

Privacy Policy

This document is a 'policy' within the meaning of the NCCH Policy & Procedure Framework.

Purpose

As a community housing provider, North Coast Community Housing collects and accesses large amounts of personal information about applicants, tenants and others. The collection, storage, transmission and use of personal information are areas of concern for our stakeholders, especially tenants, and of substantial legislation.

North Coast Community Housing manages and protects personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (**Privacy Act**) and the 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), as well as the requirements of the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW) and other state based legislation as appropriate.

Principles behind this Policy

This Policy is based on NCCH values.

Promoting NCCH values

Our dealings in privacy matters must act in a way which promotes NCCH's four key values:

1. **Respect**: We are a people centred organisation, respecting the diversity and different needs of the individuals we work with.
2. **Social Responsibility**: We support people with housing needs, striving for equality and fairness in housing outcomes.
3. **Professionalism**: We work with integrity to provide quality, innovative services and are accountable for our decisions and actions
4. **Safety and Wellbeing**: We are committed to a work environment that values health, safety and wellbeing

Scope of the Policy

This policy outlines the circumstances in which we obtain personal information, how we use and disclose that information and how we manage requests to access and/or change that information.

What is personal information and how do we collect it?

Personal information is information or an opinion about an individual from which they can be reasonably identified. Depending on the circumstances, we may collect personal information from the individual in their capacity as an applicant for tenancy or other service, tenant, member of a tenant or tenancy applicant's household, contractor, volunteer, stakeholder, job applicant, visitors or others that come into contact with NCCH.

In the course of providing services we may collect and hold:

- **Personal Information** including names, addresses and other contact details; dates of birth; next of kin details; photographic images; attendance records and financial information.
- **Sensitive Information** (particularly in relation to providing appropriate housing services and our work health and safety obligations) including where relevant, government identifiers (such as TFN), religious beliefs, nationality, country of birth, languages spoken at home, family court orders and criminal records.
- **Health Information** (particularly in relation to providing appropriate housing services and complying with our work health and safety obligations) including medical records, disabilities, individual health care plans, and counselling reports.

As part of our recruitment processes for employees, contractors and volunteers, we may collect and hold:

- **Personal Information** including names, addresses and other contact details, dates of birth, financial information, citizenship, employment references, regulatory accreditation, media, directorships, property ownership and driver's licence information.
- **Sensitive Information** including government identifiers (such as TFN), nationality, country of birth, professional memberships, family court orders and criminal records.
- **Health Information** (particularly in relation to prospective staff and student records) including medical records, disabilities, immunisation details and psychological reports.

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Generally, we will seek consent from the individual in writing before we collect their sensitive information (including health information).

It is noted that employee records are not covered by the APPs where they relate to current or former employment relations between NCCH and the employee.

Collection of personal information

The collection of personal information depends on the circumstances in which NCCH is collecting it. If it is reasonable and practical to do so, we collect personal information directly from the individual.

Solicited Information

NCCH has, where possible, attempted to standardise the collection of personal information by using specifically designed forms (e.g. an application form or Health Information Disclosure Form). However, given the nature of our operations we also receive personal information by email, letters, notes, via our website, over the telephone, in face-to-face meetings, through financial transactions and through surveillance activities such as the use of CCTV security cameras or email monitoring.

We may also collect personal information from other people (e.g. a third-party service provider, referees for prospective employees) or independent sources. However, we will only do this where it is not reasonable or practical to collect the personal information from the individual directly.

We may collect information based on how individuals use our website. We use "cookies" and other data collection methods to collect information on website activity such as the number of visitors, the number of pages viewed and the internet advertisements which bring visitors to our website. This information is collected to analyse and improve our website, marketing campaigns and to record statistics on web traffic. We do not use this information to personally identify individuals.

Unsolicited information

NCCH may be provided with personal information without having sought it through our normal means of collection. This is known as "unsolicited information" and is often collected by:

- Misdirected postal mail – Letters, Notes, Documents
- Misdirected electronic mail – Emails, electronic messages
- Employment applications sent to us that are not in response to an advertised vacancy
- Housing applications and housing program requests (for example Affordable Housing applications) sent to us that are not in response to an advertised vacancy or through approved processes
- Additional information provided to us which was not requested.

Unsolicited information obtained by NCCH will only be held, used and or disclosed if it is considered as personal information that could have been collected by normal means. If that unsolicited information could not have been collected by normal means then we will destroy, permanently delete or de-identify the personal information as appropriate. Complaints about individuals are considered to be unsolicited information.

Where NCCH receives unsolicited applications for housing or to a housing program, the information will be retained as there is a reasonable basis for assuming this was the intention of the applicant.

Collection and use of sensitive information

We only collect sensitive information if it is:

- Reasonably necessary for one or more of our functions or activities, and we have the individual's consent
- Necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to life, health or safety
- Another permitted general situation as provided by privacy legislation.

We may share sensitive information within our organisation structure, but only if necessary for us to provide our products or services.

How do we use your personal information?

NCCH only uses personal information that is reasonably necessary for one or more of our functions or activities (the primary purpose) or for a related secondary purpose that would be reasonably expected by you, or for an activity or purpose to which you have consented.

Primary uses of personal information by NCCH include, but are not limited to:



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- Providing housing, accommodation and related services
- Satisfying our legal obligations including our duty of care to tenants, workers, and child protection obligations
- Keeping tenants informed as to community housing matters through correspondence, newsletters and magazines
- Marketing, promotional and fundraising activities
- Supporting community based causes and activities, charities and other causes in connection with NCCH's functions or activities
- Helping us to improve our day-to-day operations including training our staff
- Systems development; developing new programs and services; undertaking planning, research and statistical analysis using de-identified information wherever practicable
- Administration of NCCH including for insurance purposes
- The employment of staff
- The engagement of volunteers.

We will only use or disclose sensitive or health information for a secondary purpose if you would reasonably expect us to use or disclose the information and the secondary purpose is directly related to a primary purpose.

We may share personal information within the organisation, or with the Department of Communities and Justice, but only if necessary for us to provide our services.

Storage and Security of Personal Information

NCCH stores Personal Information in a variety of formats including, but not limited to:

- Databases
- Hard copy files
- Personal devices, including laptop computers
- Third party storage providers such as cloud storage facilities
- Paper based files.

NCCH takes all reasonable steps to protect the personal information we hold from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

These steps include, but are not limited to:

- Restricting access and user privilege of information by staff depending on their role and responsibilities
- Ensuring staff do not share personal passwords
- Ensuring hard copy files are stored in lockable filing cabinets in lockable rooms. Staff access is on a need to know basis
- Ensuring access to NCCH's premises are secured at all times
- Implementing physical security measures around the premises to prevent break-ins
- Ensuring our IT and cyber security systems, policies and procedures are implemented and up to date
- Ensuring staff comply with internal policies and procedures when handling the information
- Undertaking due diligence with respect to third party service providers who may have access to personal information, including customer identification providers and cloud service providers, to ensure as far as practicable that they are compliant with the APPs or a similar privacy regime. Third party service providers may be required to sign confidentiality and privacy undertakings where practicable
- The destruction, deletion or de-identification of personal information we hold that is no longer needed, or required to be retained by any other laws.

Our public website may contain links to other third-party websites outside of NCCH. NCCH is not responsible for the information stored, accessed, used or disclosed on such websites and we cannot comment on their privacy policies.



Responding to data breaches

NCCH will take appropriate, prompt action if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a data breach may have, or is suspected to have occurred. Depending on the type of data breach, this may include a review of our internal security procedures, taking remedial internal action, notifying affected individuals and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

If we are unable to notify individuals, we will publish a statement on our website and take reasonable steps to publicise the contents of this statement.

Disclosure of personal information

Personal information is only used for the purposes for which it was given to NCCH, or for purposes which are directly related to one or more of our functions or activities, or for purposes we believe you would be reasonably expected by you.

Personal information may be disclosed to government agencies, our services providers, agents, contractors, business partners, related entities and other recipients from time to time, if the individual:

- Has given consent; or
- Would reasonably expect the personal information to be disclosed in that manner.

NCCH may disclose personal information without consent or in a manner which an individual would reasonably expect if:

- We are required to do so by law
- The disclosure will lessen or prevent a serious threat to the life, health or safety of an individual or to public safety
- Another permitted general situation applies (as defined under Privacy Legislation)
- Disclosure is reasonably necessary for a law enforcement related activity
- Another permitted health situation exists.

Disclosure of your personal information to overseas recipients

Personal information about an individual may be disclosed to an overseas organisation in the course of providing our services. It is important to note, however, that NCCH does not store personal information in the cloud; all personal information is stored on our own servers and internal backups located within Australia

We will take all reasonable steps not to disclose an individual's personal information to overseas recipients unless:

- We have the individual's consent (which may be implied)
- We have satisfied ourselves that the overseas recipient is compliant with the APPs, or a similar privacy regime
- We form the opinion that the disclosure will lessen or prevent a serious threat to the life, health or safety of an individual or to public safety; or
- We are taking appropriate action in relation to suspected unlawful activity or serious misconduct.

The quality of your personal information

We take all reasonable steps to ensure the personal information we hold, use and disclose is accurate, complete and up-to-date, including at the time of using or disclosing the information.

If NCCH becomes aware that your Personal Information is incorrect or out of date, we will take reasonable steps to rectify the incorrect or out of date information.

Please contact us if any of the details you have provided change. You should also contact us if you believe that the information we have about you is not accurate, complete or up to

Access and correction of your personal information

You may submit a request to us to access the personal information we hold, or request that we change the personal information. Upon receiving such a request, we will take steps to verify your identity before granting access to or correcting the information.

If we reject the request, you will be notified accordingly. Where appropriate, we will provide the reason/s for our decision. If the rejection relates to a request to change personal information, an individual may make a statement about the requested change and we will attach this to their record.

Complaints



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You can make a complaint about how NCCH manages personal information, including an alleged or apparent breach of the APPs or the Health Privacy Principles, by notifying us in writing as soon as possible. We will respond to the complaint within a reasonable time (usually no longer than 30 days) and we may seek further information in order to provide a full and complete response.

NCCH does not charge a fee for the handling of complaints.

If you are not satisfied with our response, you may refer the complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). A complaint can be made using the OAIC online [Privacy Complaint form](#) or by mail, fax or email.

A referral to OAIC should be a last resort once all other avenues of resolution have been exhausted.

NCCH tenants in our NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) are also protected by the NDIS Act and associated Rules. NCCH staff must ensure they comply with the NDIS Code of Conduct and other relevant privacy provisions in their dealings with our SDA Participants. In addition to their rights with the OAIC, NDIS Participants may also lodge a complaint with the NDIS Commissioner on **1800 035 544**

How to contact us

NCCH can be contacted about this Privacy Policy or about personal information generally, by:

- Emailing privacy@ncchc.org.au or info@ncchc.org.au
- Calling our Head Office on 02 6627 5300
- Writing to our Privacy Officer at North Coast Community Housing, PO Box 145 Lismore NSW 2480 .

If you wish, you can contact us anonymously (i.e. without identifying yourself) or by using a pseudonym. However, if you choose not to identify yourself, we may not be able to give you the information or provide the assistance you might otherwise receive if it is not practical to do so.

Changes to our privacy and information handling practices

This Privacy Policy is subject to change at any time. Please check our Privacy Policy on our website (www.ncchc.org.au) regularly for any changes.

This Privacy Policy was last reviewed: **October 2021**

General Definitions

“Staff” of NCCH includes any:

- Staff-member, director or volunteer
- Support Partner or their employee

Contractor of NCCH, or their sub-contractor

INFORMATION	
Title	Privacy Policy v2.2 (Oct21) 4250 po
Section	Corporate Governance
National Regulatory Code Evidence Guideline	Performance Outcome 4 - Governance
NDIS application	Yes
Last review	October 2021
Next review	October 2022
Account Code	4250 po

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INFORMATION

Release notes

Public document

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Version History			
Version #	Summary of changes made	Date Approved	Review Date
V1.0	Initial draft	30 Oct-18	31 Oct-20
V2.0	Update for NDIS	31 Oct-19	31 Oct-20
V2.1	Update – No changes	31 Oct-20	31 Oct-21
V2.2	Update – No significant change	Oct21	Oct22