

Client Service Charter

All clients who are accessing or utilising the Aboriginal Family Legal Services Queensland (Maruma-li-mari) (AFLSQ), have certain rights and responsibilities.

Client Rights

When you seek assistance from AFLSQ you are entitled to the following rights:

1. To be treated in a respectful, non-judgmental and non-discriminatory way.
2. To receive appropriate, thorough and well researched advice and/or referrals to other agencies.
3. To understand our standards for providing our services, which we will discuss and explain.
4. To be treated with honesty, respect, dignity and regard for your privacy and confidentiality.
5. To allow a support person to accompany you when you attend this service.
6. To bring an interpreter or translator if required.
7. To have your information treated as confidential, subject to disclosure required by law or disclosure required to prevent harm to yourself or other persons.
8. To voice a concern or make a complaint.

Client Responsibilities

When you seek assistance from AFLSQ, you have the following responsibilities:

1. To treat staff, volunteers and other service providers with respect at all times.
2. To act respectfully, courteously and safely towards other people using the service, and towards staff and volunteers.
3. To not swear or act in a rude, aggressive or abusive manner towards staff, volunteers or other service providers.
4. To ensure your support person understands they have the same responsibilities.

5. To arrive at your appointment on time and attend all court dates or events, as advised by a staff member.
6. To supply correct information about yourself and your situation so that staff fully understand what is happening and can assess how to best assist you and are able to represent you accurately in court if required.
7. Understand that the information and advice provided by AFLSQ is based on the information you give us. It is therefore important that you provide complete, relevant, honest, accurate, timely information and instructions.
8. To work together to resolve concerns.
9. To act in a way that doesn't put yourself or any other person at risk or compromise any person's safety.
10. To inform the service at least **24 hours before** of any cancellations regarding your appointment or inability to attend set court or other appointments.

Conflict Checks

Before we are able to assist you, we must first check that we don't have a conflict of interest. If we have a conflict of interest, we will advise and assist you to get legal advice, case management or counselling services elsewhere.

Agreement for Legal Advice

By attending our service for legal advice, you agree:

1. That AFLSQ will provide legal advice to you on the basis of the information that you provide. AFLSQ's ability to give you useful legal advice/assistance or other support depends on you giving our staff accurate and specific information about your issues and all relevant documents in a timely manner.
2. That AFLSQ will keep your file and documents in secure storage for 7 years after the closure of your file unless longer timeframes apply under statutory requirements. This may include Child Safety documents, documents pertaining to criminal disclosures of child abuse, and documents relating to the heritage and family details for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. You can request a copy of your file – see the AFLSQ File

Management Policy and Procedure for additional information.

3. That AFLSQ will provide you with legal advice, but the responsibility for progressing your legal matter remains with you.
4. That AFLSQ may provide you with counselling or case management support where able, and you will make every effort to be a contributing participant in this support.
5. That you are receiving a free legal advice appointment and that ongoing work, casework or representation is resource intensive and is therefore available in limited circumstances. There is no guarantee of ongoing work, casework or representation and this will be decided on a case-by-case basis with reference to a triage approach depending upon demand for services and the terms of our funding agreements.
6. That AFLSQ is required by law to keep all your information strictly confidential unless you authorise AFLSQ to reveal it or unless AFLSQ is required by law to reveal it to prevent imminent and serious harm or another person.

When seeking a service from AFLSQ you can help us by:

- Providing all the relevant information about your matter.
- Providing documents related to your matter when requested.
- Following our advice if/when given.
- Telling us how you want us to stay in contact with you should further contact be required.
- Providing updated general contact details (for example, phone number, email).

If we open a casework file for you, we also ask that you:

- Contact us if anything relating to your matter changes.
- Tell us if you change your phone number or address.
- Keep appointment times.
- Sign an Authority to Act.
- Sign a Service Agreement where applicable.

Agreement for Counselling Support

By attending our service for Counselling, you agree:

1. AFLSQ will provide Counselling support to you on the basis of the information that you provide. AFLSQ's ability to give you Counselling support depends on you giving our staff accurate and specific information about your issues and all relevant documents in a timely manner.
2. That AFLSQ will keep your file and documents in secure storage for 7 years after the closure of your file unless longer timeframes apply under statutory requirements. This may include Child Safety documents, documents pertaining to criminal disclosures of child abuse, and documents relating to the heritage and family details for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. You can request a copy of your file – see File Management Policy and Procedure.
3. AFLSQ will provide you with Counselling support, but the responsibility for continued engagement remains with you.
4. That you are receiving free Counselling support appointments, and that extensive ongoing work/casework is resource intensive and is therefore available in limited circumstances.
5. In compliance with the National Standards for Counselling and Psychotherapy and the standards of the Australian Counsellors Association and the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia all your information will be kept strictly confidential unless AFLSQ is required by law to reveal it to prevent imminent or serious harm to yourself or another person.

Privacy

1. Your privacy matters to us

At AFLSQ, we respect your story, your culture, and your privacy. We work hard to keep your information safe and treat it with care.

2. What information we collect

We only collect what we need to support you. This can include:

- Your name and contact details

- Information about your family, culture or community
- Wellbeing and counselling information
- Details about your legal issue, and Domestic or Family Violence information
- Information about children and children's matters (now covered by stronger new child-privacy protections)

3. How we get your information

We might receive your information from:

- you directly
- someone you give permission to, like a support worker or Child Safety Officer
- a referral agency
- court documents
- our website or digital tools

We'll always try to explain why we need the information.

4. How we use your information

We use your information to:

- help you with your legal matter, counselling, early intervention or prevention case management
- keep you and your family safe
- connect you with other services when needed through appropriate referrals
- meet our legal and community responsibilities
- improve our services for the community

We **do not sell** your information, ever.

5. Who we may share information with

Sometimes we need to share information with:

- courts or tribunals
- other support services (only if you agree)
- police or child safety if required by law
- the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) if there's a privacy issue

We always try to share the *least* amount of information needed.

6. Your rights

New privacy reforms give you stronger rights. You can:

- ask to see the information we hold about you
- ask us to fix information if it's wrong
- ask us to delete information (unless we're required to keep it by law)
- get clear information about how your data is being used, especially online

There is also a **new legal right to take action for serious invasions of privacy**, which began in 2025.

7. How we keep your information safe

The law now requires organisations to take strong “technical and organisational” steps to protect personal information.

This means we use:

- secure computer systems
- strict access controls
- staff training
- culturally safe confidentiality practices
- cyber-security protections

8. If there is a privacy breach

If something happens that may harm your privacy, we will:

1. Tell you as soon as possible
2. Tell the OAIC
3. Take steps to reduce any harm

9. Information about children

Extra care is required when collecting and handling children's information. We already follow strong cultural and safety-based practices for kids and families.

10. Cultural respect and confidentiality

We understand that privacy in Aboriginal communities has special cultural meaning. We work with:

- respect for kinship structures

- awareness of community sensitivities
- strict confidentiality within community settings
- culturally safe communication and practices

11. Have a concern or want more information?

We encourage you to talk to us.

If you have questions about your privacy, or want to make a complaint, you can:

1. Speak with our staff
2. Contact the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

We will support you through the process if needed.

Refer to 9.4 File Management Policy and Procedure v.1 and 5.1 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy v.2

Feedback and Complaints

In circumstances where client demand is increasing, we are obliged to limit the provision of our more intensive services to the most vulnerable people who are unable to advocate for themselves.

We acknowledge that unfortunately this means some clients, who believe they should receive services in addition to advice, may be disappointed. Any concerns about a service provided by AFLSQ should first be raised with the staff member involved.

If there are still issues requiring clarification after talking to the staff member, discuss the issue with the staff member's supervisor.

AFLSQ takes client feedback and complaints seriously. We use a fair and uniform approach to ensure issues are dealt with in a consistent and timely manner. We will keep you informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation or changes made as a result of your feedback.

Refer to 9.7 Client Complaints and Feedback v.1 Policy and Procedure.

Unresolved concerns or complaints must be addressed in writing to Chief Executive Officer, Charlie Rowe, email charlie.rowe@aflsq.org.au or post to PO Box 1105 Toowoomba City QLD 4350.

Where to find us

Head Office
Suite 9, Lvl 3,
158 Margaret Street
Toowoomba, Qld, 4350
PH: 07 4614 7116

Murgon
74-76 Lamb Street, Murgon,
QLD, 4605
PH: 07 4179 0110

Gympie
Shop 7/11 Mary Street,
Gympie, QLD, 4570
PH: 07 5356 9261

Roma
Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement
36 McDowell Street, Roma, QLD, 4455
PH: 0491 331 473
PH: 0499 617 722

Acknowledgement of Country

The Aboriginal Family Legal Services Queensland (Maruma-li-mari) would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians who have walked on and cared for this land for thousands of years and recognise their continuing connection to land, sea, and waterways. AFLSQ Acknowledges the stories, traditions, and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whose sovereignty was never ceded.

Connect with us

 enquires@aflsq.org.au
 www.aflsq.org.au

