



8.2 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Introduction

Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA) is committed to handling the personal information of our members, consumer representatives, staff, volunteers or members of the public with openness, transparency and accountability. HCCA respects the right of privacy and protects personal information of any individual making contact with the organisation for any purpose. This policy has been based on the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012.

Purpose

This Privacy Policy outlines how HCCA manages the personal information of staff, volunteers, members and consumer representatives and members of the public. It also describes the type of personal information held, for what purposes, and how that information is collected, held, used and disclosed.

Collection Use and Storage of Information

According to the Privacy Act, personal information is any material that identifies or could reasonably identify an individual. Normally the personal information collected by HCCA may include an individual's:

- Name, title, address, gender
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Credit card details to process membership payments
- Bank details
- Photos or videos of people participating in HCCA events

Personal information will, generally, only be used for the primary purposes of:

- Responding to individual's queries
- Processing HCCA membership forms
- Reimbursements purposes

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- Distributing Consumer Bites
- Informing HCCA upcoming events

Information about individuals and organisations shall only be accessed by HCCA staff. Information about individuals or organisations obtained by HCCA staff in the performance of their duties shall be destroyed 6 months after it was last used, unless:

- (i) The information relates to a complaint against HCCA, in which case it shall be retained for 3 years;
- (ii) The information relates to a legal matter where HCCA is, directly or indirectly, the complainant or respondent, in which case the information shall be retained for 7 years;
- (iii) The information relates to an application to become a consumer representative or other official representative of HCCA; for example attending a conference on behalf of HCCA, in which case it shall be retained for 3 months after the appointment or representation has been approved by the EC;
- (iv) The information relates to a staff member, in which case it shall be retained for as long as the person remains an employee of HCCA;
- (v) Information stored on, or retrieved from, the HCCA website will not be shared with any other organisation or individual.

HCCA staff shall only obtain and retain information about a person or organisation that is relevant to that person's or organisations specific duties.

HCCA will disclose personal information:

- For the primary purpose for which it was collected
- Where the individual would reasonably expect this
- where the individual has consented

HCCA does not disclose personal information for any secondary purposes unless the individual's consent has been given or as required by law.

HCCA will not sell any personal information that it collects from an individual.

Permission must be obtained from the individual(s) concerned, before discussing or forwarding personal information to other organisations. For example, providing unsuccessful job applicant CVs to other organisations seeking employees in similar roles.

Protecting personal information

HCCA stores information in different ways, including in paper and electronic form. HCCA takes reasonable steps to protect personal information from misuse and loss and unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Some of the ways HCCA does this are:

- Confidentiality requirements for our employees
- Storage files in lockable cabinets
- Security measures for systems access
- Providing a discreet environment for confidential discussions
- Only allowing access to personal information where the individual seeking access has satisfied HCCA identification requirements
- Access control for our buildings
- Electronic information is stored under a 'password protected' computer system
- Personal/confidential material relating to a person or organisation shall not be transmitted by insecure methods such as emails
- All written information about an individual or individuals, which is not already in the public domain, shall be destroyed by shredding or disposed of in a locked document 'security bin'.

Sensitive Information

The HCCA will not collect information about an individual that reveals their racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs or affiliations, membership of a professional or trade association, membership of a trade union, details of health, disability, sexual orientation, or criminal records without the consent of individuals.

Anonymity when dealing with HCCA

Individuals dealing with HCCA have the right not to identify themselves in relation to a particular matter where it is lawful and practicable to do so.

Accuracy and Correction of Personal information

HCCA tries to ensure information is accurate and up-to-date by updating its records whenever changes to information come to staff's attention. HCCA disregards information which seems likely to be inaccurate or out of date.

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Dealing with Unsolicited Information

HCCA will ensure that all unsolicited information is destroyed immediately.

Using our Website

HCCA may record anonymous information such as IP address, time, date, referring URL, pages accessed and documents downloaded, type of browser and operating system. The HCCA website may contain links to or from other websites. HCCA is not responsible for the privacy practices of other websites. This privacy policy applies only to the information we collect on the HCCA website.

Access to Personal Information

HCCA acknowledges that individuals have the right to access their personal information the organisation may have collected from them. If an individual requires to access their personal information held by HCCA, they need to send a written request by email to adminofficer@hcca.org.au. HCCA will handle such requests in accordance with the Privacy Act.

Direct Marketing

HCCA may use individuals' personal information for the purpose of advertising HCCA events such as consumer representatives training, health issues groups, HCCA health forums and HCCA workshops. If people do not want to receive this type of information they can contact us so staff can delete their contact details from HCCA distribution lists.

Information about Individuals:

As an entity that does not engage in individual advocacy, HCCA does not normally retain documents or information about individuals. However, during the course of conversations with enquirers who wish to discuss personal circumstances, including health, HCCA may occasionally receive personal information, which it will retain until contact with the individual(s) concludes.

Consumer representatives: Communication with community members on general principles and issues

Asking consumer representatives to observe the confidentiality and privacy of information will not prevent participants from communicating with other community members on general principles and issues as they need. If the consumer representative is unsure it is important that they check and seek clarification from the chairperson of the committee that they are a part of.

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Case Studies:

HCCA may develop and publish case studies, write submissions and deliver presentations. HCCA staff shall:

1. Obtain written permission from the person concerned to use their experience.
2. Make every effort to de-personalise the record of the experience.

In the event the person agrees to reveal their identity, HCCA staff shall:

1. Make every attempt to ensure - the person's decision is an informed one; the person has had sufficient time to make the decision; the person was not under pressure when making the decision. HCCA should also suggest the person discusses the decision with an appropriate third party, for example an advocate, family member or solicitor.

Whistle-blower protections

If HCCA is approached by health services staff about fraudulent or negligent practice we will convene a meeting of the EC to decide on the organisation's response.

Quality Assurance:

1. HCCA activity meets obligations under the Privacy Act
2. Permission received, recorded
3. Information stored in appropriate manner
4. Information destroyed appropriately, recording the time and manner of destruction
5. This policy shall be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier if required, for example following changes in legislation.
6. HCCA provides new employees with training on how to handle personal information appropriately and a copy of this policy is included in their induction package.