

Commissioner for Complaints

Quarterly Report

Statistical and Comparative Data

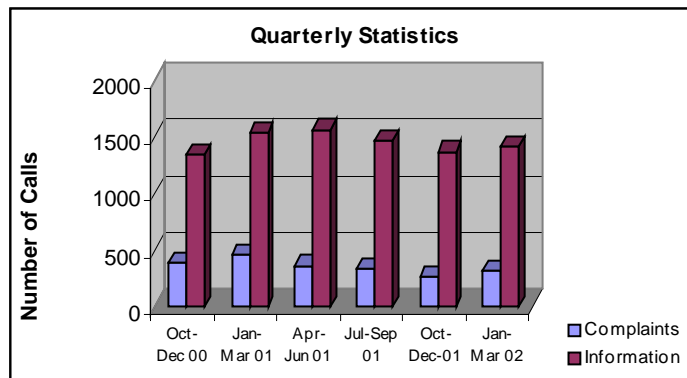
1 January 2002 – 31 March 2002

Contents

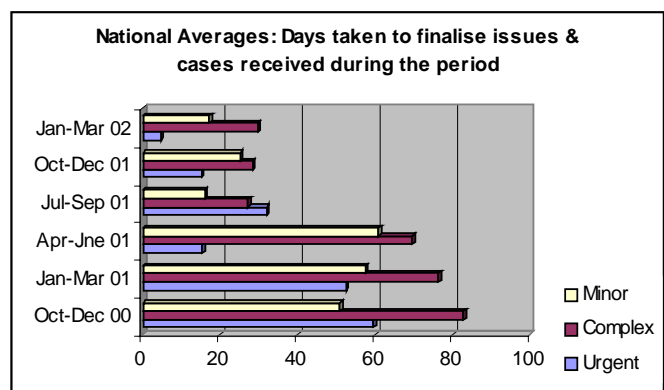
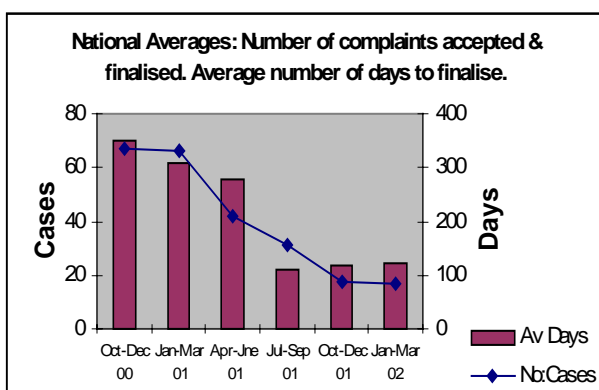
Comparisons in reporting	1
Statistics	1
Recorded Complaints	2
Total Number of Calls	2
Complainant Type	2
Referrals.....	3
Complaint Issues	3
Average Time to Resolve Complaints.....	4
Committee Hearings by State and Territory.....	5
Determination Reviews by State and Territory	5
Non acceptance of Complaints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

Comparisons in reporting

Compared to the previous reporting period the statistics show a small increase in the number of complaints and information calls recorded. Notwithstanding this increase the number of complaint and information calls is lower than that recorded for the same period last year



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 period.



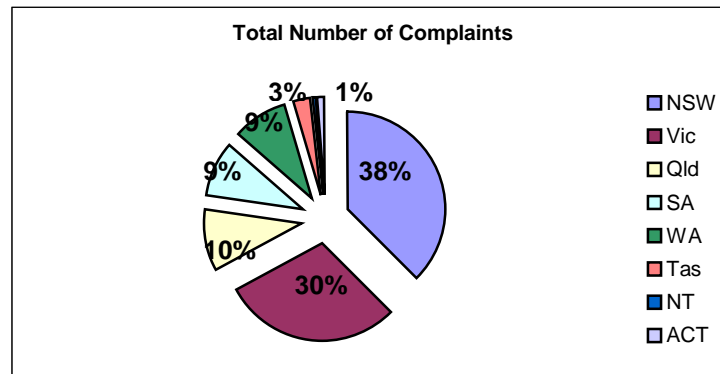
During the reporting period the database records that officers undertook a total of 115 site visits either as part of the preliminary assessment or ongoing management of the issues raised.

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.

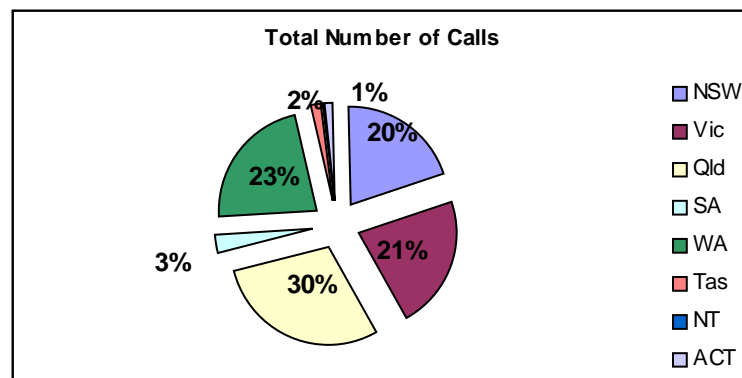
Recorded Complaints

Nationally the Scheme recorded a total of 321 complaints during the reporting period 1 January 2002 to 31 March 2002. New South Wales recorded the highest number of complaints, 120 or 38% of complaints, followed by Victoria where 95 complaints were recorded or 30% of the national total. Queensland recorded 33 complaints (10%), Western Australia recorded 30 (9%), South Australia 29 (9%), Tasmania 9 (3%), the Australian Capital Territory 4 (1%) and the Northern Territory recorded 1 complaint. The majority of complaints related to aged residential care services, however 5 complaints (2%) related to community aged care packages.



Total Number of Calls

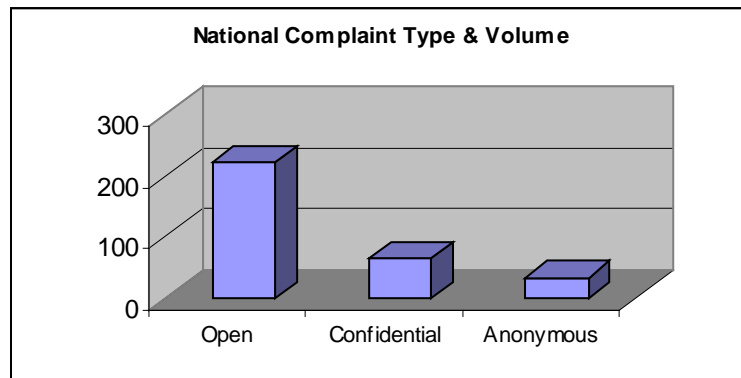
The following table shows the breakdown of calls recorded in each jurisdiction during the reporting period, that is the number of complaints, information and feedback calls, shown as a percentage of the total 1737 calls recorded nationally.



Of the 1737 calls taken during the reporting period 321 (18%) were registered as complaints (as above) and 1416 (82%) were registered as information calls.

Complainant Type

Of the 321 complaints recorded nationally during the reporting period, 222 were registered as open complaints, 65 as confidential complaints and 34 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.



In each jurisdiction the majority of complainants lodged open complaints with the Scheme.

As in previous reports, the majority of complaints recorded nationally were lodged by the relatives of residents (59%). Across Australia 11% were lodged by staff of aged care services and 8% by residents. Some 8% of complaints were lodged by 'others', 5% by friends, 4% by ex-staff, 1% by advocates and a further 4% of complainants were recorded as 'unknown'.

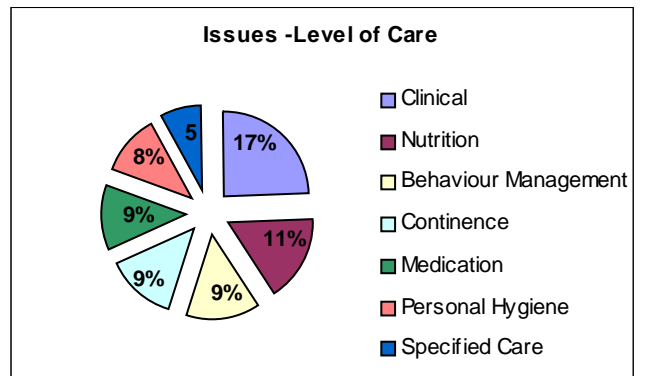
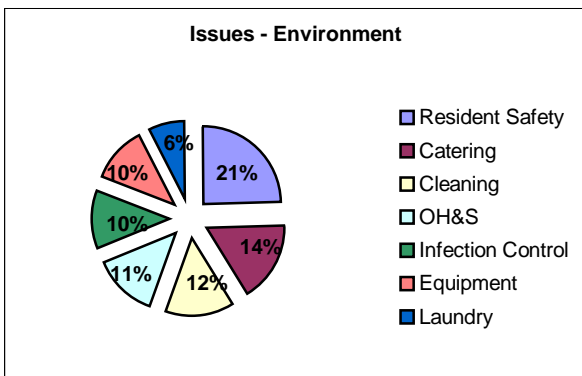
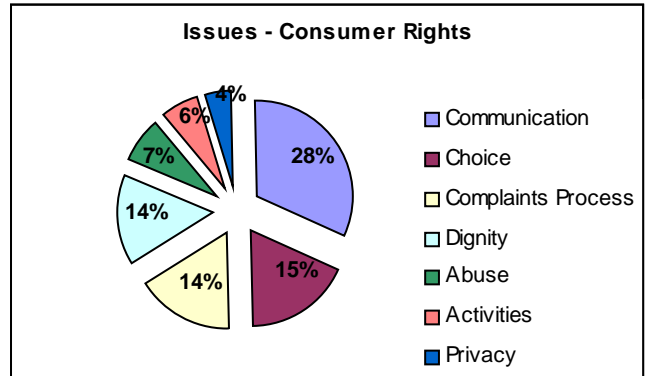
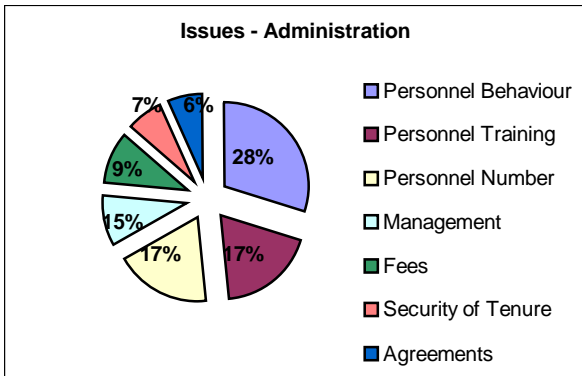
Referrals

During the reporting period a total of 50 referrals were made. 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 28 complaint issues were referred to other sections of the Department (predominantly Compliance) for further action, 15 complaint issues were referred to the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency for their consideration and three matters were referred to state health authorities. One complaint was referred to mediation, one to a committee and 2 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. The following tables 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.

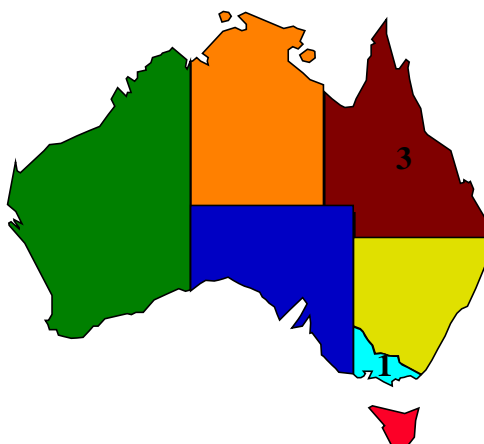
The groupings do not vary significantly from previous reporting periods. 62% of the total issues recorded under the Administration heading related to personnel behaviour, training and number issues. Issues related to communication account for 28% of all issues lodged under the Consumer Rights heading. 21% of issues raised within the environment grouping related to resident safety and matters related to clinical care comprised 17% of all issues listed under Level of Care (see over).



Average Time to Resolve Complaints

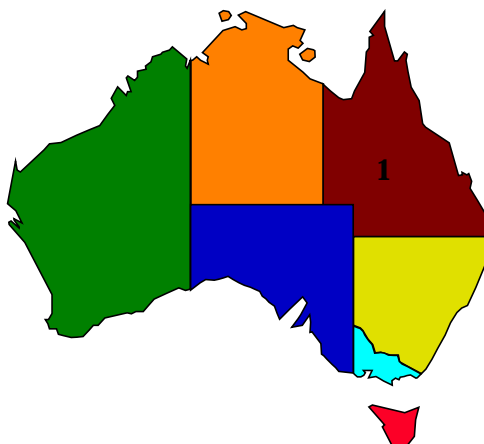
The effective and efficient management of cases is not only dependent on the complexity and number of complaints accepted by the Scheme but also the number and skill base of staff available to complete allocated tasks. The current database does not provide details regarding total cases finalised for 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 24.6 days.

Committee Hearings by State and Territory



Complaints Resolution Committees heard a total of 4 cases during the reporting period (3 in Queensland and 1 in Victoria). The matters coming before Committees are increasing in complexity. The complaints dealt with during this reporting period involved a range of issues including: resident rights, care, food, hygiene, activities, medication management, communication, confidentiality, security of tenure, fees and weight loss.

Determination Reviews by State and Territory



During the reporting period 1 Determination from Queensland was reviewed. The determination was confirmed with one variation and involved access to the facility and resident. One application for review lodged in Queensland during this period was not accepted.

Non acceptance of Complaints and Appeals

Based on *last status change* the database indicates that, across Australia, a total of 77 complaints were not accepted by the Scheme during the period ending 31 March 2002. This number includes complaints that were received prior to 1 January 2002.

The Commissioner for Complaints was asked to provide advice in relation to 5 appeals against the non acceptance of a complaint. The Commissioner recommended that 3 be Confirmed and 2 Set Aside.