

## MLC Privacy Policy

Macarthur Legal Centre will endeavour to protect and uphold the rights of our clients in the collection, storage and use of any information about them, their needs and any assistance we may provide to them. We have adopted the National Privacy Principles (NPPs) contained in Schedule 1 of the *(Cth) Privacy Act 1988*. The NPPs govern the way we collect, use, disclose, store, secure and dispose of data. In addition to this, our professional responsibilities require us to keep client information confidential.

All MLC staff, volunteers and students on placement, are bound to uphold these principles and must be constantly careful when using personal information.

Personal information collected by Macarthur Legal Centre will primarily be used to assist with the provision of services you've requested. Personal information will only be collected with the consent of the client, however if you do not consent we may not be able to assist you. This is because we also have obligations to avoid conflicts of interest. **Accordingly, if you chose not to supply your details at intake, we cannot provide advice and/or ongoing assistance to you.**

### **What is personal information?**

Personal information means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

The types of personal information we collect may include your name, address, date of birth, gender, income, housing type etc.

Providing your personal information is voluntary but in some cases if you do not provide us with the personal information requested, we may not be able to provide you with the services you require.

### **How we collect your personal information:**

Where possible, all personal information will be collected directly from the client or their legal representative and will be collected in private.

We may obtain personal information from third parties. Should we do so, where it is unclear whether you have consented to the disclosure of your personal information to us, we will take all reasonable steps to contact you and ensure that you are aware of the circumstances surrounding the collection and the purpose of collecting the information.

Personal information is collected when you call us to ask for our assistance or when you attend a meeting with one of our staff to discuss your needs.

### **Why we collect your personal information:**

We collect your personal information for the following purposes:

- to assist with the provision of services;
- to assist in planning future service delivery and monitoring past performance;
- to prevent the risk of conflict of interest;
- to meet the accountability requirements of funding bodies;
- to assist in endeavours to secure additional or special funding.

We also gather information for statistical purposes to help in monitoring and assessing the services the centre provides e.g. your ethnic origin. In these cases, this information may be given to third parties but only after it is depersonalised.

### **Who has access to your personal information?**

Only authorised staff of MLC who need to have access to client information to do their job will be able to access client personal information. MLC will not disclose your personal information to a third party without your consent unless required by law.

### **How we store your personal information:**

We take all reasonable steps to protect all personal information we hold from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Your personal information will be stored on a password protected electronic database. Only recognised employees, students and volunteers have the capacity to view data from the databases.

Hardcopies of advice and casework documents are generally kept onsite for two years and thereafter stored offsite and/or electronically for a minimum of seven (7) years with the Centre's secure storage provider/server.

Where personal information is stored with a third party, we have arrangements which require those third parties to maintain the security of the information. We take reasonable steps to protect the privacy and security of that information, but we are not liable for any unauthorised access or use of that information. Your personal information will stay on our database indefinitely until you advise that you would like it removed, unless we depersonalise it or destroy it earlier in accordance with privacy law requirements.

### **Right to Access Your Personal Information**

We will, upon request, and subject to applicable privacy laws, provide the client with access to their personal information that is held by us. However, we request that you identify, as clearly as possible, the type(s) of information requested.

Where a request has been made to access the file the matter will be brought to the attention of the solicitor with carriage of the file and such arrangements will be made by that solicitor to provide the client with all relevant documentation. Client records are the property of the organisation, but clients may have supervised access to their own records following a written request to the Principal Solicitor.

### **Maintaining the Quality of Your Personal Information**

It is important to us that your personal information is up to date. We will take reasonable steps to make sure that your Personal Information is accurate, complete and up-to-date. If you find that the information we have is not up to date or is inaccurate, please advise us as soon as practicable so we can update our records and ensure we can continue to provide quality services to you.

### **Policy Updates**

This policy will be updated from time to time and is available on our website.

### **Privacy Policy Complaints and Enquiries**

If you have any queries or complaints about our Privacy Policy, please contact us at:

**Macarthur Legal Centre:** PO Box 798, Campbelltown, NSW 2560

**Email:** macarthur\_admin@maclegal.net.au

**Phone:** (02) 4628 2042