



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER ALLIANCE

Privacy policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this privacy policy is to outline how the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance (NMHCA) handles personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). This policy ensures that personal information is managed responsibly and securely, protecting the privacy of individuals.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all personal information collected by NMHCA in relation to its activities. It covers all employees, volunteers, contractors, and service providers involved in managing personal information.

3. Definitions

‘Personal information’ is information that directly or indirectly identifies a person such as, but not limited to, a person's name, postal or email address, date and place of birth, image, and financial details.

‘Sensitive information’ is a subset of personal information and includes but is not limited to, information or an opinion about a person's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs or affiliations, memberships of professional or trade associations or unions, sexual preferences, criminal record, or health information.

4. Policy

The NMHCA is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the personal information that it collects in the course of its work to represent the voice of all mental health consumers on national issues.

NMHCA recognises the essential right of individuals to have their information administered in ways which they would reasonably expect – protected on the one hand and made accessible to them on the other.

NMHCA has adopted the following principles in relation to handling personal information:

1. **Open and transparent management.** NMHCA is committed to being open about how personal information is managed. This privacy policy is published to ensure transparency and accessibility.
2. **Collection of personal information.** NMHCA collects only the personal information necessary for its functions and activities. Sensitive information is collected only with consent or as required by law.
3. **Use and disclosure.** Personal information is used only for the purposes for which it was collected or for related purposes that are reasonably expected. Disclosure to third parties occurs only when required to deliver services, comply with legal obligations, or with explicit consent.
4. **Data quality.** Reasonable steps are taken to ensure that personal information collected, used, or disclosed is accurate, up-to-date, and complete.
5. **Data security.** NMHCA implements physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards to protect personal information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure.
6. **Access and correction.** Individuals have the right to request access to personal information held by NMHCA and to request corrections if the information is inaccurate, incomplete, or outdated.
7. **Retention and disposal.** Personal information is retained only for as long as necessary for the purposes for which it was collected. Secure disposal methods are used when information is no longer required.

5. Roles and responsibilities

NMHCA Board is responsible for developing, adopting and reviewing this policy.

The **NMHCA Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for the implementation of this policy, for monitoring changes in privacy legislation, and for advising on the need to review or revise this policy as and when the need arises.

All **NMHCA staff and volunteers** are responsible for ensuring the privacy of personal information by following this policy and ensuring it is handled securely.

Any **third-party service providers** that handle personal information must comply with this policy and ensure the information is protected according to applicable privacy laws.

6. Procedures

Collection

Personal information is collected by NMHCA in various ways, including but not limited to:

- website forms e.g. when an individual signs up for the NMHCA newsletter
- direct stakeholder engagement e.g. at events, over the phone, via email or social media, or through surveys
- event registrations
- job applications.

NMHCA will:

- Only collect information that is necessary for the performance and primary function of its work.
- Collect personal information only by lawful and fair means and not in an unreasonably intrusive manner.
- Notify stakeholders about why we collect the information and how it is administered.
- Notify stakeholders that this information is accessible to them.
- Collect personal information from the person themselves wherever possible.
- Collect sensitive information only with the person's consent or if required by law.

Use and disclosure

NMHCA will only use or disclose information for the primary purpose for which it was collected or a directly related secondary purpose. For other uses, NMHCA will obtain consent from the affected person. Personal information is not disclosed to entities outside of Australia unless appropriate privacy protections are in place.

Storage

NMHCA handles personal information in hard copy and electronically at its premises and off-site with the assistance of third-party service providers. NMHCA implements physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards to protect personal information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure.

Disposal

Personal information will be retained only for as long as necessary for business purposes and will be securely destroyed once it is no longer needed.

Accessing and correction

Individuals may request access to and correction of their personal information free of charge by contacting NMHCA at admin@nmhca.org.au. NMHCA will aim to respond to privacy requests within 30 days.

Making a complaint

Complaints regarding the handling of personal information by NMHCA can be sent to admin@nmhca.org.au. NMHCA will aim to respond to privacy complaints within 30 days.

7. Compliance and breaches

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, depending on the severity of the breach.

8. References and related documents

- NMHCA Employee Handbooks

9. Approval and version control

Approved by: Board of Directors
Issue date: 11 December 2024
Review date: 11 December 2026

Version control

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
1.0	Final draft	CEO	03/12/2024