

# **Commissioner for Complaints**

## **Quarterly Report Statistical Data**

**1 July 2003 – 30 September 2003**

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## National Statistics

The statistical information for the following graphs is derived from various reporting elements of the Complaint Resolution Database.

### Total Number of Calls

During this reporting period the Scheme dealt with a total of 1856 calls. The following figure 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 1856 calls recorded nationally.

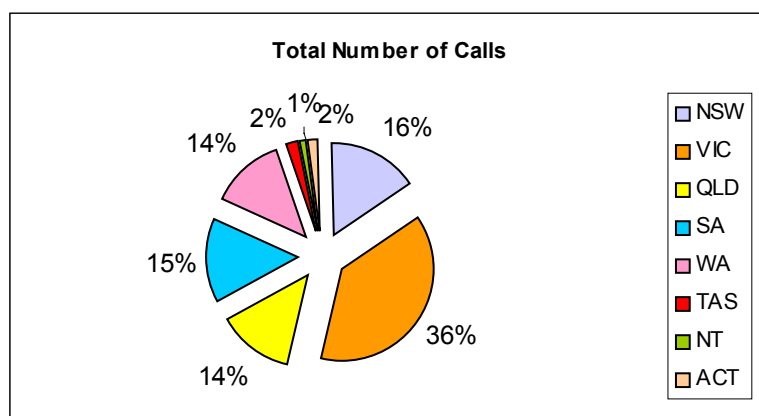


Fig 1: Total Number of Calls by Jurisdiction

Of the 1856 calls recorded, 283 (15 per cent) were registered as complaints and 1573 (85 per cent) were registered as information calls.

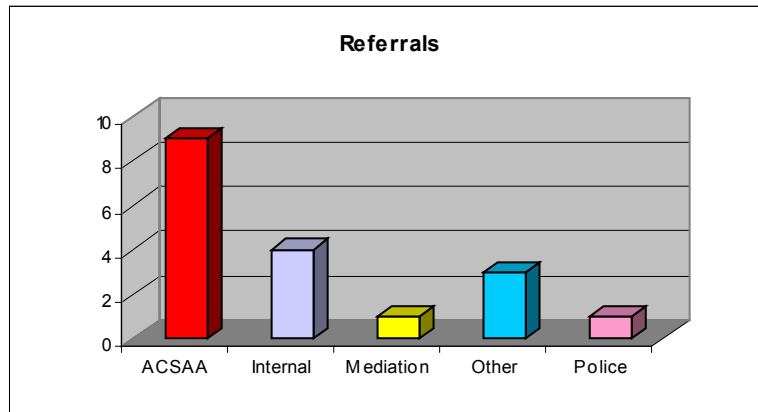
### Recorded Complaints

The majority of the 283 complaints recorded during the reporting period related to aged residential care services, however, ten complaints (4 per cent) related to community aged care packages. As in previous reports, the relatives of residents (60 per cent) lodged the majority of complaints recorded nationally. Across Australia 11 per cent of complaints were lodged by staff of aged care services and five per cent by residents or care recipients. Five per cent were lodged by ex-staff. Friends lodged three per cent of complaints. Advocates lodged one per cent of complaints. Four per cent of complaints were listed as being lodged by 'others', and three per cent by 'unknown'.

#### 3.2.1 Referrals

The database identifies a total of 18 referrals made during the reporting period. The statistical report identifies that 4 complaint issues were referred to other sections of the Department for further action. Nine matters were referred to the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, one matter was referred to the police, three referrals are recorded as 'Other' and one matter was recorded as being referred to mediation. During this and the previous three reporting quarterly periods no matters are recorded as being referred to a Complaints Resolution Committee therefore the accuracy of data input is questioned.

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 Scheme officers take no further action with regard to the complaint.



**Fig 2: Referrals**

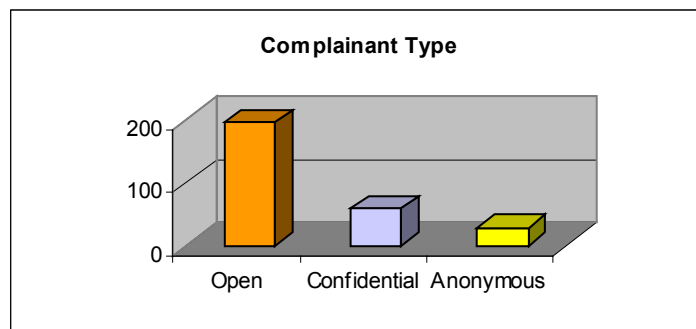
### Site Visits

During the reporting period the database records that officers undertook a total of 129 site visits either as part of the preliminary assessment or ongoing management of the issues raised. A total of 112 facilities were visited and issues relating to 138 individual complaints were discussed.

### Complainant Type

Of the 283 complaints recorded nationally during the reporting period, 196 (69 per cent) were registered as open complaints, 59 (21 per cent) as confidential complaints and 28 (10 per cent) 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.



**Fig 3: Complainant Type and Volume**

### Issue Priorities

Complaints are assessed as either urgent or complex. During the reporting period four issues were assessed as urgent. A further 193 complaints were assessed as complex.

## Average Time to Resolve Complaints

The database provides information regarding new cases both received and finalised within a period. During the reporting period the Scheme finalised 116 cases. The average number of days to finalise complaints received within the reporting period was 28.2 days.

At the end of the reporting period the data show that, nationally, 15 per cent of cases were incomplete, 26 per cent were ongoing, 41 per cent had been finalised and 18 per cent had been withdrawn.

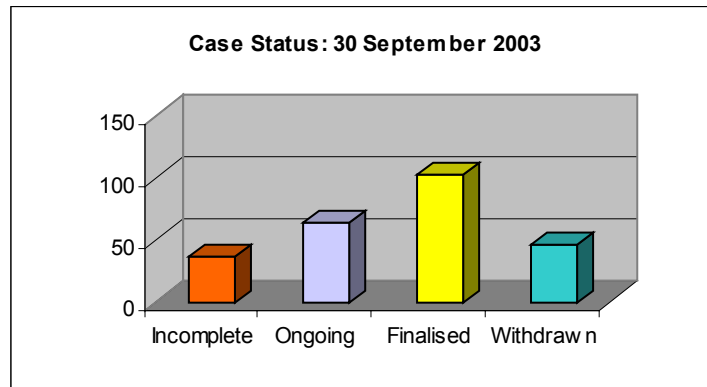


Fig 4: Case Status: End of the reporting period

## 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 per cent but are presented in this manner for ease of viewing. The groupings do not vary significantly from previous reporting periods.

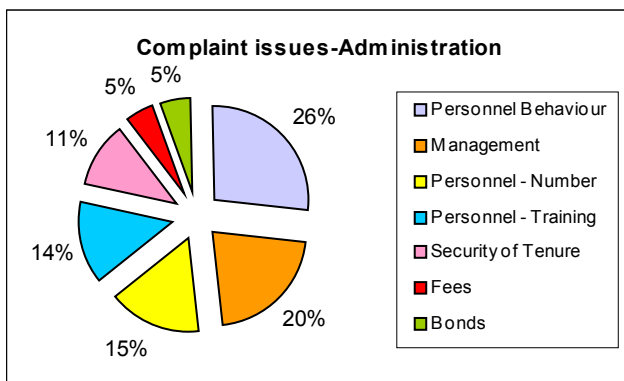


Fig 5: Complaint Issues: Administration

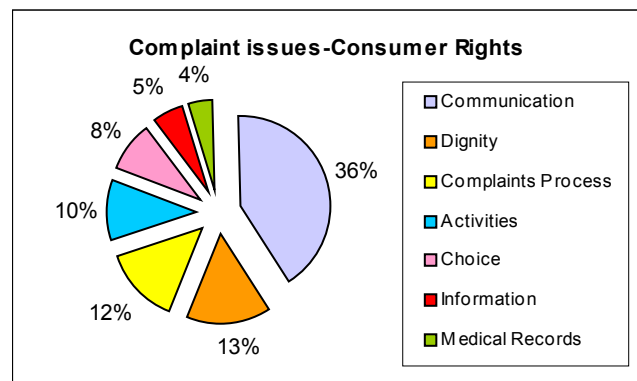


Fig 6: Complaint Issues: Consumer Rights

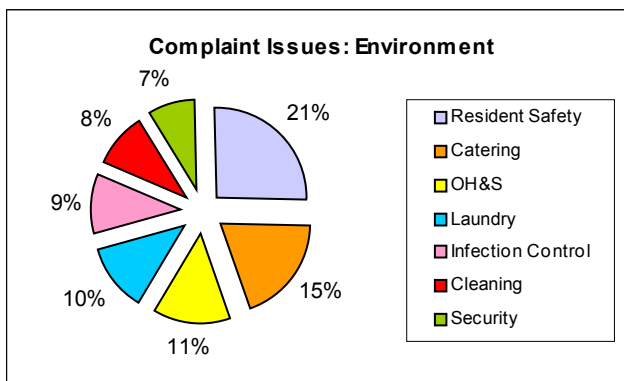


Fig 7: Complaint Issues: Environment

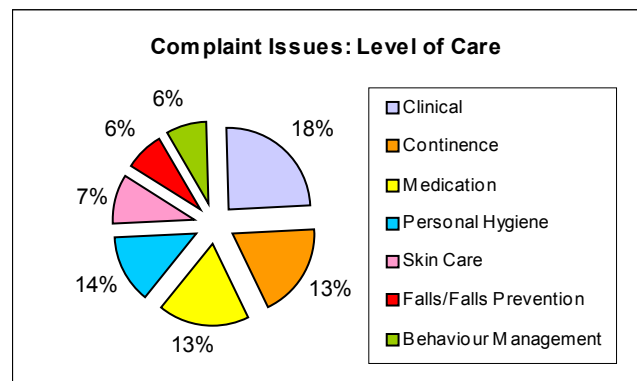


Fig 8: Complaint Issues: Level of Care

Fifty five per cent of the total issues recorded under the Administration heading related to personnel behaviour, number and training issues. Communication issues made up 36 per cent of all issues lodged under the Consumer Rights heading. The safety of care recipients made up 21 per cent of the issues lodged under the Environment heading. A total of 222 issues were recorded under the Level of Care heading, 21 per cent of which related to clinical care and medication issues. Fig 11 shows the seven most frequently recorded complaint issues, across the four groups, during this reporting quarter.

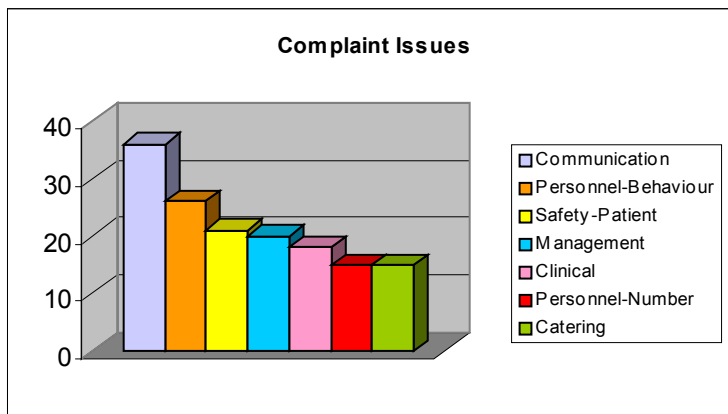


Fig 9: Most frequently recorded complainant issues

### Non acceptance of Complaints and Appeals

Based on *last status change* the database indicates that, across Australia, a total of 42 complaints were not accepted by the Scheme during the period ending 30 September 2003. Ten of these complaints were received prior to 1 July 2003.

Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory did not record any non-accepted complaints. Seventy-four per cent of the total complaints not accepted originated in Victoria, 14 per cent in Tasmania, 5 per cent each in New South Wales and Western Australia and 2 per cent in the Northern Territory. The following figure shows the breakdown by jurisdiction, including those complaints that were received prior to 1 July 2003 and not accepted during this reporting period.

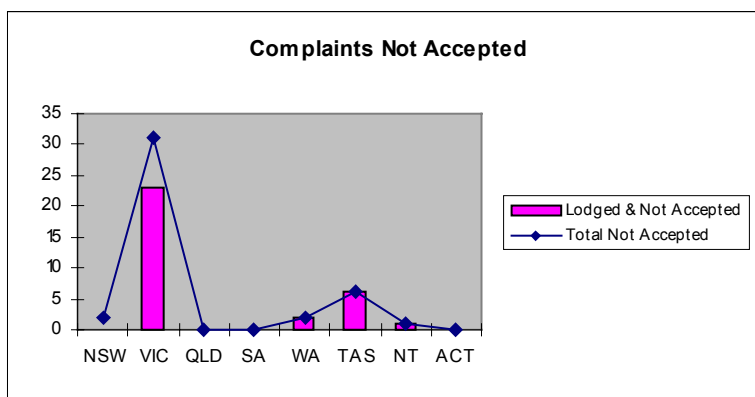


Fig 10: Total Number of Complaints Not Accepted

During this quarter, the Commissioner for Complaints was asked to provide advice in relation to three appeals against the non-acceptance of a complaint. Two appeals originated in Victoria and the Commissioner recommended that these decisions be confirmed. One appeal was lodged in Queensland and the Commissioner recommended that this decision be confirmed.

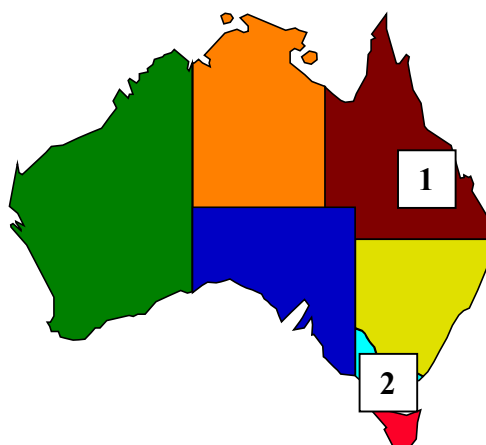


Fig 11: Appeals against Non Acceptance

### Committee Hearings by State and Territory

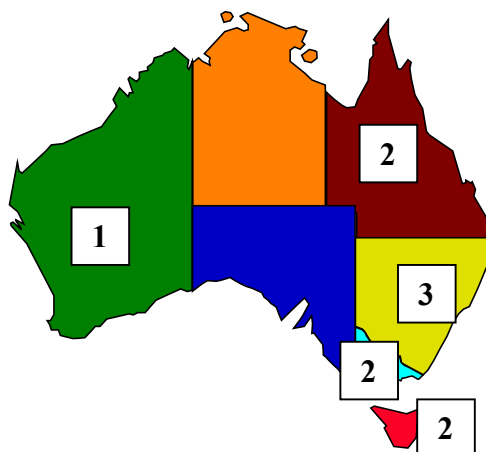


Fig 12: Committee hearings

A total of 10 referrals to Complaints Resolution Committees were made for the period, one of which was a rehearing (three in New South Wales, 2 each in Tasmania, Queensland and Victoria and 1 in Western Australia). Of these, 5 complaints have been heard and determination decisions provided. Two hearings have been conducted with determinations to be provided. Three hearings have been scheduled for the next quarter.

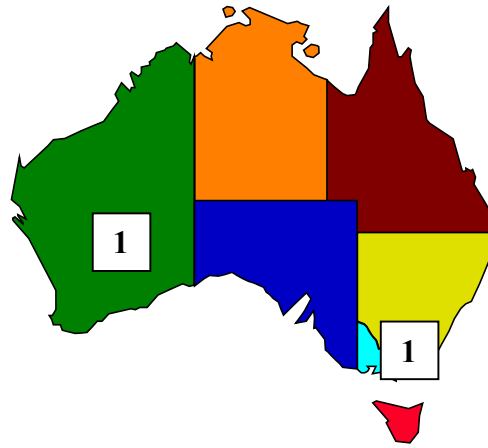
The complaints involved a range of issues including internal complaints mechanisms, communication, behaviour management, resident safety, privacy and dignity, care (including pressure care, updating and monitoring of care plans and diversional therapy) and staff training.

Three determinations were provided on referrals to Complaints Resolution Committees from the previous quarter.

### Determination Reviews by State and Territory

Two determinations resulted in applications for determination reviews for this quarter. A determination review for Western Australia was conducted with the review decision to come, while a determination review for Victoria will be conducted in the next quarter.

A determination review was conducted in this quarter for which a Determination Review Panel was appointed last quarter. This was for Victoria and the original determination was confirmed with variations.

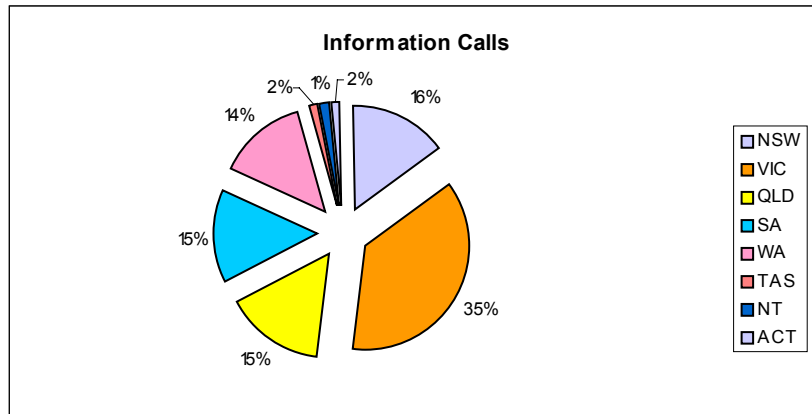


**Fig 13: Determination Reviews by State and Territory**



## Information Statistics

During the reporting period 85 per cent of the calls registered by the Scheme (1576) were recorded as information calls. All jurisdictions recorded a higher percentage of information calls when compared to the number of complaints registered. The following figure shows a percentage breakdown of the total number of information calls received during the period.



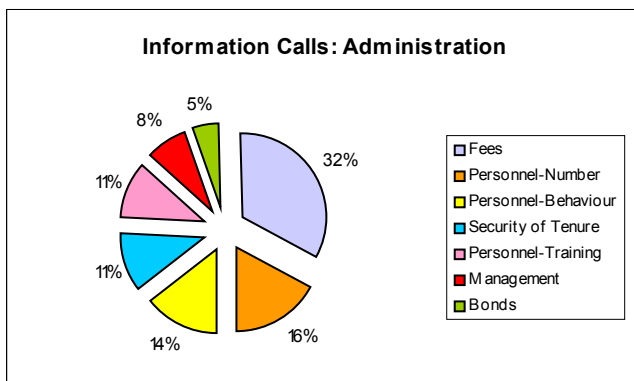
**Fig 14: Total number of information calls by jurisdiction**

The majority of callers (81 per cent) were seeking general information, however, 19 per cent of calls (292) sought information outside the jurisdiction of the Scheme.

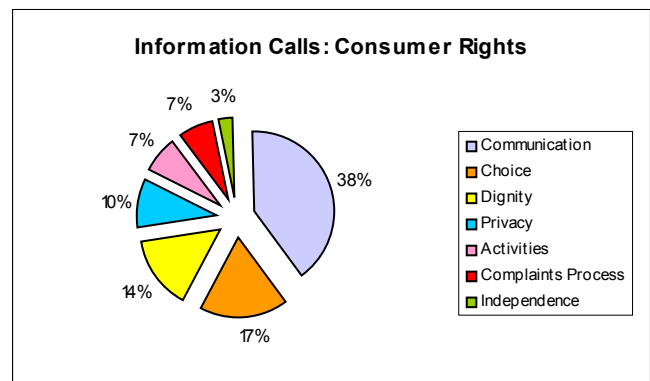
At a national level, 56 per cent of the information calls registered were made by relatives, 14 per cent by currently employed staff, 11 per cent by care recipients, 2.5 per cent by advocates, 2.5 per cent by friends and 1 per cent by ex-staff. Twelve per cent were recorded as 'other' and 1 per cent as 'unknown' or ex-staff.

The database shows that 50 per cent (643) of information calls received by the Scheme nationally were concluded in less than 15 minutes. Thirty per cent of calls (380) took between 15 and 30 minutes, 17 per cent (216) between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Three per cent of calls (37) were concluded between 1 and 3 hours. Two calls were recorded as taking over 3 hours, both originating from New South Wales.

The database registers the nature of the information calls using the same key words and groupings that are applied in the recording of information about complaints. It is important to note that this data are not recorded in the case of all information calls received, nor is it relevant for those calls seeking information outside the Scheme. Data captured in the following figures show the top seven issues in each category as a percentage of the total. Figures do not equal 100 per cent but are presented in this manner for ease of viewing.



**Fig 15: Information Calls – Administration**



**Figure 16: Information Calls – Consumer Rights**

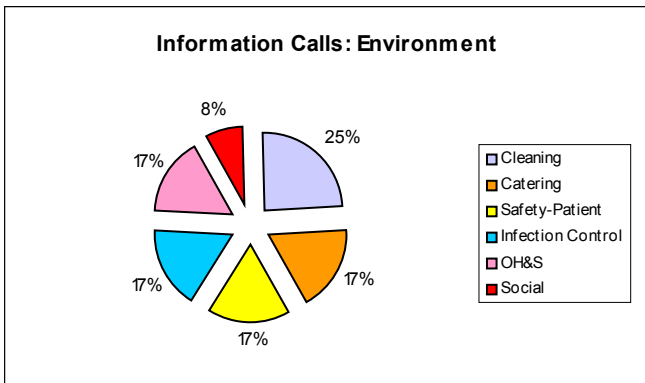


Fig 17: Information Calls – Environment

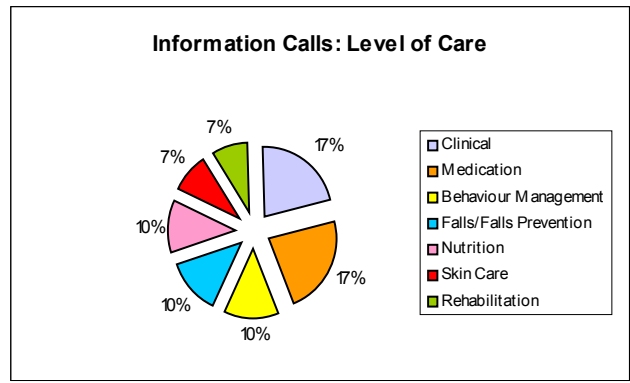


Fig 18: Information Calls – Level of Care

Figure 19 shows the most significant issues for people seeking information during this reporting period.

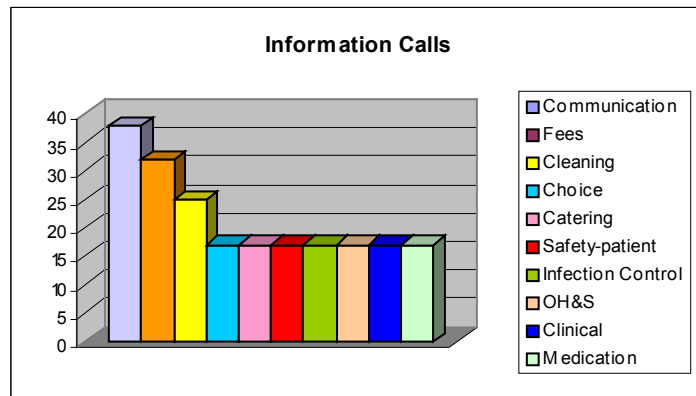


Fig 19: Frequent information sought