



AASW Ethics Resource Sheet 1: Alternative Dispute Resolution

Current as of July 2011

There are a number of alternate dispute resolution options available for those who wish to complain about the conduct of social workers. The following table presents a range of options available. The appropriateness of each of these will depend on such factors as:

- nature of the complaint;
- the employer body (that is, state government, Commonwealth government, non-government agency, private practice); and
- where the alleged misconduct occurred.

Each of the following are not exclusive – that is, there may, for example, be more than one appropriate body with which a complaint can be lodged. Each of the website addresses below will give potential complainants information about the appropriateness of each agency.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Options	Website	Phone number	Cost
For an extensive listing of alternative dispute resolution options Australia-wide in such areas as: health services, commercial practice and general community-based options.	www.business.gov.au www.caslon.com.au E: info@caslon.com.au	1800 777 275 (Caslon -email only)	
For criminal matters – all criminal matters should be referred directly to the local police service		<i>See local phone directory</i>	No cost
For complaints against social workers employed by commonwealth departments			
Commonwealth Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.gov.au	1300 362 072	No cost
Social Security Appeals Tribunal (includes Child Support Agency)	www.ssat.gov.au	1800 011 140	No cost to apply
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	www.aat.gov.au	1300 366 700	\$777 / can be reduced or waived if exempt



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For complaints in relation to industrial matters			
Fair Work Ombudsman	www.fairwork.gov.au/	13 13 94	No fees to apply. There may be charges for time taken to process application.
For complaints against social workers employed by state government departments			
NSW Ombudsman	www.ombo.nsw.gov.au	1800 451 524	No cost
Vic Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au	03 9613 6222 1800 806 314	No cost
Qld Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au	07 3005 7000 1800 068 908	No cost
SA Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au	08 8226 8699 1800 182 150	No cost
WA Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au	08 9220 7555 1800 117 000	No cost
TAS Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au	1800 001 170 (freecall Tas) 1300 766 725 (cost of a local call in Aust)	No cost
ACT Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.act.gov.au	1300 362 072	No cost
NT Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.nt.gov.au	08 8999 1818 1800 806 380	No cost



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State health and community complaints schemes			
ACT Human Rights Commission	www.hrc.act.gov.au E: human.rights@act.gov.au	02 6205 2222	No cost
NSW Health Care Complaints Commission	www.hccc.nsw.gov.au	1800 043 159 02 9219 7444	No cost
NT Health and Community Services Complaints Commission	www.hcsc.nt.gov.au	08 8999 1969	No cost
TAS Health Complaints Commissioner	www.healthcomplaints.tas.gov.au E: health.complaints@ombudsman.tas.gov.au	1800 001 170	No cost
QLD Health Quality and Complaints Commission	www.hqcc.qld.gov.au E: info@hqcc.qld.gov.au	1800 077 308 07 3120 5999	No cost
VIC Office of the Health Services Commissioner	www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc E: hsc@health.vic.gov.au	1800 136 066 03 8601 5200	No cost
WA Health and Disability Services Complaints Office	www.healthreview.wa.gov.au E: mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au	08 9323 0600 1800 813 583	No cost
SA Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner	www.hcsc.sa.gov.au	1800 232 007 08 8226 8666	No cost
For complaints of any nature			
NSW Community Justice Centre	www.cjc.nsw.gov.au E: cjc_info@agd.nsw.gov.au	1800 990 777	No cost
NT Community Justice Centre	www.communityjusticecentre.nt.gov.au	1800 000 473	No cost
ACT Conflict Resolution Service	www.crs.org.au	02 6162 4050	Free / low cost mediation
QLD	www.justice.qld.gov.au/mediation	07 3239 6269	Free to public.



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Dispute Resolution		1800 017 288	Workplace facilitations set at a fee for service cost
For complaints of any nature			
VIC Dispute Settlement Centre	www.justice.vic.gov.au/disputes E: dscv@justice.vic.gov.au	03 9603 8370 1800 658 528	No cost
TAS Positive Solutions	www.positivesolutions.com.au	Hobart: 03 6223 5612 Launceston: 03 6334 9151 1800 664 200	Min \$30 fees charged. (Negotiated for financial hardship). Income assessed
WA Dispute Resolution Association Inc.	www.wadra.law.ecu.edu.au	08 9321 3755	Cost (\$250 to lodge application)
National Association of Community Legal Centres. (Available in each state – see website for state addresses)	www.naclc.org.au E: naclc@clc.net.au	02 9264 9595	No cost
Consumer Affairs			
Qld Office of Fair Trading	www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au	13 74 68	No cost
NSW Fair Trading	www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au	13 32 20	No cost
Tas Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading	www.consumer.tas.gov.au	1300 654 499	No cost
Consumer Affairs Vic	www.consumer.vic.gov.au	1300 558 181	No cost
SA Consumer and Business Services	www.ocba.sa.gov.au	131 882	No cost
NT Consumer and Business Affairs (see Community Justice Centre)	www.communityjusticecentre.nt.gov.au	1800 000 473	No cost
WA Department of Consumer Protection	www.commerce.wa.gov.au	1300 304 054	No cost



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Fee-based mediation services

There are numerous qualified mediators in all states and territories. These people offer a paid service. There are a number of websites which provide listings of mediators. A search of the local Yellow Pages will also identify mediators.

Association of Dispute Resolvers	www.leadr.com.au	1800 651 650 02 9251 3366	Cost
Mediate Today	www.mediate.com.au	1300 760 225	Cost