



CLIENT CHARTER

OUR SERVICES

We provide free legal advice and advocacy to people experiencing hardship or who are vulnerable to disadvantage. Our services are directed to those who would not otherwise be able to access legal and advocacy services, either because they are not eligible for legal aid or because they cannot afford the services of a private lawyer.

We advocate for the protection and advancement of the needs, rights and freedoms of people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged in the Wide Bay region of Queensland.

We deliver free community legal education, workshops and information sessions on a number of general legal advice topics.

OUR STANDARDS

Wide Bay Advocacy is committed to providing a quality service to all clients and will adhere to the following standards:

- Explain our services and how you can use them
- Be courteous and approachable
- Actively listen to you, treat you as an individual and treat to meet any special needs by, for example:
 - o Using an interpreter when appropriate
 - o Ensuring our service delivery is sensitive and culturally appropriate to people and non-English speaking and First Nations backgrounds
 - o Enquiring about domestic and family violence where applicable and ensuring your safety is a priority
- Use language you understand
- Ensure your confidentiality
- Provide accurate and appropriate information and advice
- Discuss your legal problem and help you understand available options

EXPECTATIONS OF CLIENTS

- Let us know if you have any particular needs
- Give us complete, honest and accurate information
- Bring relevant document and written information with you
- Let us know if you need to cancel an appointment
- Let us know if you change your address or phone number
- Treat staff and volunteers with courtesy, respect and consideration

WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

- Inform you what the law says in a way you understand
- Give you choices about what you can do
- Inform you about other services
- Refer you to other services
- Keep you up to date with what is happening with your matter

WHAT WE CAN'T DO FOR YOU

- Spend all time on your problem
- Do everything right away
- Always say for sure what will happen
- Always be available for your phone calls
- Offer financial or taxation advice

ACCESS AND EQUITY STATEMENT

Wide Bay Advocacy is committed to maximising access to our services for everyone within the agreed target client group, and to ensuring equality of access across eligible service users.

Wide Bay Advocacy will endeavour to optimise access for people to its services and activities. We aim to create a positive and non-prejudicial environment and atmosphere in all our contacts and activities. We recognise that an access and equity strategy is an ongoing commitment that requires continual evaluation and review.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

When you attend Wide Bay Advocacy, our staff will begin by asking you information about yourself and your matter. It is necessary to collect this information for our own records, and because our funders require some of the information. No identifying information is ever provided to the funders.

All information collected is strictly confidential. Staff and volunteers are bound by both law and our own policies and procedures not to disclose any information provided by you without your permission, unless required by law or to our insurer.

Wide Bay Advocacy is committed to supporting the National Privacy Principles and our procedures relating to personal information are designed to ensure that you are fully protected under Australian privacy laws.

CLIENT FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Feedback may be provided by individual clients and stakeholders on their own initiative or in response to requests from Wide Bay Advocacy. Individual clients and stakeholders may provide feedback by taking part in Wide Bay Advocacy's Client Satisfaction Survey, completing a Client Evaluation Form or making a complaint directly to our service.

Wide Bay Advocacy is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation accessing our services or is affected by our operations has the right to lodge a complaint and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

A person wishing to make a complaint should do so in the following order:

1. To the staff member concerned
2. To the Manager and Principal Solicitor
3. To the Chair of the Wide Bay Advocacy Board

Written complaints may be posted, hand delivered or emailed. Complaints must be made in writing unless it is not possible to do so. A hard copy of this Client Charter can be provided to you upon request and is available on our website. Further information about making a complaint can be provided upon request.