

# Client Rights and Responsibilities Policy

## 1. Introduction

wayss is committed to the rights of clients who use wayss services. This policy outlines how wayss will support clients to exercise their rights and to provide feedback or complain if they feel their rights have not been respected.

wayss recognises that many of its clients have complex needs and have experienced trauma, and wayss has a responsibility to deliver services that are responsive to the individual needs of each client and accompanying children. wayss will work with clients to identify the services that can be accessed, within funding parameters, so that clients can be confident in exercising their rights and meeting their responsibilities.

## 2. Commitment Statement

wayss is a Child Safe organisation and child safety is at the forefront of our program delivery. Our policies ensure that child safety is a primary part of everyday thinking and practice. All employees, contractors and volunteers have an obligation to ensure we keep children safe from harm and abuse.

We're committed to upholding the rights of our stakeholders and creating a workplace that fosters inclusion and diversity. We believe that by bringing our authentic selves to wayss, we can contribute to building strong teams, cultivating leaders, and creating an organisation that is well-suited for every individual. It is essential to us that we establish an environment where everyone, regardless of their background, can be themselves and feel safe, valued, and respected. Regardless of whether you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or LGBTIQ member, are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, or a person living with a disability, as an individual associating with wayss, you have the right to participate and engage in an environment that is free from discrimination and bias, and we strive to create a workplace that honours that commitment.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff (including temporary, contractors or casual staff), volunteers, and students who may be on placement at wayss (referred to together as **team member**) and people accessing wayss services (**clients**). Where wayss refers to clients this also includes people who are renters residing in wayss owned or managed housing.

## 4. Policy Principles

### 4.1. Client Rights

People who access our services have the right to:

- be shown respect for their individual human worth and dignity without discrimination,
- be treated with courtesy,
- be assessed for access to services without discrimination,
- be informed and consulted about available services and other relevant matters,
- make choices and participate in decisions made about the service they receive and the services they use,
- a culturally safe and inclusive service where beliefs are accepted and there is access to communication aids such as interpreters and Auslan translators,

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- respect in relation to their sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status and relationships,
- pursue any complaint about service provision without retribution,
- involve an advocate of their choice,
- receive quality services by professional staff,
- request privacy and confidentiality, and expect information collected about them is relevant and stored securely,
- be safe, feel safe and have their voices heard including the voices of accompanying children,
- provide feedback with anonymity at any time about our services, and
- inform service design, delivery, and evaluation.

### 4.2. wayss Rights

wayss has the right to:

- provide services in an environment free from violence and abuse,
- make recommendations about service provision based on knowledge and experience in the homelessness, housing and family violence sectors including young people, children, singles and families,
- exercise its legal rights to ensure the ongoing operation of the organisation and the safety of clients and employees,
- refuse to condone, collude, or engage in activities it believes are illegal or unethical or that may compromise safety of employees or clients, and
- refuse to provide a service at its discretion if providing that service is not suitable or appropriate at the time.

## 5. Responsibilities

### 5.1. Client Responsibilities

People who access our services are expected to:

- treat staff and clients with respect, human worth and dignity,
- respect the diversity of other clients accessing wayss,
- take responsibility for the choices they make, and
- to fulfil any agreements and legal obligations.

Where a client is unable to meet their responsibilities, the ability of wayss to provide a service to them may be affected.

### 5.2. wayss Responsibilities

In providing services, wayss has a responsibility to:

- provide a safe work environment for employees and enable them to provide clients with safe services informed by their circumstances,
- provide a safe and welcoming environment for children and young people, with zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect or mistreatment,
- enhance and respect the independence and dignity of the client,
- ensure that client access to a service is based on need and the capacity of the service to meet that need,
- inform clients about the various programs and services that are offered,
- inform clients of their rights and responsibilities in relation to wayss services,

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- respect each client's sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status and relationships,
- involve the client in shared decision making about the services they receive,
- discuss any changes to the provision of services with a client prior to making a change,
- ensure staff are culturally competent and responsive to the diverse social, cultural, and physical experiences and needs of clients,
- inform the client about the service to be delivered, any fees charged and other ways programs and services offered,
- inform the client of the standards to expect in relation to services they may receive,
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of the client, whilst complying with any mandatory information sharing requirements,
- allow the client access to information held by ways whilst respecting legal requirements, privacy and safety,
- refer clients to more appropriate services when necessary,
- respect a client's refusal of a service and ensure any future attempt by the client to access a ways service is not prejudiced because of that refusal,
- provide clients with opportunities to provide feedback at any time, in ways that are accessible for them, and to acknowledge that feedback in a timely manner,
- deal with client complaints fairly, promptly and without retribution and to be transparent about ways processes for managing client complaints,
- mediate and attempt to negotiate a solution if conflict arises between the client, ways or others who might be impacted,
- accept the client's choice and involvement of an advocate to represent his or her interests,
- provide information to clients about their rights and responsibilities,
- educate employees about these rights and responsibilities and ensure employees assist clients to understand these rights and responsibilities,
- provide this policy in different formats or languages if needed, and
- ensure front line service staff are trained in trauma informed practice to better support client discussions.
- provide all clients with the option of having a copy of the agreed goals and actions to address the presenting issues.

## 6. Review

ways will conduct a comprehensive review of this document every two years, aligning with the established policy review schedule. Additionally, revisions may occur sooner in response to legislative changes or feedback about service delivery that could affect the content of this document.

## 7. Related Documents and Resources

- Client Rights and Responsibilities Procedure
- Client Privacy Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Social Services Regulations 2023
- Housing Registrar Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- DFFH Homelessness Services Guidelines
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017

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- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

### 8. Change History

Date	Version	Summary of changes	Approver
3/11/20	2.0	New format, updated language.	CEO
19/10/2024	3.0	Addition of organisational statements, review of responsibilities, relevant documents and legislation.	
10/02/2025	3.0	CEO recommendations added and approved.	CEO

**QRC Reviewed**

**Date: 21/10/2024**

**Reviewer: Kristy A**