



Commissioner for Complaints

Quarterly Report

Statistical Data

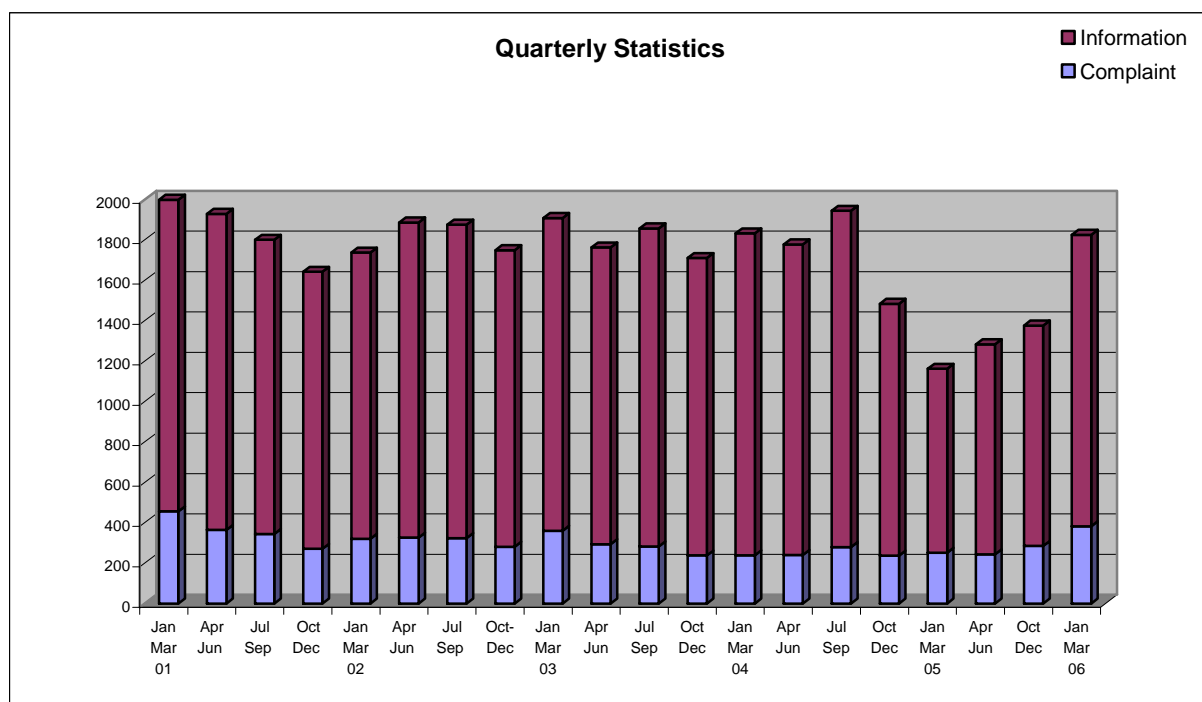
1 January 2006 – 31 March 2006

Contents

NATIONAL STATISTICS	1
Total Number of Calls.....	3
Recorded Complaints	3
Site Visits.....	4
Complainant Type.....	4
Issue Priorities.....	5
Average Time to Resolve Complaints	5
Complaint Issues.....	5
Non acceptance of Complaints and Appeals.....	6
Reconsideration of a Decision to Cease Dealing with a Complaint.....	7
Referrals and Committee Hearings by State and Territory	7
Determination Reviews by State and Territory	7
INFORMATION STATISTICS.....	8

National Statistics

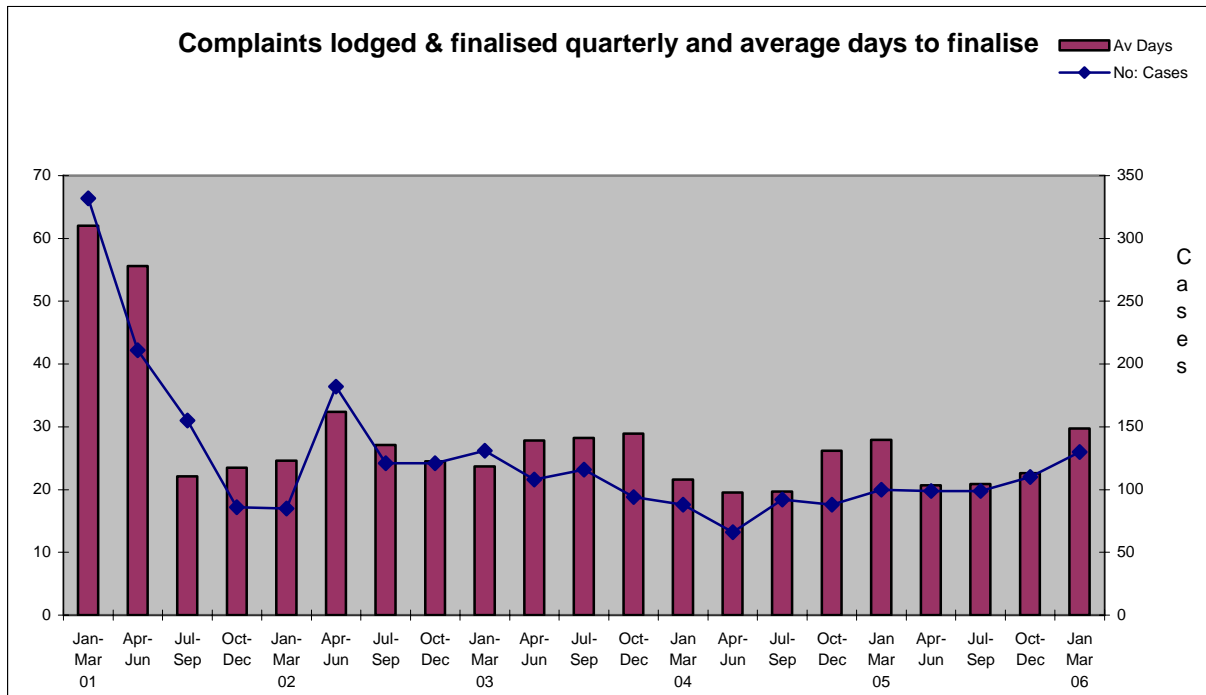
The data show that the number of complaints and information calls recorded each quarter is proportionately similar. The data show that, during the current reporting quarter, there was an overall increase in both complaints and information calls and the total number of calls received by the Scheme was higher than that registered since the July-September quarter in 2004. This increase is thought to be due to media interest in aged care during the reporting quarter.



Quarterly statistics January 2001 – March 06

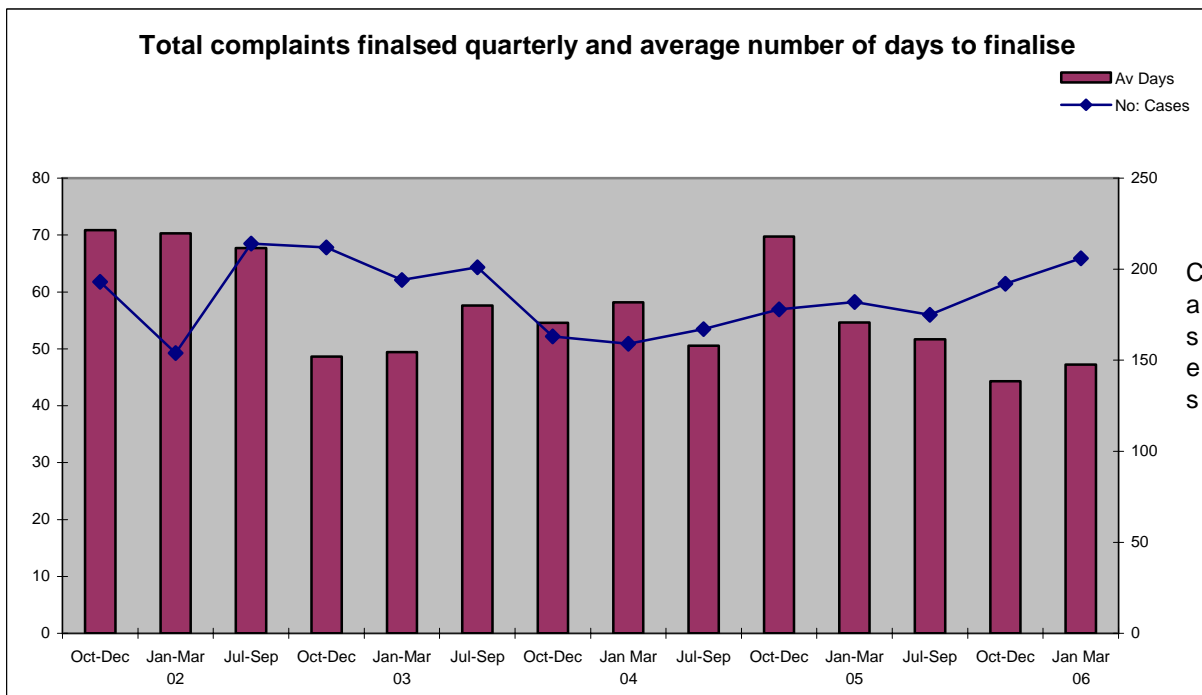
The next figure shows the average number of days taken to finalise complaints accepted during all reporting periods from the January-March 2001 quarter. The data show that the number of complaints lodged and finalised during this quarter equate to the numbers reported in the January-March quarter in 2003. The average number of days taken to finalise complaints has risen.

During the January-March quarter 2003, the average number of days to finalise 131 complaints was 23.7 days compared with the current reporting quarter where the average number of days taken to finalise 130 complaints was 29.74 days. It is thought the increase in the average number of days taken this quarter is possibly related to the sudden influx of complaints and information calls and the complexity of the complaints managed by the Scheme during this period.



Cases lodged and finalised during each quarter

Each quarter the Scheme finalises a number of complaints that were accepted prior to the beginning of the current reporting period. The figure below depicts the total number of complaints finalised in a period and the average number of days to finalise all complaints resolved during the period. Between 1 January 2006 and 31 March 2006 the Scheme finalised a total of 206 complaints; 76 of those complaints were lodged prior to 1 January 2006. This figure includes complaints finalised via negotiation, mediation, determination as well as complaints that were not accepted, withdrawn or where the Scheme made a decision to cease to deal with the matter.

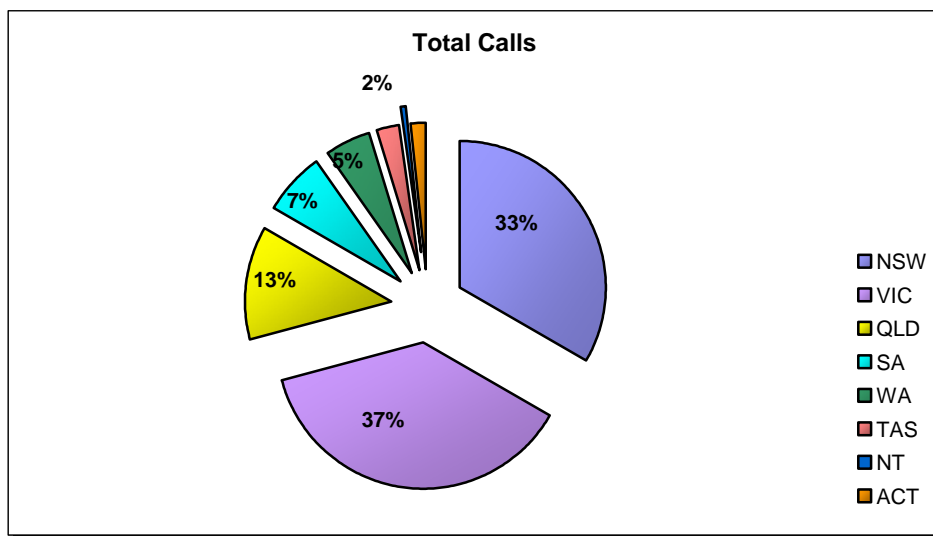


Total number of complaints finalised during the quarter and average days to finalise

The following data is derived from various reporting elements of the Scheme's database and provide information relating to the operation of the Scheme during the reporting period 1 January–31 March 2006. Irregularities in data reports generated from the database and poor data input continue to pose problems for those responsible for data analysis and reporting and therefore, as with all statistics, care should be taken when interpreting these data. As far as is possible the report provides an update on the statistical information, issues and trends identified in previous reports.

Total Number of Calls

During this reporting period the Scheme dealt with a total of 1,825 calls. The following figure shows the breakdown of calls recorded in each jurisdiction, that is the number of complaints and information calls, shown as a percentage of the total number of calls recorded nationally.



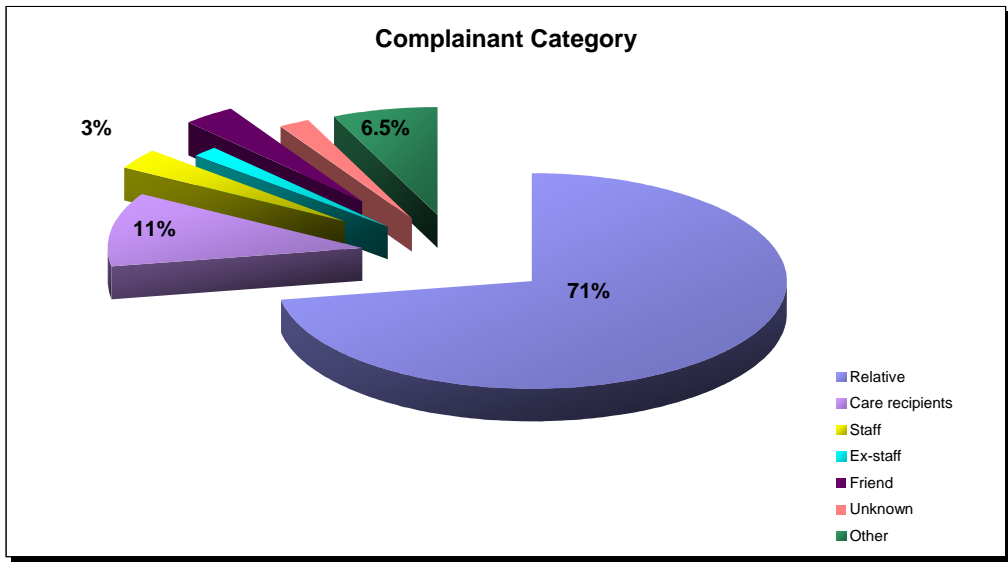
Total Number of Calls by Jurisdiction

Of the 1,825 calls recorded, 382 (21 per cent) were registered as complaints and 1,443 (79 per cent) were registered as information calls.

Recorded Complaints

The majority (94 per cent) of the 358 complaints recorded during the reporting period related to aged residential care services. Twenty-one complaints (five per cent) related to Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) and one per cent of complaints related to flexible care services.

As in previous reports, the relatives of residents lodged the majority of complaints recorded nationally (71 per cent). Across Australia, care recipients lodged 11 per cent of complaints, friends and staff each lodged three per cent and ex staff lodged 1.5 per cent. Three per cent of complaints were registered as 'unknown' and a further 6.5 per cent of complainants were recorded as 'other'.



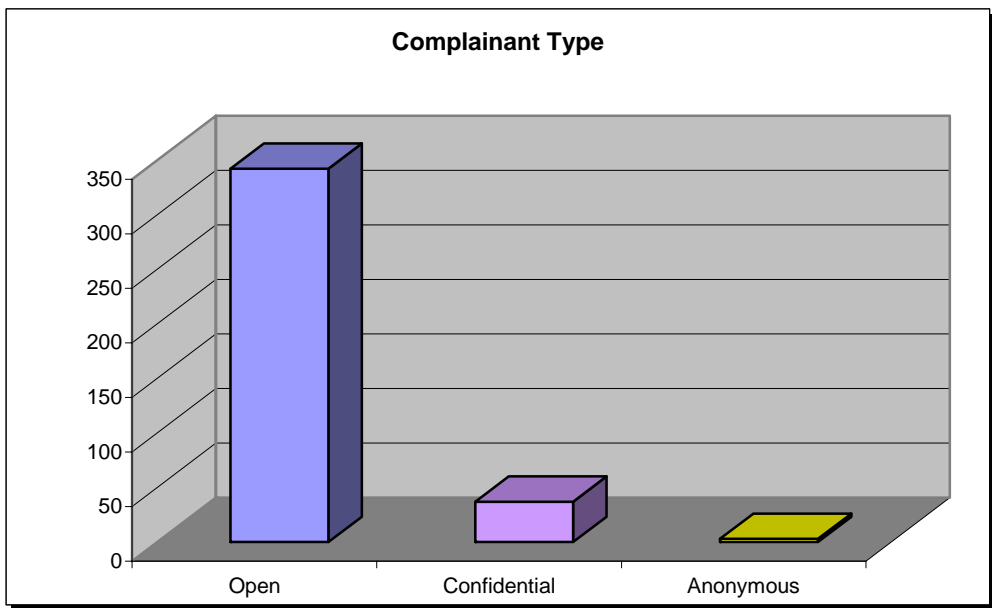
Complainant Category

Site Visits

During the reporting period the database records that officers undertook a total of 122 site visits either as part of the preliminary assessment or ongoing management of the issues raised. A total of 104 facilities were visited and issues relating to 120 individual complaints were discussed.

Complainant Type

Of the 382 complaints recorded nationally during the reporting period, 342 (89 per cent) were registered as open complaints, 37 (10 per cent) as confidential complaints and three (one per cent) as anonymous complaints. The small number of anonymous complaints is thought to be a manifestation of recording practices and not a true reflection of the numbers of anonymous complaints. Readers should also 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.



Complainant Type and Volume

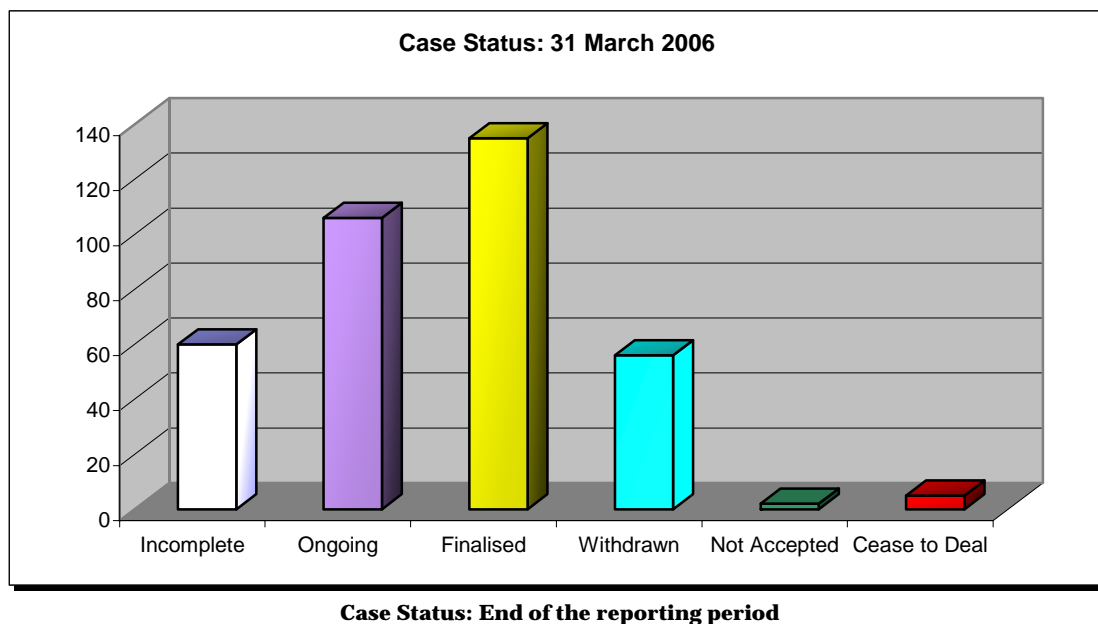
Issue Priorities

Complaint issues are assessed as either urgent or complex. During the reporting period the database identified that from 382 complaints staff prioritised 466 issues. Of those, nine issues were assessed as urgent and 457 issues were assessed as complex.

Average Time to Resolve Complaints

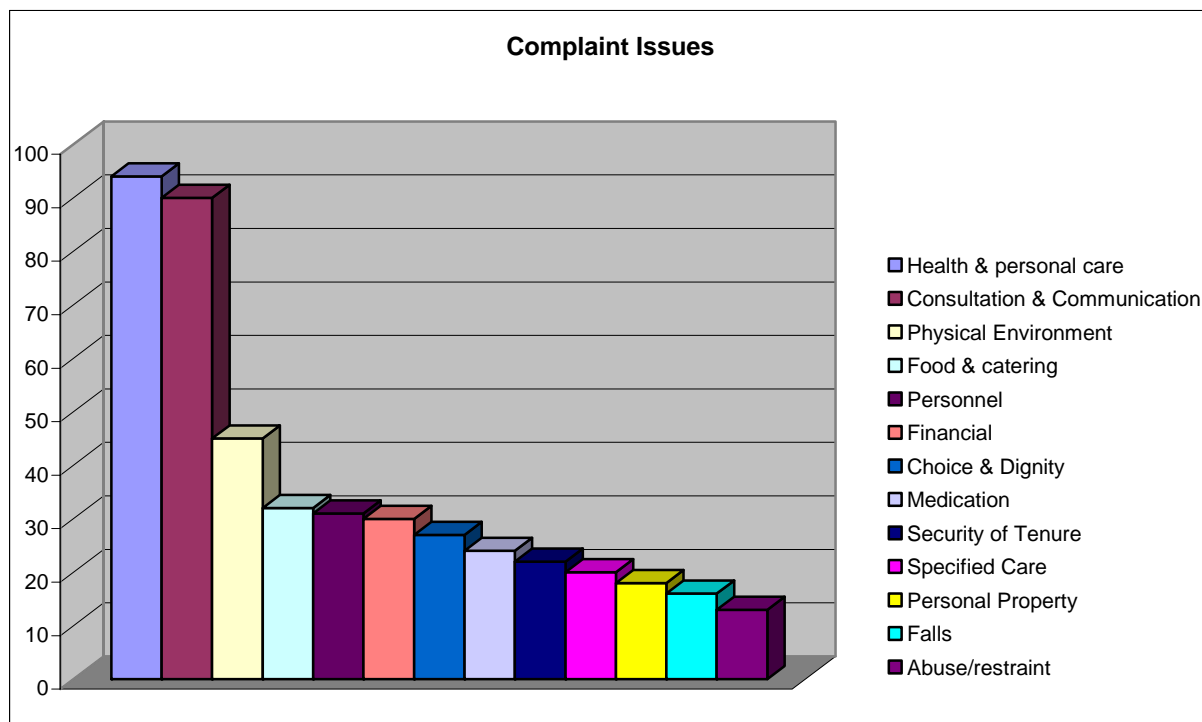
The database provides information regarding new cases both received and finalised within a period. During the quarter the Scheme finalised 131 cases that were lodged during the reporting period. The average number of days to finalise complaints received within the reporting period was 29.74 days. However, during the quarter the Scheme finalised a total of 207 complaints. The average number of days to finalise all complaints, including those lodged prior to 1 January 2006, was 47.23 days. The higher figure reported in the previous quarter resulted when two complaints of long standing were finalised. Ongoing analysis during this reporting quarter has seen a reduction in the number of outstanding complaints identified nationally at any one time.

At the end of the reporting period the data show that, nationally, 16 per cent of cases were incomplete, 29 per cent were ongoing, 38 per cent had been finalised, 15 per cent had been withdrawn, one per cent were not accepted and the Scheme made a decision to cease to deal with 5 complaints (one per cent).



Complaint Issues

The Scheme uses 13 key words to record complaint issues. Officers apply one keyword to each separate issue and, wherever possible, are encouraged to create one issue per case. That is, officers are asked to choose the one keyword that outlines the principal underlying concern for the case. Current practice is to create second issues only if necessary and only where a different keyword is applied. The following figure shows the most frequently recorded complaint issues during this reporting quarter.



Most frequently recorded complainant issues

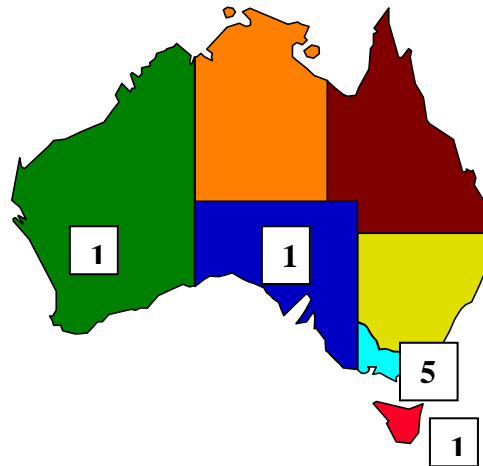
Complaints registered necessarily comprise at least one issue and, given the complexity of complaints, it is expected that the number of issues would exceed the number of complaints. The database report identifies 382 complaints and records 462 identified issues. [In another report identifying issue priorities the database report identifies 466 issues]. As in most reporting quarters, health and personal care and consultation & communication are the most frequently recorded complaint issues. The third most common issue recorded this quarter related to 'physical environment'. This was also the third most common issue during the January-March quarter in 2005; however, the incidence generally sits around fifth position and has been as low as seventh position on the scale of most frequently recorded complaint issues.

Non acceptance of Complaints and Appeals

Based on *last status change* the database indicates that, across Australia, a total of 26 complaints were not accepted by the Scheme during the reporting period. Eight of these complaints were received prior to 1 January 2006.

Eighteen complaints lodged during the reporting period were not accepted. Of those, 15 were not accepted in Victoria, one in New South Wales and two in South Australia respectively.

During this quarter, the Commissioner for Complaints was asked to provide advice in relation to eight appeals against the non-acceptance of a complaint. This equates to 31 per cent of all non acceptances recorded during the period. Five appeals were lodged in Victoria and one each in Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania. The Commissioner recommended that four of these decisions be confirmed. In each of three other appeals the Commissioner recommended that the decision in relation to some compliant issues be confirmed and be set aside in others and substituted with a decision to accept those issues. One appeal recommendation is to come.

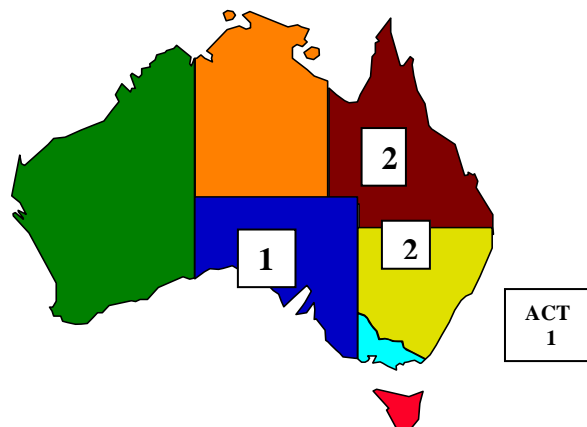


Appeals against Non Acceptance

Reconsideration of a Decision to Cease Dealing with a Complaint

During the reporting quarter the Scheme made a decision to cease dealing with five complaints. No applications for reconsideration of a decision were received or sent to the Commissioner for advice.

Referrals and Committee Hearings by State and Territory



Committee hearings this quarter

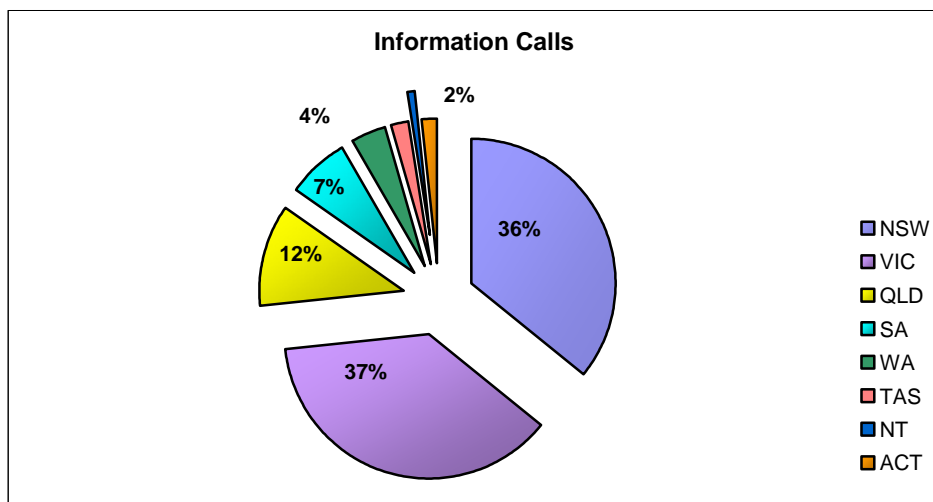
During the reporting period nine complaints were referred for determination and six hearings were conducted. A total of four determination reports were provided. Of these, two related to complaints referred during the previous period and two to complaints referred and heard during the current period. The complaints involved a range of issues including consultation, complaints process, communication, medication, bowel management, clinical care, weight loss, security of tenure, fees and charges, wound and pressure care, dental care and personal hygiene.

Determination Reviews by State and Territory

One Determination Review, relating to a complaint originating in South Australia, was conducted during the reporting period. The review panel confirmed the original committee's decision. An Application for Review was received in relation to a complaint originating in Queensland and this matter will be reviewed during the April-June 2006 reporting quarter.

Information Statistics

During the reporting period 79 per cent of the calls registered by the Scheme (1,443) were recorded as information calls. The following figure shows a percentage breakdown of the total number of information calls received during the period.



Total number of information calls by jurisdiction

The majority of callers (67 per cent) were seeking general information. Thirty-three per cent of callers (470) sought information outside the jurisdiction of the Scheme; this is slightly higher than the previous reporting period. As noted previously Western Australia and Queensland have revised the management and recording of information calls. Whilst complaints officers continue to respond to all information calls, in the main only those relating to matters falling within the Scheme's jurisdiction are recorded on the database.

The Scheme recorded the category of 738 callers (51 per cent) seeking information, that is, the category of 705 callers (49 per cent) is unknown. Of the 738 identified callers, ten per cent were listed as 'other'. Forty-nine per cent of callers identified themselves as relatives, 11 per cent as care recipients, 18 per cent as currently employed staff, two per cent as ex-staff, five per cent as friends and four per cent as advocates.

The database shows that the time taken to manage information calls was recorded in 1,139 cases or 79 per cent of all calls taken. Of those recorded, 592 of information calls (52 per cent) received by the Scheme nationally were concluded in less than 15 minutes. A further 36 per cent of calls (406) took between 15 and 30 minutes, 10 per cent (119) between 30 minutes and one hour and two per cent of calls (22) were concluded between one and three hours.

The database no longer records the nature of information calls.