wales). One complaint has been scheduled for a further hearing. These complaints involved a range of issues related to the provision of aged residential care services including issues such as access, safety (falls and equipment), the provision of equipment (wheelchair), security of tenure, nutrition, behaviour management, choice (re pharmacy) and medication.

Determination Reviews by State and Territory



During the reporting period 3 Determinations were reviewed, 2 originating from Queensland and 1 from Victoria. Of these, 2 determination decisions were varied and 1 was confirmed. An appeal for review lodged in Queensland during this period was rejected.

Non acceptance of Complaints and Appeals

Based on *last status change* the database indicates that nationally 106 complaints raised during the reporting period were not accepted by the Scheme. The Commissioner for Complaints was asked to provide advice in relation to 6 appeals against the non acceptance of a complaint. Of the 8 appeals mentioned above, the Commissioner recommended that 6 decisions be confirmed and 2 be Set Aside.