



Governance Manual 2010

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MODIFICATION HISTORY

Policy Section	Date of meeting when amendment agreed to	Reasons for change
Introduction	Email 6/10/09	Vision and Strategic Intent changed
2.2	“	Expanding Expectations of MCM
throughout	“	Hours of full time work changed from 35 to 38
“	“	Reflect name of new state award
“	“	Organisational Map Reflect changes in staff
6.1	April 2010	Updated client complaints procedure

INTRODUCTION

The Welfare Rights Centre Inc (WRC) is a non-profit, incorporated community organisation formed in 1984 in Queensland. It covers two areas of law; Social Security and Disability Discrimination.

The Welfare Rights Centre is managed by a Management Committee comprising of:

- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- 4 other Committee members.

The Welfare Rights Centre receives funding from Federal and State Attorney-Generals Departments under the Community Legal Services Program. These funds are administered by Legal Aid Queensland. The funding covers core expenses such as salaries and operating costs of the Association.

The Governance Manual of the Welfare Rights Centre is intended to assist staff and Management Committee in understanding important information about the Centre's management systems and operational policies.

The more detailed day to day processes and standards of practice are outlined in the Operational and Service Standards Manual.

VISION

We are an independent voice for fairness determined to empower people who are often forgotten or unheard.

STRATEGIC INTENT

We focus our services towards bringing about change for the greatest number of people with intent to deliver high impact, quality services through our three core service models:

Client advocacy
Community Education
Reform and policy development.

Client Advocacy

utilise the **legal system** to address unfairness.
We will **engage** with clients to get the most efficient outcome for them.
We will invest in the **expertise** of our staff to ensure quality services

Community Education

build capacity of **community workers** so they can advocate for their clients using our knowledge, expertise and support.
encourage and facilitate participation of **clients** in their own advocacy.
present solutions to unfairness to other **service system** providers.

Systemic Advocacy

pursue client focused, **evidence** based systemic reforms.
build the evidence base for law reforms and social policy development.
build **strategic alliances** with key stakeholders to pursue fairer systems for clients.

We ensure the governance of the Centre is fair, transparent and accountable whilst:
operating in a way that eliminates unnecessary risk, and
managing the resources to ensure ongoing viability of the services.

VALUES

The Welfare Rights Centre values:

- the inherent rights of all people to natural justice
- the rights of disadvantaged people to access legal services

INTRODUCTION

- the rights to a reasonable income which will allow participation in the community
- diversity and tolerance
- ethical practice principals in the development, delivery and leadership of the organisation and its services.
- the pursuit skills and knowledge necessary for the continued growth and development of the organisation, its staff and volunteers.
- independence from political and religious influence

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a focussed quality legal service in relation to the social security and disability discrimination legislation
2. To influence policy makers and promote systemic change affecting the areas of policy and law relating to income security and disability discrimination
3. To educate and build the capacity of the community to understand rights and respond to issues in relation to social security and disability discrimination laws.
4. To develop and maintain a stable, independent and innovative organisation.

SERVICES

Services provided by the Welfare Rights Centre include:

Social Security Services through:

Legal Advice and Casework

- Free independent and confidential legal advice on problems with Centrelink, through our Telephone Advice service.
- Assistance and representation in applications for review of Centrelink decisions, including the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
- Appropriate and supportive referrals.

Community Legal Education

Systemic Advocacy

- Commentary on proposed changes to legislation.
- Data collection, research and publications.
- Campaigns to achieve a just and equitable social security system.

Disability Discrimination Legal Advocacy Service through:

Legal Advice and Casework

- Free, independent and confidential legal advice on Disability Discrimination.
- Assistance and representation with respect to complaints of Disability Discrimination, including in the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission and Tribunal, Australian Human Rights Commission, and the Federal Court of Australia.
- Appropriate and supportive referrals.

Community Legal Education

- Education on Queensland and Commonwealth Disability Discrimination laws including:
- Informing the community about their rights.
- Educating public and private organisation of their responsibilities and obligations.
- Training community workers, the legal profession, and students.

Policy and Law Reform

- Commentary on proposed changes to legislation.
- Research and publications.

- Campaigns.

Service Limitations

The WRC has written Casework Guidelines that are reviewed annually to determine the type of work we take on. These guidelines include the level of service that we provide. The most recent copy is kept in the Operations Manual Appendix and is publically available on our website.

Other Services

Other projects or services may exist if/when we receive funding to undertake additional tasks. All projects are to be in keeping with our Vision and Mission.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 Decision making

The Welfare Rights Centre Inc. will follow the ratified Constitution in accordance with the Associations Incorporations Act 1981.

The Welfare Rights Centre recognises the rights and different points of view of all individual members of the Association and strives to democratically set policies, and make decisions through discussion, and majority votes.

1.2 Code of Conduct

All members of the Welfare Rights Centre Inc should ensure that they act in an accountable and impartial manner and that they uphold the values of the Association with integrity and transparency.

All members, management, employees, students and volunteers are to familiarise themselves with this code.

Departure from any of its provisions may be grounds for grievance procedures to apply.

The accepted standard of conduct for Management Committee, members, employees, students and volunteers of the Association are designed to ensure accountability, impartiality, integrity and transparency. They include:

- Observe the rules of the organisation including those set out in the Constitution, The Associations Incorporation Act or any other rules set by the Management Committee or the membership of the organisation.
- Represent the organisation in a positive way.
- Adhere to the conflict of interest policy.
- Adhere to the principle of privacy and confidentiality.
- Observe the principles of honesty, integrity.
- Ensure that the work of the Welfare Rights Centre is carried out efficiently and effectively.
- Give effect to the policies of the Welfare Rights Centre whether they approve of that policy or not.
- Accept responsibility for the consequences of their own actions and be aware of the effect of those actions on the lives of others.
- Be committed to the maintenance of high standards of skill and knowledge
- When speaking publically, clarify whether speaking on behalf of the Welfare Rights Centre with its permission, or as a private individual.

Employees and volunteers should also read 4.4 of this Governance Manual.

1.3 Confidentiality

The purpose of this policy is to ensure confidentiality of staff, students, volunteers, members and service users wherever possible, and to create an environment of respect and privacy for the organisation and its users.

Information about a person's private affairs should not be used for any purpose other than what it was intended for, without the persons consent.

Confidential information about the operations of the WRC and its membership should not be disclosed to others without appropriate levels of consent or approval.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Executive Director and/or the Management Committee will determine the most appropriate course of action in these cases.

Workers and Management Committee members may share information where necessary for the purpose of supervision, debriefing or work effectiveness.

Information disclosed shall remain confidential except where it involves:

- The course of the delivery of services; or
- Issues which could endanger the safety of others; or
- Obligations to make notifications to government bodies; or
- There is a legal requirement.

Confidentiality applies to information accessed by paid staff, students, volunteers and/or Management Committee members or others in the course of their work for the organisation.

Implementation of this policy is set out in the Operations Manual of the WRC.

1.4 Conflict of Interest

The Management Committee, staff and members will conduct their affairs so that personal and professional interests do not conflict with the interests of the Welfare Rights Centre.

Management members, staff and volunteers must disclose to the committee or supervisor potential conflicts of interest as soon as she/he becomes aware that the possibility of a conflict may arise.

Some examples of potential conflicts of interest include:

- *Taking part in decisions affecting a relative; someone disliked or a close or intimate friend.*
 - *Offering referrals or contract to a person/service where oneself, relatives or friends are likely to profit.*
- All conflicts of interest must be recorded in staff or Management Committee minutes.
 - A register of all conflicts will be held at the front of the Management Committee minute book.
 - Where a conflict exists the conflicted person should undertake appropriate action including:
 - abstain from voting on the issue/motion.
 - leave the meeting while the matter is under discussion.
 - take leave of absence from the committee/team meeting for the period during which the matter is being handled.
 - resign from the committee if the conflict of interest is important, significant and likely to continue.
 - stand down for as long as conflict occurs or until decision is made that clarifies conflict.
 - Where a person does not recognise their conflict of interest, it is important that their attention be drawn to the matter in a spirit of compassion, understanding and tolerance.
 - If the person chooses not to raise the matter formally then others should apply the conflict resolution procedure.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Management Committee members will complete a register of interests annually. If during their term as Committee Members interests change they are to note the change on the register. This register is open to the public through application to the Secretary of the Welfare Rights Centre.
- Committee members, staff, volunteers and students will declare any gratuities or gifts that they may be offered in relation to their position over the value of \$20.

1.5 **Access and Equity**

The Welfare Rights Centre will ensure all policies and procedures and day to day practices of the Centre adheres to fair access and equity principles that cut across client services, employment, student and volunteer placement and membership.

This includes seeking out and addressing barriers that clients may have accessing services or resources delivered by the centre, particularly those people from vulnerable groups including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - People from Culturally and Linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - People with disabilities
 - People who are isolated based on location or institutionalisation
 - 'At risk' young people
 - People with literacy problems
 - People living in family violence situations.
- The Executive Director will ensure the physical surroundings are accessible for people with disabilities and are child friendly.
 - Services are delivered in a way that respects the values of the Centre.
 - Casework and service delivery guidelines and practice procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure all people are able to access a fair level of service, but the service targets towards the most vulnerable are realised.
 - Evaluation procedures are used to monitor client experiences of service provision through the client satisfaction survey and formalised complaints handling procedure.
 - Clients, staff and other stakeholders are treated with respect and dignity in a non discriminatory way.
 - Non casework projects will be established according to the needs of target groups identified in the planning processes and in response to the changing legislative, political and social environments.
 - Outcomes and services are to be evaluated in terms of inclusiveness of vulnerable and targeted groups.



SECTION 2 – ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES

2.1 Organisational Structure

The Welfare Rights Centre is an Incorporated Association (pursuant to the Associations Incorporation Act). The conduct of the affairs of the centre are governed by the rules contained within the Constitution of the Welfare Rights Centre and the provisions of the Act.

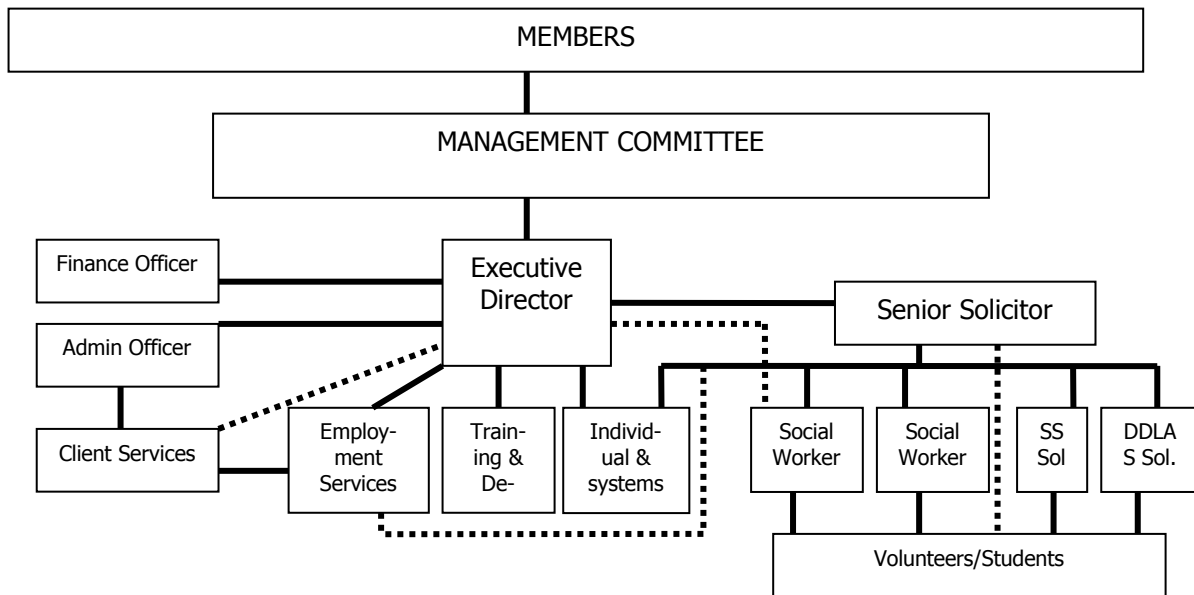
The Constitution sets out the basis for membership of the Welfare Rights Centre, procedures for the conduct of meetings and defines the role of the Management Committee. The Centre is committed to community management through the involvement of community members on the Management Committee.

Management Model

The Centre is governed by the Management Committee which delegates all operational management responsibility to the Executive Director.

The Committee may, from time to time, create sub committees to deal with specific issues as it sees fit.

Organisational Map



SECTION 2 – ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES

2.2 Committee of Management

The Welfare Rights Centre Inc. is a community organisation managed by a Management Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting.

The role of the Management Committee is to govern the Welfare Rights Centre rather than to manage it. It is the role of the Executive Director to manage the day to day operations of the service in accordance with the direction and delegations of the Management Committee.

Roles and Responsibilities of a Management Committee include:

- Employment
- Risk Management
- Financial Management
- Accountability
- Liabilities
- Obligations

The collective responsibilities of the Management Committee are:

- Policy development and endorsement
- Organisational Planning - Participate in the development of the strategic direction of the Centre and monitor the implementation of the strategy and centres achievements.
- Compliance, Quality & Accountability - Ensure the Centre complies with all relevant standards (including best practice principles), insurance policies, funding guidelines and legal/financial obligations.
- Risk Management. The Management Committee is responsible for ensuring appropriate risk management policies and practices are in place. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Professional Indemnity
 - Human Resources
 - Financial Management

Expectations of the Management Committee

Members of the Management Committee shall be covered by an Officers and Directors Insurance policy, however liability can carry to individuals if there is evidence of fraud, criminal act, gross neglect or wilful misconduct.

It is expected that members of the Management Committee shall act in good faith and in accordance with the code of conduct. Members should also be prepared for each Management Committee meeting and attend a minimum of 75% of the meetings each term. Being prepared includes: Being prepared to ask questions, seek information, raise issues and concerns and demonstrate an interest in the business of the WRC.

Should a member of the Management Committee not meet the expectations noted above then the President or a nominee appointed by the committee should be appointed to discuss with the member their capacity and willingness to remain on the committee. The Intention is to come to an amicable agreement about the commitment required of management members and if applicable the code of conduct

Should the member be aggrieved by this discussion then they should put their reason/s in writing (within one month from the date of the discussion) reaffirming their commitment to the role a of a management member. If the Management Committee do not accept the reaffirmation then they should call for a general meeting, in accordance with the constitution, with the purpose of asking members whether the management member should be expelled."

Role of the President

The President utilises his/her skills and leadership to:

- Chair committee meetings in an effective and efficient manner,
- Establish agendas
- Ensure new members of the Committee are inducted appropriately
- Welcome new members
- Facilitate participation of Committee members
- Attend meetings with funding bodies and other stakeholders (as required)
- Ensure records of the meetings are kept,
- Ensure decisions of the Management Committee are implemented
- Report to members at the AGM and through the annual report
- Provide support to the Executive Director by being aware of current issues and events impacting on the WRC.

Role of Executive Director at Management Committee meetings:

The Executive Director is not a member of the Management Committee but attends meetings to assist committee deliberations and to provide a report on the operations of the service including outcomes achieved, future plans and any issues which need to be considered. He/she also presents reports from the Principal Solicitor and Finance Officer.

The Management Committee may request other staff or consultants to attend to present reports and/or information for the committee.

2.3 Membership of Welfare Rights Centre Inc.

Membership is open to all persons and organisations who agree with, and support, the Vision, Mission and values of the Welfare Rights Centre.

The Secretary will ensure that:

- application forms are available for prospective members.
- any new applications received will be presented at the next monthly general meeting of the Management Committee.
- a register of current members is maintained .

The cost of membership for each category is reviewed each year and placed on the new membership form which is publically available through the website.

Services to Members

- E bulletin. Organisational members are encouraged to send on our e-bulletins to staff throughout their organisation.
- Invite to AGM and any other forums organised through the WRC
- Copy of the Annual Report to be sent either electronically or via post.

Membership is not required in order to access services. Members do not get any preferential treatment to services.

2.4 Guiding Policies and Procedures

The Welfare Rights Centre will maintain a comprehensive system of policies and procedures that are designed to provide appropriate levels of guidance to the staff and management committee.

"Policies are the statements of philosophy, values and beliefs which drive the delivery of service to service users and service participants. Where policies provide the sign posts or guidance, the procedures tell people how things will be done. A procedure specifies what will be done, when and by whom. It is the 'recipe' by which policy is enacted."
From How and when to write policies and procedures, M Dyson, ACROD 1994

SECTION 2 – ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The Centre's guiding policies and procedures are located in three documents:

1. Governance Manual – This manual which contains high level overarching policies reviewed regularly.
2. Operations Manual – This is a more instructive resource but must never conflict with the Governance Manual. Staff will regularly update the contents of this manual but all significant changes are to be reported to the Management Committee by the Executive Director.
3. Social Policy Position Manual - which is a series of documents and statements that identify the WRC position on social policy issues.

The Welfare Rights Centre, recognising that changes occur in organisations and the organisational environment, is committed to changing and developing new policies and procedures to respond to these changes. The Executive Director is responsible for maintaining these manuals.

Governance Manual

When changing or adding to the Governance Manual the following procedure will be adopted:

- Identification of the need for modification.
- Consultation with those affected by the policy and examine the draft policy statement.
- Consider the feedback.
- Formal adoption of the policy by the Management Committee.
- All changes must be endorsed by the Management Committee and recorded in the minutes.
- Review any new policy within a minimum period of 12 months.

A master copy of the Governance Manual must be securely stored and be available when needed. A modification history will appear at the beginning of the document with brief details of changes. These details will include the meeting date of the amendments or new policies being ratified.

Operations Manual

When changing or adding to the Operations Manual the following procedure will be adopted:

- Identification of the need for change
- Consultation with those affected by the change
- All options and feedback considered
- All significant changes are to be reported to the Management Committee
- All modifications are recorded in the front of the manual
- Review any new policy within a minimum period of 12 months.

Social Policy Position Manual

The Management Committee and staff use various processes to develop and promote the social policy positions of the Centre. Once a social policy position is agreed it is recorded and shall remain in place until challenged or reviewed.

The Executive Director is responsible for maintaining a register of the policy positions.

No staff person or member of the Management Committee should make public comment on behalf of the WRC without knowing whether the position is supported by the Centre.

2.5 Service Planning and Review

The Welfare Rights Centre will hold an annual planning day with staff and the Management Committee to review its achievements for the year and make decisions regarding future strategies and actions that may be required to ensure the service is affective and relevant to the communities needs.

SECTION 2 – ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Procedures are outlined in detail in the OSSM but follow the following principles:

- The WRC will seek feedback from clients and stakeholders about the effectiveness and suitability of services provided.
- Client and stakeholder feedback, funding agreements, a review of available data and the centre's vision, mission, values and objectives, will be used to develop an annual operational plan for the WRC.
- Any changes deemed necessary for the improvement of the Welfare Rights Centre will be considered by the Management Committee for endorsement.
- Individual annual work plans and targets will be developed using the Operational Plan.

SECTION 2 – ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES



SECTION 3 - FINANCIAL & ASSET MANAGEMENT

3.1 Introduction

The Welfare Rights Centre will develop and use efficient financial systems to support effective management and accountability in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 and other relevant legislation and accountability requirements of funding bodies.

- True and accurate records are kept of all monies received and expended and up-to-date entries of financial transactions are recorded by the Financial Administrator.
- All financial records are open and available for inspection by members of the committee.
- Accurate, detailed monthly reports of budgeted and actual income and expenditure are prepared by the Financial Administrator and presented at Management Committee meetings. There are appropriate controls in place to identify misappropriation of funds.
- Employ skilled staff to assist the Centre fulfil its obligations and record keeping.

3.2 Annual Budget

The Treasurer is to ensure that a yearly budget is drafted and presented to the Management Committee for endorsement before each new financial year. This budget is to be reviewed quarterly. The Treasurer will ensure that expenditure does not exceed anticipated income.

- The Executive Director, Financial Administrator and Treasurer will meet to discuss the annual budget in April each year.
- A draft budget will be presented at the May Management Committee meeting.
- The Management Committee are to endorse the budget prior to it being sent to funding bodies.

3.3 Financial Controls and Reports

The Management Committee has the overall financial responsibility of the Centre. The Treasurer ensures the financial affairs of the Centre are maintained in good order, presents monthly reports and facilitates the audit of the Centre. Skilled staff will be employed to maintain the ongoing financial records of the Centre.

The following details will be included in the monthly financial reports:

- Actual income and expenditure; budget income and expenditure amounts for the month
- Actual income and expenditure; budget income and expenditure amounts for the year to date
- Bank reconciliation statements for all accounts
- List of cheque payments and internet banking for the month.
- Ratification of all financial transactions for the month.
- A Balance Sheet.

3.4 Financial Audit

The Management Committee of the Welfare Rights Centre will ensure that a financial audit is completed at the end of each financial year.

SECTION 3 - FINANCIAL & ASSET MANAGEMENT

- The financial records of the Welfare Rights Centre are prepared as at 30 June of each financial year by the Financial Administrator as directed by the Executive Director and Management Committee.
- The Annual General Meeting of the Centre appoints a qualified independent auditor who carries out the audit.
- The auditor's report is forwarded to the Treasurer for the endorsement of the Management Committee prior to tabling at the Annual General Meeting.
- The Auditor's Report and Statements of Cash Flow are distributed, as per standing agreements, to all relevant bodies.
- The Treasurer will ensure that a copy of the Centre's Annual Audited Statement is forwarded to the relevant funding bodies, no later than three months after 30 June. An annual statement from the auditor, nominated at the Annual General Meeting, who is a Certified Practicing Accountant or a member of the Australian Society of Certified Accountants of Australia, will be sent with the audited statement.

3.5 Financial Reporting

The Management Committee will ensure that all financial reporting requirements of funding bodies and Government Agencies are completed at the required time.

- Quarterly Reports as required by Legal Aid Queensland and any other funding source are to be prepared and forwarded on time by the Financial Administrator.
- An Annual Report including audited statements will be forwarded to funding bodies as required under the funding agreement .
- Annual audited accounts will be sent to the Office of Fair Trading as required under the Associations of Incorporation Act 1981 and the Collections Act 1966.

3.6 Investments

The Management Committee will open bank accounts in the name of the Centre with responsible and reputable financial institutions to ensure no loss of funds through inappropriate investment.

- The Financial Administrator will retain monthly statements of all accounts.
- Reconciliation of all bank accounts will be completed every month.
- Term Deposits are monitored by the Financial Administrator and the Executive Director.
- Roll Over of Term Deposit accounts will be done in a timely manner.
- The Treasurer and/or President shall be advised of all decisions to roll over existing Term Deposits.
- Roll over decisions shall be reported at the Management Committee Meetings.

SECTION 3 - FINANCIAL & ASSET MANAGEMENT

3.7 Financial Delegations

The Centre will ensure that financial delegations are made to ensure the efficient operation of the service.

Financial Delegations are authorities given to officers and staff of the Centre. They limit that person's power to commit Centre funds. The Management Committee acting on the Treasurer's advice ratifies these delegations:

- The Executive Director is authorised by the Management Committee to make decisions relating to purchases that fall within the budget.
- The Executive Director is authorised by the Management Committee to make decisions relating to purchases up to and including the sum of \$2,000 that are outside regular expenditure after considering the budget, item to be purchased and level of urgency.
- The Management Committee, or in emergency situations, the Treasurer in consultation with the President, must authorise purchases above \$2,000.00 that are outside the budget.
- The Principal Solicitor is authorised to make decisions relating to purchases and costs up to and including the sum of \$1,000 that are within the budgeted expenditure or are to be funded from the legal costs account.
- Staff are approved to claim up to \$50 for business related expenditure. Amounts over this limit are to be approved prior to expenditure.

3.8 Purchasing Policy

The Centre will ensure that purchases are made from reputable businesses or service providers in a fair and transparent selection process.

- The Executive Director will authorise the seeking of all quotes for purchases.
- All sundry items such as stationery and hardware are to be purchased from stores from which a monthly account is received.
- For purchases above \$2,000.00 two written quotes must be obtained and presented in line with the financial delegations (see above).
- For purchases over \$5,000 three written quotes are required.

3.9 Expenditure

The Financial Administrator will ensure that payments are made in a timely and efficient manner and that all payment details are recorded in the MYOB accounting system.

The WRC has various methods of making payments, including:

- Petty Cash
- Credit Card
- Cheques
- NAB On line banking
- Westpac Internet Banking.
- An authorised payment voucher/stamp must be attached to each invoice before a payment made.
- Payment vouchers/stamp must show at least one signature to be deemed "authorised".
- The signatories must be authorised bank signatories of the Centre.

SECTION 3 - FINANCIAL & ASSET MANAGEMENT

- All payments over the GST threshold limit must be made on legitimate tax invoices.
- All payments to third parties over the Petty Cash limit are to be made through an electronic transfer, credit card or by cheque.

3.9.1 Petty Cash

The centre shall manage a petty cash system.

- An amount of \$200.00 is to be set as the Petty Cash float.
- Petty Cash will not be issued for more than \$50.00.
- Receipts must be kept for all expenditure from Petty Cash, otherwise expenditure cannot be authorised without the express permission of the Executive Director or Treasurer.
- A Petty Cash voucher must accompany all receipts before they are reimbursed or entered into the Petty Cash journal. The Executive Director/Officer Administrator may authorise payment on vouchers for amounts up to the cash limit.
- Petty Cash is to be kept in a locked environment at all times. The Office Administrator is responsible for ensuring that Petty Cash is locked and secure at all times when staff are not in attendance.
- Petty Cash is only accessible to nominated staff - Office Administrator and Executive Director.
- The Financial Administrator is responsible for reconciling the Petty Cash as required.

3.9.2 Credit Card

The Welfare Rights Centre utilises a corporate credit card in order to simplify the purchase of items and services.

- There is only to be one credit card issued and it is in the name of the Executive Director.
- The card is to have a limit of \$5000.
- The amounts are restricted to those delegated to the Executive Director.
- The card should only be used for legitimate WRC Inc. expenses and in line with budget limitations.
- The Financial Administrator will check the details of the statement with the Executive Director before payment.
- A relevant Tax Invoice is to be retained for all purchases and given to the Financial Administrator upon return to the office.
- All payments to be matched against the invoices.
- Any discrepancies to be settled prior to payment being made.
- Misuse of the card will result in disciplinary action.

3.9.3 Cheques

- All cheques will be kept in a secure, locked environment with limited access.

SECTION 3 - FINANCIAL & ASSET MANAGEMENT

- Each cheque is to be signed by two authorised signatories of the Centre. One signatory must be a Management Committee office bearer.
- Signatories must be members of the Centre.
- The Executive Director and Principal Solicitor are the only staff authorised to sign cheques for the Centre.
- No blank cheques will be raised.
- No cheques will be raised unless there are sufficient funds in the account to cover them.
- All cancelled cheques to be retained and attached to a payment voucher.
- Should a sub-committee of the Centre be formed, the Treasurer of the Centre must be a required signatory on all accounts opened by the sub-committee.

3.9.4 Internet Banking (B PAY payments)

- The WRC uses Westpac for its Internet Banking Service.
- Internet Banking is limited to amounts less than \$1,500.
- All Internet payments require two signatures from authorised persons.
- The Financial Administrator is responsible for setting up payments based on appropriate documentation.
- Password access to internet banking is to be kept secure and not transferred to any other person.

3.9.5 On Line Banking

- The WRC uses NAB for its On Line Banking.
- On Line Banking is used to process the payroll and supplier payments where bank account details are provided.
- The Financial Administrator is responsible for setting up payments based on appropriate documentation.
- The Executive Director or the Principal Solicitor are to approve On Line banking payments.
- Password access to on line banking is to be kept secure and not transferred to any other person.

3.10 Income

The Centre will ensure that all monies received are appropriately recorded.

- All monies received or collected are to be recorded in a duplicate receipt book in a timely manner.
- All cash and cheques shall be deposited in the appropriate bank account at the earliest available opportunity.
- All receipts are to be accounted for.

SECTION 3 - FINANCIAL & ASSET MANAGEMENT

- No duplicate receipts are to be removed from any ratified receipt book.
- Any interest earned must be applied to the objectives of the Centre and identified in the audit.
- Any funding the WRC receives on top of CLSP grants shall comply with our financial policy and be identifiable in our accounting system. Such funding will be specifically used for the purposes for which they were obtained.

3.11 Insurance

The Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Centre has adequate insurance to indemnify it against loss, damage or injury.

- The Executive Director and Financial Administrator in consultation with the Treasurer will review annually all insurances. If necessary, seek two quotes for comparison to be presented to the Management Committee and ensure that the Welfare Rights Centre has:
 - public liability no less than \$10,000 000.00
 - adequate contents and buildings cover where applicableand ensure that:
 - The office has adequate fire, theft and contents coverage
 - Management Committee members have *Director's Liability* cover and volunteers have *Volunteer Indemnity* cover.
- The WRC shall participate in the NACLIC Professional Indemnity Insurance scheme. The implementation of this insurance is outlined in the Risk Management Guide and is incorporated into the Centres' practice and procedures through the Operations Manual.
- All requirements with regard to insurance by the WorkCover are met.
- The Centre will pay for personal injury insurance for all unpaid staff and volunteers.
- Any other insurance that is deemed necessary will be paid.

3.12 Reimbursement of Staff and Management Committee Expenses

The Centre will reimburse staff and management for actual costs incurred whilst on authorised business.

- The Treasurer will be responsible for reimbursing Management Committee members for actual costs paid out on authorised business as follows:
 - Telephone: cost of the calls
 - Travel: fares or mileage allowance (set at the rate prescribed by the Australian Tax Office).
- All receipts/dockets must be produced before reimbursement.
- The Executive Director is responsible for approving reimbursement for Staff expenses incurred whilst on authorised business.
- Staff must provide a receipt that shows the amount of GST paid.
- If a receipt is lost a request for reimbursement must be made in writing and approved by the Executive Director.

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3.13 Travel Expenses

When Management Committee members and Staff are required to travel on behalf of the Centre to attend conferences or meetings the Centre will reimburse approved costs.

- Prior approval by the Executive Director or the Management Committee to attend the conference/meeting etc. will be required.
- Payment of registration and any travel costs associated with the meeting/conference prior to the employee attending.
- Subsequent approved costs will be reimbursed on presentation of receipts or by meal/incidental allowances (as per ATO) paid in advance prior to the travel.
- Expenditure must be within budget guidelines.

3.13.1 Cab Charge Vouchers

Policy: The Centre shall hold a cab charge voucher system which is available to all staff and Management Committee as follows:

- Taxi vouchers will only be used for purposes relating to Centre business.
- Vouchers are available to staff who need a taxi although where possible the workplace vehicle should be used.
- Vouchers are to be kept in the safe.
- Staff to complete the docket in the cab charge book upon their return to the office or provide the Office Administrator with a receipt.

3.14 Payroll

Wage payments are made in accordance to the relevant industrial instrument pay scales that are approved by the Management Committee.

- Wages are paid every fortnight on Mondays.
- The following records are kept to enable direct payments to the employee:
 - Bank Account details.
 - Time sheets are to be kept by employees and checked by the Financial Administrator and Executive Director in relation to the hours worked and any holiday/sick/special leave entitlements or TOIL.
- Wages and regular fringe benefit payments shall be processed through either the on line or internet banking systems.
- The Financial Administrator is to prepare payslips and complete the necessary forms for online batch processing.
- The Financial Administrator is to provide an itemised copy of the batch payments to the Executive Director prior to them being authorised and processed.
- The Executive Director must check entries as they appear on the computer before payment is made.

SECTION 3 - FINANCIAL & ASSET MANAGEMENT

- Authorisation involves an authorisation device provided by the Welfare Rights Centre's bank. This device has allocated passwords that the Executive Director and Principal Solicitor can administer.
- The Financial Administrator will prepare and distribute pay slips that will have details of pay and any deductions (tax, etc).
- The Financial Administrator will prepare holiday pays as requested by staff after the approved holiday leave form has been completed, checked against the worker's entitlements and approved by the Executive Director.
- Leave loading is paid in two annual instalments in June and December.
- No variations to payroll (e.g. overtime) can be processed without written notification from the Executive Director.
- Other deductions such as union fees will be deducted from all payments of wages if the employee authorises the deduction in writing. These deductions shall be recorded on the payslip of the employee.

3.15 Salary Sacrifice/Packages

The Welfare Rights Centre Inc will ensure it has adequate and consistent systems in place for the effective management of salary sacrifice and salary packaging arrangements for staff and that all staff are aware and informed of the terms and conditions of salary sacrifice and/or salary packaging arrangements. Appendix A is a copy of the current protocols that are given to new staff and to existing staff on an annual basis.

3.16 Superannuation

The Welfare Rights Centre will pay employer superannuation contributions to a fund nominated by the employee. The Centre will follow the requirements set down by the relevant Federal and State legislation.

- Following the final salary payments for any given month, the Financial Administrator will ensure that the relevant payments are made to the nominated superannuation funds of employees of the Centre for that period.
- The Financial Administrator shall prepare the necessary documentation (contribution forms) to accompany payment. Every effort should be made to ensure that payment is sent by the seventh day of the next month.

3.17 Asset Management

The organisation aims to prevent disrepair, excessive risk to its assets through an asset management plan.

- All assets are to be traceable so conflicts of interest in the management of the Welfare Rights Centre resources can be identified.
- Welfare Right Centre's assets must be insured to the extent necessary for prudent risk management.

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- Assets will be used only for the purposes of the organisation.
- Assets shall be depreciated in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

3.17.1 Assets Register

The Centre shall maintain an assets register of all assets of the Welfare Rights Centre of value in excess of \$2,000.00.

- The register will list date of purchase, cost at time of purchase (evidenced by receipt), any applicable warranty/service details and sales provider, accumulated depreciation, depreciation for each financial period, current value of the asset.
- Assets identified in the Register of Assets will be held at least until written off in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards.
- The assets register shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director but is delegated to appropriate staff to maintain.

3.17.2 Depreciation and Capital Equipment

- Depreciation is charged against assets valued over \$2,000.
- The WRC uses the "Reducing Balance Depreciation" process to account for the current value of assets and wealth.
- Depreciation is reported to the Management Committee in the Finance Reports.

3.18 Motor Vehicle

The Welfare Rights Centre shall maintain a vehicle for use by all staff with a Queensland Drivers License when on authorised business of the WRC.

- Appropriate records will be kept so the centre can comply with any ATO regulations.
- The vehicle will generally be allocated on a first in basis as booked in the central diary. Bookings can be over ridden by the Executive Director if more cost efficient to the Centre to allocate the vehicle to another worker.
- If the vehicle is to be made available to staff for personal use or home garaging then the details of the use and coverage of Fringe Benefits Tax is to be outlined in a contract that is kept on the staff persons personal file.
- Records of the vehicles use is to be maintained in a log book and include; date, beginning km reading and ending km reading, purpose of trip and name of driver.
- The vehicle is to be maintained to ensure its safety and serviceability.
- Staff are required to drive the vehicle in accordance with all the road rules.
- The vehicle is covered under either RACQ membership or vehicle manufacturer's breakdown recovery service.

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3.18.1 Vehicle Insurance

- The vehicle is to be fully covered by all relevant insurances and breakdown services.
- Accidents, damage and insurance claims are to be reported to the Executive Director who will manage the process.
- Any excess incurred by accidents while on duty will be paid by the WRC.
- If the vehicle is stolen, personal property belonging to drivers is not insured and the Centre takes no responsibility for personal property left in the vehicle.
- The Welfare Rights Centre's insurance policy does not cover the Association or any person driving the vehicle if, at the time of the accident, the driver is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- All drivers are responsible for the payment of any fine incurred while in charge of the vehicle.

3.18.2 Employee Private Vehicle Use

- Should the workplace vehicle not be available when a staff person needs transport, then staff can use their own vehicle and claim costs as per the ATO rates if their own vehicle is registered, insured and is safe to drive.
- Staff are advised to check with their insurance companies that their vehicles may be used for work purposes.
- When driving ones own vehicle in the unlikely event of an accident in the course of a worker's duties, accident claim forms must be lodged with the worker's personal insurance company. WRC will pay the initial excess incurred under the worker's personal insurance policy.

3.19 Disposal of Equipment/Assets Policy

The Welfare Rights Centre from time to time obtains new equipment to replace old or superseded equipment. The Welfare Rights Centre will dispose of the old or superseded equipment in a reasonable and fair manner.

- The Executive Director will determine an appropriate and fair way of disposing of superseded equipment if and when the value is less than \$2,000.
- For property with a value of more than \$2,000, a disposal process will be presented to the Management Committee for their approval.



4.1 Staff Appointments

The Management Committee is responsible for overseeing the recruitment, selection and appointment of all permanent staff based on the principles of equal employment opportunities as outlined in anti-discrimination legislation.

- When a position becomes available the Executive Director will review the:
 - Type of work to be undertaken
 - Position Description
 - Selection Criteria
 - Staffing and reporting structure
 - Salary and conditions of employment.
- Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures to be agreed prior to the advertising of the position.
- Any vacancy that is full-time or permanent part-time (more than 6 months duration) will be advertised.
- An advertisement for a vacant position will be finalised by the Executive Director in consultation with the President or nominated member of the Management Committee.
- Interviews will be conducted by an appropriate interview panel, established by the Management Committee with skills relative to the position.
- A Short List of the most suitable applicants will be interviewed.
- Appropriate consideration should be given to the Centre's Access and Equity Policy when short listing applicants.
- Reasonable notice to candidates of interview times should be given.
- Where it is not possible for a candidate to attend the interview personally (due to geographical distance) arrangements should be made for a teleconference.
- Each interview should ideally not exceed 45 minutes.
- Panel members should agree beforehand on the format of the interview and this should be outlined to each candidate at the start of the interview.
- Candidates should be advised of an approximate timeframe in which they will be notified about the outcome of the selection process.
- Referees will be contacted. Only people nominated by the candidate as referees should be contacted.
- The successful candidate will be contacted by a panel member as soon as possible and offered the position.
- The successful candidate's offer and acceptance should be followed up with a formal letter offering the appointment and a contract that includes all relevant materials.

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- In the event that a selection is not possible, the position should be reviewed.
- The panel should finalise their task by reporting back to the Management Committee of the outcome prior to the proposed appointment.
- All documents relating to the recruitment and selection of staff will be retained for a period of at least twelve months.
- A report will be given to the Management Committee to ratify the appointment of the successful applicant.

4.2 Staff Induction

All new staff, students and volunteers are to be appropriately inducted into the organisation.

- The degrees of induction will vary depending on the person's role in the organisation.
- The Executive Director is responsible for maintaining an induction sheet that is to be checked off and completed within 1 month of a person starting work.
- The completed check list is to be kept on the staff/volunteers/students personal file.

4.3 Filling Temporary Vacancies

The Executive Director will be responsible for the filling of temporary vacancies within the Welfare Rights Centre, other than the Executive Director and the Principal Solicitor's positions. A temporary position occurs when a current employee takes leave for extended periods over 3 months or a project position is created through one-off grants or a budget surplus.

- Due to the nature of the casual/temporary nature of these positions it may not be necessary to proceed with any formal process. If the position is a full-time relief position which exceeds three months but is less than six months 'expressions of interest' should be called for. The process should ensure that:
 - The position be advertised through networks and community service websites
 - Applicants are required to submit a written expression of interest in the position.
 - Suitable applicants are to be interviewed to assess their capacity to do the work and fitting the workplace culture.
 - Referees are to be provided and checked

4.4 Staff, Students and Volunteers Code of Conduct

All staff, students and volunteers are required to act in an accountable and impartial manner and that they uphold the values and objectives of the Welfare Rights Centre with integrity and transparency.

In addition to the code of behaviour set out in Section 1.2 of this Governance Manual employees, students and volunteers of the WRC should agree to the following:

- work within the operations and service standards as noted in the Manual.
- contribute to the development of best practice through agreed processes.

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- To work cooperatively with the Management Committee and work colleagues and act respectfully towards their point of view.
- Follow any grievance procedures set down by the Management Committee to try to resolve any conflicts with staff, students, volunteers or members of the organisation.
- Treat clients and others who use the WRC with courtesy, respect and consideration.
- Not disclose any information concerning clients or business of the service without appropriate levels of permission, except where the worker has a duty of care.
- Recognise the power imbalance between staff, students, volunteers and client and not use this position for personal gain or favours.
- Not personally accept gifts or gratuities from clients over the value of \$20.
- Not remove property or funds from the organisation without appropriate permission from the Executive Director or Management Committee.
- Not consume alcohol or other illegal substances whilst at work and not perform duties under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Not carry on a private business from the organisation premises.
- Not use the organisations resources for private business.
- Not use the internet for unauthorised purposes.
- Observe no smoking policy in the workplace.
- Wear neat and appropriate clothing that are not offensive to clients.

Failure to abide by this code of behaviour may lead to dismissal from the Welfare Rights Centre (WRC).

4.5 Time Sheets

Time sheets are legal documents and all staff must keep them accurate and up-to-date.

- Time sheets must be recorded with the following information:
 - Total hours worked regular hours and overtime hours.
 - Time off in Lieu (TOIL).
 - Annual leave, sick leave, bereavement leave, study leave, etc.
 - Lunch periods accounted for every day with all staff members taking the appropriate time off for lunch periods as per award.
- At the end of each time sheet period, the time sheets are to be signed by the employee and must be countersigned by the Executive Director.
- Staff are required to complete time sheets within two working days of the pay period.
- The original of the time sheet will be kept on file.

4.6 Payment of Employees

All employees will be paid in accordance with relevant Industrial Agreement, in a timely manner.

All changes to staff salaries (including increments) are to be noted at Management Committee Meetings.

4.7 Annual Staff Reviews

The Management Committee will strive to ensure that the employment review process is a cooperative process assisting the employee and employer to identify strengths of the individual staff person and the tasks that need to be carried out. Staff reviews shall not be used as a disciplinary action. They are to be seen as a tool for service improvement and staff development.

An annual staff review will be undertaken to:

- allow the staff member, supervising staff and/or Management Committee to be confident that the work required is being undertaken.
- review and negotiate any necessary updating of job descriptions.
- identify the developmental and training needs of staff and negotiate plans to meet those needs.
- link the workers role and their work tasks to the organisations CLSP.
- to establish clear expectations by setting objectives and tasks that relate to the worker's position description.
- identify factors that may impact on staff's work performance.
- provide a forum for staff to be heard.
- ensure the employer is managing any potential risk in relation to the employee/employer relationship.

Staff reviews should occur annually to fit in with the strategic planning of the organisation. Reviews are undertaken by the Executive Director or their delegate.

The review of the Executive Director will be carried out by two members of the Management Committee.

At least one week prior to the review the following is to be distributed:

- a current position description,
- current copy of the organisations CLSP
- previous years targets

4.7.1 At the Review

- The role of the employee should be clarified and the Position Description should be reviewed and necessary changes made.
- The main achievement and shortfalls for the previous year should be noted. Strategies and ideas for overcoming any shortfalls should be noted.
- Any training needs should be explored and a plan developed to ensure 10 hours of professional training is to be achieved within the year.
- Tasks and key performance indicators for the coming year should be discussed and documented including individual targets.
- Staff will have their level of satisfaction assessed in relation to the following:
 - Wages and conditions of employment
 - Team work
 - Management/Support and Supervision
 - Communication
 - Occupational Health and Safety

- Direction of the service

4.7.2 After the interview

- A copy of the reviewed Position Description and list of Key Performance Indicators to be signed by staff and their supervisor and a copy placed on the personal file and a copy given to the staff person.
- Any notes taken shall be placed on the employees personal file.

4.8 ***Conditions of Employment of Staff***

The Welfare Rights Centre will only offer staff fair conditions of employment which are to be outlined in a relevant Industrial Agreement and/or Industry Award. WRC strives to achieve best practice employment standards whilst securing the ongoing viability of the centre.

- All staff will be employed in accordance with the Industrial Agreement.
- All staff at the commencement of their employment will be provided with documentation of their appointment, a position description, reporting requirements, conditions of employment, the process for reviewing performance and the process for grievance.
- Staff will be provided with a contract which will include the following as a minimum:
 - terms and conditions of employment
 - definitions, wages and allowances
 - hours of work
 - statutory holidays, leave, etc.
- Staff are encouraged to participate in their relevant union and reasonable levels of support will be given to facilitate the relationship.

4.9 ***Leave***

All paid staff are entitled to leave entitlements in accordance with the Industrial Award under which they are employed.

- WRC Inc has various types of leave including: Holiday, Sick, Study, Carers and Family leave and Christmas Closure.
- If a staff person takes leave of any type the appropriate form is to be completed as soon as possible.
- All leave needs to be approved by the Executive Director who is responsible for ensuring there are enough staff to operate the service safely and the mix of staff skills is appropriate.

4.9.1 Annual Leave

- The staff member should make application for leave on the Leave Application Form when it is their intention to use annual leave.

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- The Executive Director will assess each request considering staffing levels at that time. Requests will not be unreasonably denied although the workloads and staffing levels will need to be considered.
- The appointment of a locum replacement will be addressed as per the Staff Replacement Policy 4.9.9.
- Staff with dependent school aged children will be given priority for leave in school holiday periods, although they are expected to have planned ahead and made a request at least 6 weeks prior to the holiday period.
- Staff are entitled to carry annual leave over from one year to another although when more than 6 weeks leave has accrued staff are required to negotiate with the Executive Director a suitable time to take this leave. If the annual leave balance exceeds eight weeks staff will be required to take leave within the next 4 weeks.

4.9.2 Sick Leave

- If unable to attend work due to ill health the staff person will phone their supervisor on the morning of sick leave so that a replacement can be arranged if necessary/possible. In the case of the Executive Director being sick, then he/she will notify the office on the morning of the sick leave.
- Staff sick leave can be used if any person a staff member is responsible for becomes ill.
- A medical certificate will be required after three days absence from work, or as outlined in the industrial agreement.
- Alternative arrangements may be negotiated with the Executive Director in lieu of medical certificates in special circumstances.

4.9.3 Leave without pay

- The staff member wanting leave without pay for a period of 12 months or less then they should apply in writing to the Executive Director.
- Requests for leave over 12 months needs to be considered by the Management Committee.
- If the Executive Director approves the request then the Management Committee is notified of the leave and staff replacement arrangements.
- The staff member will, within 3 months before their reinstatement of position, give written notification to the Executive Director of their intentions.
- If the staff member notifies of their intention not to return to the position, the position will be declared vacant and the policy of appointment of staff will be started.

4.9.4 Public holidays

- Staff are entitled to all gazetted Public Holidays for the Brisbane region.

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- In the case of permanent part-time workers, hours will be credited, in proportion to the number of hours they work each week for every public holiday. This allows for staff flexibility around the days they work without loss of paid time off.
i.e. If a person works 3 days a week they are entitled to three fifths of 7 hours for every public holiday or gratis day.
- Staff wages will not be altered to accommodate this method of paying public holidays. The hours will be made up in the usual flexible work arrangements.

4.9.5 Study Leave

Staff are entitled for up to 4 hours study leave per week.

- Study leave will be granted for all study that has an accreditation attached and is related to the work of the organisation.
- Applications for study leave to be presented to the Executive Director in writing outlining the type of study, its relevance to the staff persons work, dates and times required.
- The written application and the response to be filed on the staff persons file.
- If leave is refused by the Executive Director the staff person may take the request to the President of the organisation.

4.9.6 Parenting Leave

Paid maternity, paternity and adoption leave is provided to assist permanent (full-time and part-time) staff in balancing work with family responsibilities. Paid maternity leave assists the organisation by retaining the skills and experience that staff have developed during their work with the organisation.

- The Executive Director, with the Financial Administrator, is responsible to the Management Committee for ensuring that parenting leave entitlements are processed.
- Maternity, paternity and adoption leave becomes an entitlement after twelve months of continuous service with the organisation.
- An application for parenting leave is to be in writing and given to the Executive Director.
- An eligible employee shall be entitled to adoption leave upon production of a statement from an approved adoption agency or other appropriate body of the date of placement and where the child is not of school age and has not previously lived with the employee concerned for a period of six months, or who is not a child or step child of the employee or spouse.
- The following period of leave and rates of payment apply:
 - The amount of paid maternity leave is six weeks full time (pro rata for part time employees). The employee is entitled to receive this payment in the pay period that falls in the fortnight immediately preceding the leave.
 - In accordance with the QSCSA award, an eligible employee is entitled to a maximum of 52 weeks of absence. This leave may be commenced up to twenty weeks before the anticipated date of birth.

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- An additional seven days sick leave shall be available to a pregnant employee before maternity leave is commenced.
- Adoption leave conditions are the same as maternity leave (above).
- A secondary care parent employee is entitled to two weeks paid leave of absence. The employee is entitled to receive this payment in the pay period that falls in the fortnight immediately preceding the leave.
- A secondary care parent employee is entitled to unpaid leave, in accordance with the QSCSA award.

4.9.7 Christmas Closure

- The WRC closes down for two weeks during the Christmas/New Year period. Staff are not to attend but will be paid for this period.
- This leave is not transferable and does not attract leave loading.

4.9.8 Long Service Leave

- Long Service Leave (LSL) is accrued in accordance with the Queensland Legislation.
- Employees of WRC are entitled to Pro Rate LSL after 5 years of continuous service.
- LSL needs to be applied for at least 4 weeks prior to being utilise.
- LSL must be taken in blocks of 2 weeks.

4.9.9 Replacement of Staff on Leave

Where resources are available, including skilled people and a budget, the WRC will endeavour to replace all staff when a person is sick or on leave. However in recognition that finding suitable staff can be difficult the following procedures shall apply:

- Staff should not request leave if they have any duties or matters that can not be easily transferred to another person or rearranged.
- The Executive Director has the discretion to appoint a relief worker with appropriate skills and experience.
- Legal staff taking leave of more than 10 days will be required to liaise with the Principal Solicitor about their matters prior to taking leave.
- Unexpected matters that arise in the files of a staff person on leave will be assessed by the Principal Solicitor and it may be deemed necessary to have the file reallocated to another staff person or worked on by a volunteer.
- All phones/emails will have recorded messages left on them and/or redirected to the Admin line.
- Clients that contact the centre will be advised of your return date. If they have a problem with this they are to be contacted by the Principal Solicitor.
- All locum and relief workers will be paid in accordance with the Industrial Agreement.

4.10 Hours of Work

- Full time staff are expected to work 38 hours a week (full time employees). Part time staff will have their hours stipulated in their employment contracts.

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- These hours can be worked any where between 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday. Hours worked outside of these hours are to be approved by the Executive Director.
- WRC Inc has core working hours of 9.30am – 3pm. Time taken off during these hours needs to be approved by the Executive Director.
- Staff hours should not exceed 10 hours on any one day. Working more than 10 hours a day may attract overtime penalties and would need to be approved in writing by the Executive Director.

4.10.1 TOIL

- Full time staff can accrue up to 38 hours TOIL (or the equivalent of one weeks worth of hours for part time employees). Hours accrued over the individual limit in any pay period shall not be carried over to the next time sheet without approval from the Executive Director. This means these hours will not be paid for without prior approval.
- Staff can go into a negative TOIL balance of up to 4 hours. The Executive Director can approve more than 4 hours but it must be justified.
- TOIL can be used by having flexible start/finish times. Alternatively whole days can be taken but these should be approved by the Executive Director prior to being taken. A form will be required to be completed if a whole day is being taken.
- Working on weekends, public holidays and for more than 10 hours a day is actively discouraged.

4.10.1 Meal Breaks

- The award sets a minimum of 30 min and a maximum of 1 hour. Working through a meal break attracts penalties and would need to be approved by the Executive Director.
- Lunch times are organised on a daily basis but two staff are to be in the office at all times.

4.11 Managing Staff, Student and Volunteer Grievances

The Welfare Rights Centre recognises that staff, volunteers and students have the right to access fair and equitable procedures for dealing with disputes and grievances.

- Grievances may be raised by any individual or group that believes actions of the WRC, or an individual associated with the Centre causes the staff to be aggrieved.

Grievances procedures for clients are outlined in section 2.7.

Procedures to deal with grievance are as follows:

- In the first instance a person that is aggrieved should make an attempt to raise their concern with the person who is causing the problem to them. If this is not possible or appropriate the aggrieved should talk to the Executive Director or President.
- It is important that any grievances are dealt with in a timely manner. For this reason it is necessary that the grievance is raised within two weeks of the situation/s causing a problem has occurred.

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- If that attempt at settlement fails, or such a discussion is inappropriate, then the process needs to be formalised. Staff, students or volunteers are required to document their concern in writing making notes of any actions they have taken to settle the matter.
- This formalised grievance should be presented to the Executive Director or the President who will investigate the complaint.
- The investigation process will entail communicating with all relevant parties to determine if the grievance is valid. If the grievance is validated a plan of action to address the concern will be developed within 2 weeks and presented to all relevant parties to provide comment.
- If either party is dissatisfied with the plan of action they should put their concern in writing and it will be tabled at the next Management Committee meeting.
- Staff are able to utilise external support regarding the fairness of the outcome or seek advice and support from their union.
- Disciplinary action may be taken against any person who is found not to be;
 - following the Code of Conduct, and/or
 - operating according to the organisations policy and procedures, and/or
 - performing their required duties as outlined in their position description and work plans.

4.12 Staff/Volunteer/Student Disciplinary Procedures

The Welfare Rights Centre recognises that staff, students and volunteers have a right to access fair, timely and equitable procedures should situations arise where their conduct and/or performance is not meeting the expected standard.

- Disciplinary action may need to be taken with staff, students or volunteers due to a complaint or as a result of work performance not being to an acceptable standard.
- At all times the staff members, students or volunteers shall be treated in accordance with the principles of natural justice. These include:
 - The right to a fair hearing including adequate notice of what is alleged and a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations, and
 - The right to an unbiased process of judgement.
- Nothing in this procedure shall restrict the employer's right to summarily dismiss an employee in circumstances that warrant such action.
- Where relevant this procedure shall also apply to students and volunteers, although the decision making will be limited to the Executive Director and not include the Management Committee.
- Where the employer has concerns about the work performance or conduct of an employee the following disciplinary procedures will apply:

Verbal Warning

- The issue should be discussed with the person in the first instance by the Executive Director (or the President) within 2 weeks of the incident causing the problem has occurred or is revealed.
- The staff person shall be advised of the problem with their work performance or code of conduct.
- The required conduct or work performance will be clearly expressed and a strategy to rectify the problem will be discussed.
- The employee is to be given a right to reply to any issues raised against them. If the employee does not agree with the strategy to rectify the problem they may put their concerns in writing to the Management Committee who will decide the appropriateness of the strategy.
- A written record of this discussion will be kept in the Executive Director or Presidents' diary.

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Written warning

- If the problem continues or occurs again after the verbal warning the person should be given written notice of the complaints against them. This notice shall:
 - outline the reason for the warning
 - provide details of the required standards of performance or conduct expected
 - set a time frame to review the concern
 - outline reasonable strategies to assist the employee meet the required performance such as training and/or mentoring
 - note consequences of not meeting the required standards of performance and/or conduct.
- The staff person shall be required to attend a meeting to discuss the matters raised in the notice. This meeting shall be attended by the Executive Director or President and at least one other member of the Management Committee. The purpose of the meeting is to prevent further problems occurring.
- The staff person is entitled to be supported/represented by a person of their choice (including union representation) at any meetings.
- Records of this meeting will be kept on the staff persons file for an agreed period no longer than three years. After this time period a review will take place and if the matter has been resolved then no further action will be required.

Final Written warning

- If the problem continues or occurs again after the written warning, the staff person shall be given another, final written notice of the complaint/s against them requiring them to attend another meeting. This meeting shall be attended by the Executive Director or President and at least one other member of the Management Committee.
- The staff person is entitled to be supported/represented by a person of their choice (including union representation) at any meetings.
- The aim of the meeting is to resolve the dispute by reviewing the agreed course of action and making necessary changes and reinforcing the consequences if the behaviour or performance is not improved. Any further changes to the strategy/action will be noted and a time frame to implement these changes will apply.
- All outcomes from this meeting shall be recorded and all Management Committee members will be advised of the course of action that has been taken.
- If there is no improvement or a repeat of the issues of concern then the involvement of the person in the organisation may be terminated.

Termination of Employment

If necessary the decision to terminate an employee will need to be determined by the Management Committee. A special meeting may need to be called for the matter to be fully discussed.

Alternative Action

Depending on the causes and severity of the situation, the committee *may* choose to conduct an alternative dispute resolution process (through the Dispute Resolution Centres) to resolve the issue.

4.13 Staff Resignation

In accordance with the time periods as detailed in the relevant award, employees are required to provide a written notice of termination of employment. This original notice of termination of employment should be included in the employee's personal file.

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Upon notification by an employee of their impending termination of employment, it is the Executive Director's responsibility to:

- ensure the collection of property belonging to the organisation, e.g. keys
- ensure the security of the organisation's information systems by cancelling passwords and ensuring the return of any hardware and software which may be in the employee's possession
- ensure that the employee 'hand over' in critical work areas is done in a timely, appropriate manner and in accordance with the Executive Director's requirements.

4.14 Exit Interview

An exit interview will take place with the Executive Director and the resigning staff member if agreed to by the resigning staff member.

An exit interview is to be an opportunity to obtain evaluative feedback of the organisation and service provision aspects. The exit interview is meant to be constructive for the individual and the organisation providing an avenue by which both stakeholders can address issues and highlight areas, where relevant, that can improve the organisation's performance.

4.15 Staff Supervision

Supervision is important to ensure that staff are supported in their work and that their work is carried out effectively. Additionally, supervision sessions provide an opportunity to follow through on staff development issues noted in staff performance reviews.

The model of supervision used in the Centre is a mix of formal and informal. All workers will have access to advice and assistance from other workers and the Executive Director and/or Principal Solicitor when needed.

Supervision sessions will cover the following points:

- review of performance since last session;
- major activities planned before next session;
- organisational issues;
- feedback on performance including identification of strengths and weaknesses;
- identification of strategies for staff development.

4.15.1 Supervision of Casework Staff

- Each caseworker will have responsibility for decisions made on files allocated to them.
- The Principal Solicitor will be responsible for checking advice session data sheets where the supervising caseworker is not legally qualified or a nominated person.

4.16 Student and Work Placements

The Welfare Rights Centre recognises the importance of training opportunities to students and trainees and will endeavour to provide such opportunities from time to time.

The Executive Director will have the responsibility for ensuring that student and work placements are utilised in the proper manner and in accordance with any guidelines from the educational/training institution.

4.17 Volunteers

The Welfare Rights Centre has clear practices for volunteer engagement which ensure that the work of volunteers enhances the work of the Association and the well-being and personal development of the volunteers themselves. The work of volunteers is to supplement and enhance, but not compete with the work of paid employees. Volunteers are to be recognised as valuable team members.

For information about practices and procedures see the Operations Manual.

4.18 Professional Development

The Welfare Rights Centre requires all permanent staff working more than 14 hours a week to participate in a minimum of ten hours professional development in each 12 month period. This is supported by spending a minimum of 3% of the salary budget on staff development, including attendance at Workshops and Conferences.

- The Queensland Law Society (QLS) expects solicitors to, "each year, complete a minimum of ten CPD units to maintain their practising certificate". The Welfare Rights Centre has extended this good practice to all staff working at the Centre.
- The Welfare Rights Centre will support workers to comply with their professional development in the following manner.
- The WRC will promote relevant professional development sessions through staff supervision, mail, notice board and staff meetings. Where CLC specific training is available, staff will be encouraged to attend.
- Reasonable costs to attend relevant training will be met by the WRC when resources are available within the budget.
- Staff are to advise if they attend any professional development so records can be kept.
- The QLS assessment period runs from 1 April to 31 March each year and staff will be advised in December of each year how many hours of training they have attended.
- Staff are initially responsible for recognising the professional development they want to participate in. However, supervisors may identify and recommend training through support and Annual Review sessions.
- If the 10 hours are not achieved the WRC is not responsible for any individual consequences that the individual may face by their professional association.
- Staff may request paid time and flexibility in working hours to undertake the professional development. Examples would include: TOIL, study leave and working outside core hours. All are to be approved by the Executive Director prior to undertaking any training.

4.19 Working From Home Agreement

- The WRC will consider requests from staff that want to work from home. These requests will be assessed on an individual basis and will depend on factors including the workers capacity to meet any targets and work commitments they have in a safe environment which is conducive to quality work.

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- Working from home is a short-term option which aims to benefit both employee and employer.
- The opportunity to work from home is not an entitlement, a right or an obligation, and can only occur by formal agreement between the Executive Director and the staff.
- Either the Executive Director or the staff member can initiate discussion about formalising a Working from Home Agreement, but unless both parties agree, an employee cannot be directed to work from home and the WRC is under no obligation to approve a request from an employee to enter into a working from home arrangement.

4.19.1 Conditions Governing Working from Home

- The Executive Director, when asked to approve a working from home request will consider issues such as:
 - the type of work and the amount of work
 - can the work be completed safely?
 - can the work be completed more efficiently at home?
 - will there be an adverse effect on the organisation or other staff?
 - can the work be completed without onsite supervision?
 - will the arrangement impact on clients?
- The duties to be performed while working from home should be clearly detailed and formalised in the Agreement prior to commencing the work arrangement.
- Staff will be able to claim for reasonable costs incurred during work from home. These costs need to be submitted with a copy of the tax invoice highlighting the specific costs. In accordance with financial delegations, costs over \$20.00 will need to be approved prior to being incurred.

4.19.2 Implementation Procedures

Should work from home be an ongoing arrangement then the Executive Director is required to follow through with the following implementation procedures:

- Visit site to assess for OH&S
- All appropriate insurance is transferable or available
- Check necessary equipment is available
- Consider costs and reimbursements
- The work is secure and client confidentiality can be maintained
- The employee agrees that the WRC is not responsible for any liability on the part of a third party who is not an employee of the WRC.
- Hours of work do not change
- The adequacy of communication and interaction with others is discussed
- A work agreement is signed and documented on file.



SECTION 5 - WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

5.1 General Policy

The Welfare Rights Centre will conduct its activities in such a way as to *provide an environment which, so far as practicable, protects the health, safety and welfare of all people at the workplace and actively encourages safe and environmentally friendly working practices.*

- The Welfare Rights Centre and its staff shall:
 - Promote health and safety awareness and the development of healthy and safe working procedures.
 - Consult with employees, including volunteers on health and safety matters and on ways to reduce workplace hazards and improve control systems.
 - Identify potentially dangerous situations and hazards and report them to the Executive Director.
 - Encourage the rehabilitation of injured employees.
 - Set health and safety objectives and regularly review performance.
 - Report accidents and incidents that occur whilst working.
- In the case of an emergency the appropriate emergency service/s will be called.
- Employees, including volunteers and visitors for their part, will be expected to:
 - Have their presence on the premises recorded.
 - Comply with all relevant legislation and statutory requirements and working procedures, codes of practice and industry standards.
 - Wear appropriate protective equipment (where needed).
 - Report and, where appropriate, rectify hazards and participate in analysis of accidents.
 - Accept responsibility for protecting themselves and others.
- Sufficient space will be provided to staff to meet the needs of the office environment.
- Training will be offered to staff in workplace health and safety issues when necessary.
- The Executive Director will appoint a Workplace Health and Safety Officer whose role will be to oversee the day to day issues that may impact on staff members. This staff member will be trained in first aid and will be entitled to receive a "first aid allowance".
- A well-maintained and equipped first aid kit will be kept in an accessible place in the office.
- At no time shall a staff member approach an aggressive person. Assistance must be sought prior to the person being approached from another staff member or other source (e.g. police).
- In the event of a critical incident occurring staff will be offered the opportunity of counselling to discuss the incident with an appropriately qualified person.
- Staff, being aware of their own limitations, will not move furniture or any other items that are too heavy.
- Should a home visit be necessary to a client, then two staff members are to attend. The Centre will be advised of all the details of where they are going and when they expect to return.
- The office will only be open to clients when two staff members are present at the same time. A staff member may choose a volunteer to be the second person present.

SECTION 5 - WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

- Entry points to the office will be secured at all times. The sliding door is only used in an emergency and the door is to be kept latched at all other times. Staff should use the front reception door to enter and leave the office.

5.2 **Stress at Work**

The Welfare Rights Centre will assess risk factors that relate to stress in the workplace and take steps to minimise these risk factors.

- Stress can be defined as a demand placed on a person by a specific situation or other people. It is when the demand becomes so great that there is a negative response which in turn affects the person's job performance.
- The organisation needs to examine workplace conditions and look for any risk factors and attempt to reduce or eliminate identified stressors that may cause high levels of stress.
- Stress related symptoms may lead to workers being absent from work either by sick leave, holiday leave or workers' compensation. Losses associated with stress may be compensated when the condition was caused or aggravated by work or work-related activities. Effective rehabilitation can assist in preventing long absences from work.
- Risk management will be undertaken regularly to assess and prevent serious occupational stress by:
 - Identifying potential stressors: Investigate any accidents and their causes, review conflict levels in the organisation, check absenteeism rates and observe uncharacteristic behaviour.
 - Assessing the effect of stressors: How many staff are likely to be affected, what are the possible cumulative effects and what is the frequency of observed stress.
 - Developing control measures to minimise stressors: Maximise opportunities for workers to influence work situations, access for workers to effective training programs
 - Reviewing control measures: If stress problems remain or become worse or other difficulties develop then an outside consultant needs to be secured to assist with the workplace environment.
- The Welfare Rights Centre will provide good organisational support to lessen the incidents of stress in the workplace by:
 - Advising workers of relevant organisational change
 - Provide career opportunities
 - Responding to staff complaints/suggestions
 - Supporting staff in times of family illness/crisis
 - Provide regular feedback
 - Ensuring good staff working conditions are a priority
 - Clearly defining job responsibilities and accountability structures
 - Establishing appropriate levels of supervision and support for all staff
 - Ensuring work plans and timelines are realistic
 - Use of timely procedures to ensure unacceptable behaviour by any one worker is dealt with.
- Staff to have access to an external counselling service to assist with personal and professional stressors.

5.3 **Violence at work**

The Welfare Rights Centre will not accept violence at the workplace.

SECTION 5 - WORKPLCAE HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

- The Welfare Rights Centre defines violence as “any unlawful incident or pattern of behaviour that results in the physical and/or psychological harm to employees”. Examples of work-related violence are:
 - intimidation
 - sexual harassment
 - threats of violence
 - assault
- For employees providing a community service, exposure to violence may be acute, for example sudden physical attack or it may be cumulative, for example daily abuse and/or intimidation. Both forms of abuse may lead to physical and emotional harm. There is a risk of violence in the workplace if there is:
 - an aggressor
 - an employee and
 - an opportunity for interaction.
- Staff are not expected to put up with abusive or violent behaviour from clients. If clients become extremely difficult, they should be referred to a person's immediate supervisor or to the Executive Director for attention. If necessary the Police will be called.
- Preventing violence in the workplace is a first priority by:
 - preventing the aggressor from entering the workplace
 - removing the employee from the workplace
 - ensure the interaction is non-violent.
- The Executive Director will take action to minimise or prevent the risk of violence and minimise the severity of the injury by:
 - identifying where there is a risk of violence in the workplace
 - assessing what factors contribute to the level of risk, and
 - so far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate or control the factors that contribute to the risk of violence and the short and long-term effects of it. This may include limiting or refusing services to clients who continually verbally abuse staff or threaten harm.
- Training will be provided to staff to assist in dealing with difficult clients.
- An incident form will be filled out by the person affected as soon as possible.
- The staff member affected by the incident will be offered debriefing by suitably qualified people.

5.4 Workplace Bullying

The Welfare Rights Centre will not accept any form of bullying from its members, Management Committee, staff, volunteers and clients. When necessary steps will be taken to prevent and eliminate this abusive behaviour in the work place.

The Queensland Government defines workplace bullying as:

'the repeated less favourable treatment of a person by another or others in the workplace, which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practice'. It includes behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates a worker, possibly in front of co-workers, clients or customers''.

People included under this policy include; staff, students, volunteers and members of the Management Committee.

SECTION 5 - WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Management Committee has an obligation to protect the workers from workplace bullying – Section 28 of the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 extends to ensuring that workers are not bullied in the workplace.

The Welfare Rights Centre will deal with all inappropriate behaviour in the following manner:

- People should report any workplace bullying to either the Executive Director or a Management Committee member. This report should be in writing. All reports will be taken seriously. (See Managing Staff Grievance, section 4.11).
- Due to the nature of bullying the complainant will not be required to be alone with the alleged perpetrator, although supervisory or managing responsibilities will still apply during the investigation process unless directed by the President that this should not occur.
- The Welfare Rights Centre will investigate all reports of workplace bullying. This investigation will be undertaken quickly and impartially and will be convened by either the Executive Director and/or Management Committee members.
- The investigation process will be developed and agreed to by both parties. Where ever possible the complaint will be dealt with internally in the first instance. If there is no agreement the process is to be determined by the person or parties convening the investigation.
- The process of investigation will require both the alleged bully and their victim to document their cases.
- Both parties are able to have union representation. If the person is not a member of a union, or the union is not their relevant advocate, they may nominate an independent and appropriately qualified advocate with the consent of the convenor.
- If it is found that there is a case of bullying or other inappropriate forms of conduct then disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrator to ensure a safe workplace for the victim and others involved with the Welfare Rights Centre (see Staff Discipline section 4.12).
- Serious cases of bullying made lead to summary dismissal.
- A worker may also make an external complaint of alleged workplace bullying to the Division of Workplace Health and Safety in accordance with their practices.
- New staff and volunteers are to be made aware in their induction that workplace bullying is not tolerated in this organisation.

5.5 Fire Procedures

There are two fire extinguishers located in the office. One is located by the doorway of the reception room. The other is located in the volunteer room by the CLSIS files. Both are powder type and can be used on flammable liquids, flammable metals, gas and electrical equipment. Before attempting to use any fire extinguisher consider your own safety first and place yourself between the fire and the exit door.

In the event of a fire or other emergency, the emergency services should be dialled immediately.

It is important to make sure that the people in the building are safe. However do not put yourself in danger.

When leaving rooms make sure that everyone is out of that room and shut any doors you pass through. Make your way to the meeting point which is the corner of Old Cleveland Road and Edith Street outside the TAB store.

5.6 Green Office Environment

WRC is committed to minimising our carbon footprint. As a result we have developed an identified position as "Green Officer". This staff person/s will be responsible for offering advice and finding solutions as to how we can minimise our impact on the environment.

SECTION 5 - WORKPLCAE HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

This may include (for example):

- **Having our "Green Officer/s" attend relevant training**
- **Identify and implement green office procedures, including educating staff on the procedures and the benefits to the environment.**
- **Monitoring the use of power and consumables.**
- **Setting reduction targets that are reported to staff at meetings**

A small budget is to be allocated each year to meet the additional costs which may include:

- Purchasing more expensive consumables
- Making changes to the equipment and office environment



SECTION 6 – SERVICE QUALITY & COMPLAINTS

6.1 Client or Service Complaints

Any client complaints in relation to the Centre's advice or casework must be reported to the Responsible Person and the complaints procedure outlined in the Governance Manual is to be followed.

Complaints are a way of rectifying errors and improving the way the organisation works and may reveal weaknesses in policy and inappropriate procedures.

Like any service provider, the WRC may be perceived by clients as not providing a fair or appropriate service, or that the service or a worker in the service has not behaved in an acceptable way. Acceptable ways of behaving are outlined in the Code of Conduct (see section 1.2) and (see section 4.4) Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Should a client not be happy with the service they are receiving, or received, then the following procedure for dealing with these complaints should be followed in a timely manner.

When dealing with client complaints it is important that the matter not be discussed with people who are not involved in the complaint or the settlement process.

Promotion of the WRC Client Complaints procedure will be through the Website and the Client Charter.

Complaints received more than three months after the alleged incident will need to be assessed in terms of capacity to achieve an outcome.

Procedures for dealing with complaints are as follows.

First Stage - Defusing

In the first instance, the client should be encouraged to raise the issues with the worker/s involved. The intention here is to defuse the complaint and empower the client. However, the relationship between the persons concerned may deem this inappropriate, especially if there are issues of power imbalance.

Timeframe

This shall be done within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

If there is no resolution in this stage then the matter will progress to the next stage.

Stage Two - Investigation

Stage two involves the workers line manager or the Executive Director. Complaints about legal practice will go to the Senior Solicitor. Complaints about the Senior Solicitor will go to the Executive Director and complaints about the Executive Director will go directly to the President.

It is important that the complainant is asked to outline the complaint and asked what they think will settle the problem as this may be achieved without too much effort. For example our clients may make a suggestion that improves our overall service delivery without progressing the complaint. The fact that we can implement their suggestion may well be the end of the complaint.

The staff supervisor must listen to the complaint and take relevant notes in relation to the facts and evidence given by the complainant. Assuming a staff person is involved they are to be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint and can also give the facts and evidence that they have to demonstrate their actions and decisions.

It is important that staff are aware that a complaint from a client may lead to disciplinary action against them (see section 4.13). For this reason it is important that a staff person is given the opportunity to have an advocate with them when/if discussing the complaint with the staff supervisor.

After this investigation the staff supervisor can make a suggestion that they feel may settle the complaint. This could be (but not limited to) a change of policy, change of practice or clear guidance being given to the staff

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person in relation to service standards.

The outcome is to be relayed to both the complainant and the employee (where relevant).

Timeframe

The investigation and proposed outcome should be completed within 21 days from stage one.

If the client is satisfied a note is made in the staff supervisor's Diary and the documentation relating to the investigation is destroyed.

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome then they are encouraged to formalise the complaint by putting the complaint in writing to the Executive Director (or if inappropriate) to the President of the Management Committee. The written complaint must outline the incident/s they are referring to and should propose an appropriate course of action that will rectify the complaint.

If the staff person is not happy with the outcome then they can follow the staff grievance procedures.

Stage Three – Conciliation/Mediation

If the complaint is formalised then the staff supervisor is required to document the investigation to date and give it to the Executive Director. When the Written Complaint from the client is received a file will be opened and the matter will be fully reviewed. If the staff supervisor is the Executive Director then this stage is undertaken by a representative of the Management Committee.

During this stage of complaint, details of the complaint will be taken in writing and records kept for up to three years. All parties will be advised that these records will be kept and for how long.

After considering all the facts the Executive Director will suggest to the parties an appropriate process to deal with and settle the complaint. They should keep in mind what the complainant wants as an outcome, the staff persons' initial comments and the values, purpose, resources and reputation of WRC.

Options may include:

- use of dispute resolution services
- joint meeting
- mediation
- counseling of those involved
- other suitable process

If counseling is linked with staff disciplinary procedures then the staff person should be advised that they can have their union present at any meeting. These meetings will not include the client/s.

Timeframe

The outcome of this stage should be completed within 31 days from the client's letter being received.

A written report on the outcomes of all stage two matters will be sent to all parties and a copy kept by WRC.

Where necessary internal policies and practices shall be updated to reflect our learnings from the situation.

Stage Four – Management Committee Review

If the client is not satisfied with the outcome of this process they can write to the Management Committee. Any such letter is to be marked confidential and will not be opened by staff but recorded as incoming mail and tabled at the next Management Committee meeting for consideration.

The committee will consider all available information and will decide the next steps from this point. These could include:

- meeting with the complainant and representatives of the committee to discuss the matter. If, after these meeting/s there is no resolution the matter may be referred to an external service such as the Dispute Resolution Centre, ADCQ, Ombudsman or the Law Society.
- mediation between parties may be offered.
- Other action as deemed appropriate.

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If, in the consideration of the committee, all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the issue and no further action is necessary, then the matter may be closed. This decision must clearly be documented and the complainant advised. A copy of the management committee correspondence is to be attached to the file.

Any staff person involved will be continually kept informed about what has occurred and outcomes or resolutions will be documented.

Timeframe

The process will be started at the first Management meeting after receiving the letter and should be completed within two months”.

Clients can use external avenues of appeal at any stage.

6.2 Service Audits

In accordance with the Funding Agreement (Clause 12) the Funding Body (LAQ) may undertake Service Standard Audits during the term of the agreement. The Service Standards are documented in the Service Standards Manual which is found on the CLSP website.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that regular service audits are undertaken and the outcomes are reported to the Management Committee and funding body (if and when required).

Client Satisfaction Surveys are to be conducted annually and reported to Management Committee and the funding body through CLSIS.



SECTION 7– RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Risk Management

The purpose of this Risk Management Policy and subsequent procedures is not to eliminate risk but rather to establish the systems and processes required to manage the risks involved in the WRC Inc. activities.

Effective management of risk will enable all staff to understand the nature of risks in their work activities and to systematically identify, analyse, evaluate, treat, monitor and review risks. To be effective these processes must be integrated across the WRC Inc at all levels of management and service delivery.

The objectives of the WRC risk management activities are to:

- Maintain the highest possible integrity for services provided by the organisation;
- Safeguard the organisation's assets – people, financial, and property;
- Demonstrate transparent and responsible risk management processes aligned with accepted good practice standards and methods.

Mostly Risk Management is about incorporating common sense into the practices and procedures.

The WRC Inc. is committed to maintaining clear policies and procedures to assure stakeholders that the organisation is pursuing its objectives and fulfilling its responsibilities with due diligence and accountability.

A fundamental component of these policies and procedures is the effective management of the organisation's risks in order to protect its employees, assets, clients and members against potential losses, to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives and to maximise the opportunities to achieve its Vision.

It is the organisations policy to fully support risk management as an integral part of their role. The Management Committee, in conjunction with the Executive Director and Principal Solicitor, will oversee the WRC risk management activities

Risk is inherent in all of the WRC activities. Risk Management includes the proactive activities undertaken by Management Committee, staff, students and volunteers to ensure that the centre engages in practices and techniques that protects the organisation from unnecessary costs or losses.

The sources of risk may be apparent in the following:

- Relationships between the WRC Inc. and staff, clients and funding providers;
- Technology and technical issues;
- Occupational health and safety risks;
- Management activities and controls; and
- Services given to clients.

All employees are responsible for the effective management of risk and as such will have access to information regarding the WRC Inc's risk management processes and identified risks.

All employees are responsible for identifying actual and potential risks. This includes risk analysis, recording, evaluation, treatment, monitoring and communication in their work area. These risk management processes are integrated with relevant policies and procedures.

The Management Committee is responsible for ensuring all areas of risk are managed.

This can be done by ensuring the actions on the following check list are carried out.

Risk Management Check List This had fallen off

Finance

- All payments to follow the agreed authorisation procedures.
- Finance Reports to be presented to every Management Committee
- Asset Management Plan to be Reviewed by the Management Committee every 2 years.
- The annual Budget is to be approved by the Management Committee in the May or June Meeting
- A Financial Audit is to be carried out annually in accordance with funding agreement, Constitution and Policy manuals
- An Insurance Register to be presented to the Management Committee at the first meeting in the new year.

Employment

- All staff to be employed under an Award or industrial agreement
- All employment of staff or termination of staff are undertaken in accordance with Organisational Polices and Procedures and the relevant Award or industrial arrangements.
- The Grievance Procedure is to be reviewed by the Executive Director annually and changes discussed with staff and the management committee
- All staff are to participate in an annual Appraisal of their work and achievements
- Individual work plans are to be developed in consultation with each staff person. These work plans are to link with the organisations operational plan.
- A Staff satisfaction survey is to be conducted annually and reported to the Management Committee.
- The Executive Director to undertake an Occupational Health and Safety Audit annually and report to the Management Committee once completed.

Service Provision

- Client Satisfaction Surveys are to be completed annually and reported to the management committee.
- Volunteer Satisfaction survey are to be done regularly
- The outcomes of the PII audit is to be reported to staff and the management committee
- Client Confidentiality is to be respected at all times
- All computer data to be backed up and secured in accordance with the manual.

Planning

- Staff and Management are to meet annually to develop an organisational plan.
- A report on targets and client demographics is to be prepared prior to the planning day.

It is an expectation that all staff and the management committee will act in accordance with the Organisation's Code of Conduct and will follw this action plan to ensure risks are minimised.