

GUNDITJMARA ABORIGINAL COOPERATIVE

# Client Handbook





**Karnda wanyoo ngalameen koorooke ngapoon wangan  
nootyoong meering ngayook wilan ponponpooramook bunjil**

We call out to our ancestors, our grandmothers and grandfathers. We respect country, we respect our totems the yellow tail black cockatoo, the red-tailed black cockatoo, the white crested cockatoo and our creator Bunjil.

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Limited  
Client Handbook  
Version 7  
Septmeber 2024

Once printed, no longer version controlled.

# Vision

Empower the individual, the family wins,  
Empower the family the community wins,  
Empower the community our culture wins.

# Purpose

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative exists to provide community controlled, culturally appropriate HOLISTIC services that meet the identified needs of the Aboriginal people and the boarder community.

# Values

- We are COMMITTED to a positive and healthy future for our community and organisation
- We RESPECT our history, our culture, our families and community
- We continue to strengthen and expand our PARTNERSHIPS with other organisations
- SELF EMPOWERMENT is at the core of what we do
- COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION is valued and encouraged
- CULTURAL SAFETY is understood, adhered to and respected

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# Ngatanwarr

“We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land of the Gunditjmara peoples and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future. As an Aboriginal Organisation we at Gunditjmara honour all that have come before us.”

## Hours of operation

### Head Office

Monday-Thursday: 9am -5pm

Friday: 9am - 4pm

### Medical Clinic

Monday-Thursday: 9am -5pm

Friday: 9am - 4pm

## Eligibility

Eligibility for programs is specific to each program area, for more information in regards to eligibility criteria please contact Gunditjmara Reception who will refer you to the right person to give you information. Please be advised that some programs/services at Gunditjmara Cooperative are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific and also age specific (Those specific Aboriginal programs/services are identified with an asterisk).

## Costs involved

For most of the Gunditjmara programs there are no associated costs, but occasionally there are out of pocket expenses, staff will give you information when this is required prior to you receiving services.

## How to become a Member

To become a member please refer to the Gunditjmara website [www.gunditjmara.org.au](http://www.gunditjmara.org.au). You will need to provide proof of Aboriginality and fill out a membership form which will be reviewed and endorsed by the Gunditjmara Board of Management. You will then receive a letter advising the outcome of your application. Gunditjmara's services are available to everyone in the community whether you're a member or not.

# Introduction

This Client handbook has been prepared by Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative with the goal to inform you (our client) of:

- The services Gunditjmara provides
- Your rights and responsibilities as a service user
- Other helpful information to ensure your experience with Gunditjmara is of the most benefit to you, your family and community

## Who we are

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd is an independent community based not-for-profit Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) founded by a group of volunteers from the local indigenous community of South West Victoria in 1979. The Cooperative was incorporated in 1982.

Since its beginning, Gunditjmara has enjoyed considerable growth, particularly in recent years, both in the number of staff and in the number of programs we deliver to community. Gunditjmara provides a range of different programs and holistic supports to community across three sites.

Gunditjmara means ‘belonging to person’ and the Gunditjmara Nation shares its borders to the west with the Buandig people, to the north with the Jardiwadjali and Djab wurrung peoples, and to the east with the Kirrae Whurrong people. Our Nation’s totem is “Bunjil” the Eagle. The Gunditjmara people today continue to act as the gate keepers of maintaining cultural practices through family kinship systems, dance, song, language and caring for country.

Gunditjmara people are traditional owners of an area extending from Portland in the south, around the coast to Port Fairy, Warrnambool and inland to Camperdown. Gunditjmara people are traditionally river, and lake people, with Framlingham Forest, Lake Condah and the surrounding river systems being of great importance to us both economically and spiritually.

# Cultural Safety

Gunditjmara recognises that we are all shaped by our history and cultural backgrounds, which in turn influences the way we see the world around us, our values, our spiritual beliefs and how we perceive ourselves and relate to other people.

As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative is at the forefront of cultural safety and awareness. Whilst our organisation provides services primarily for Aboriginal people and their families, others associated with us are influenced by their own culture, age group and experiences.

Gunditjmara is mindful that each individual has a right to expect a quality service that is culturally safe and tailored to suit their individual needs.

Gunditjmara also strives to educate and develop non Aboriginal staff's understanding of Cultural safety and their journey with us.

# Victorian Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities

The Victorian Charter of human rights and responsibilities contains twenty rights that promote and protect the values of freedom, respect, equality and dignity. Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative is obligated to comply with all the principles of this charter.

- Right to be recognised and treated equally before the law
- Right to life
- Protection from cruel treatment or punishment, including torture and medical treatment without consent
- Freedom from forced work or slavery
- Right to move freely within Victoria, to come into and leave Victoria, and to choose where to live
- Right to privacy and to protect your reputation
- Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Right to hold an opinion and freedom of expression
- Right not to have your property taken away, unless the law says it can be taken (protection of children in the criminal process).
- Right to a fair hearing
- Rights in criminal proceedings including the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty
- Right not to be tried or punished more than once for the same crime
- Right not to be found guilty of a crime if the behaviour was not against the law when it happened



# Client Rights & Responsibilities

The Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative has a commitment to providing services within a framework which is both client focused and client driven.

## Your Rights as a Service User at GAC

- To have your privacy, confidentiality and dignity respected at all times
- To be treated with courtesy
- To make decisions for yourself and to be encouraged to do this
- To be kept waiting no longer than necessary to receive a service
- To refuse a service
- To have a private space for discussions
- To access services without discrimination
- To be informed and consulted about available services and
- other relevant matters
- To seek an independent Advocate if you feel you need one

## Your Responsibilities as a Service user

- Treat all Gunditjmara property with respect and care (i.e. buildings, equipment etc)
- To treat service provider staff and other service users with dignity, courtesy and respect
- Provide feedback to Gunditjmara on the services that you, as a client, receive
- To accept the outcome of any decisions you make
- Let us know when you want changes to your services
- Take responsibility for any decisions you make

### Gunditjmara has a NO SMOKING policy

Smoking is NOT permitted on Gunditjmara grounds, office facilities or in Gunditjmara's vehicles.

### Gunditjmara has a ZERO TOLERANCE policy for violence and aggression.

Staff members have the right to refuse service to anyone if they believe their safety is at risk.

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# Our Responsibilities as a Service Provider

## Our staff has the responsibility:

- To respect and treat service users with dignity
- To inform service users of their options
- To involve service users in decisions about service delivery planning
- To ensure service users receive the service which they have agreed to To respect the privacy and confidentiality of service users
- To deliver services to service users in a safe manner
- To respond to service users complaints fairly and promptly and without retribution
- To accept service users choices and the involvement of an advocate to represent their interests
- To consider service users views when planning, managing and evaluating service provision

# Discrimination

Discrimination against, or the harassment of members of staff, visitors and/or other clients will not be tolerated within any sector of GAC, particularly on the basis of:

- Gender
- Family
- Marital status
- Age
- Race, colour or nationality
- Physical or intellectual impairment or disability
- Gender preference
- Cultural or religious beliefs
- Political beliefs

## Rainbow Tick

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative is currently working towards becoming more inclusive of the LGBTIQ+ community.

## Alcohol and/or drugs

Alcohol and/or drugs are NOT to be consumed, nor are they permitted, on any Gunditjmara property, office facility, service delivery site and/or vehicle. Any person can be refused services and/or access if under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

## Our Responsibilities

As a Service Provider, Gunditjmara has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that your access to a service is decided only on the basis of need and the capacity of Gunditjmara to meet that need
- Inform you and community members of your rights and responsibilities in relation to Gunditjmara services

## Access & Support

Gunditjmara is committed to provide support to people to access services to meet their individual needs.

# Charter of Aged Care Rights

## Commonwealth Home Support Program

I have the right to:

- safe and high quality care and services;
- be treated with dignity and respect;
- have my identity, culture and diversity valued and supported;
- live without abuse and neglect;
- be informed about my care and services in a way I understand;
- access all information about myself, including information about my rights, care and services;
- have control over and make choices about my care, and personal and social life, including where the choices involve personal risk;
- have control over, and make decisions about, the personal aspects of my daily life, financial affairs and possessions;
- my independence;
- be listened to and understood;
- have a person of my choice, including an aged care advocate, support me or speak on my behalf;
- complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly;
- personal privacy and to have my personal information protected;
- exercise my rights without it adversely affecting the way I am treated.

# The NDIS Code of Conduct

The NDIS Code of Conduct applies to all NDIS providers, registered and unregistered, and all persons employed or otherwise engaged by an NDIS provider.

## **In providing supports or services to people with disability, a person covered by the Code must:**

- Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions
- Respect the privacy of people with disability
- Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner, with care and skill
- Act with integrity, honesty and transparency
- Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with disability
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against, and exploitation, neglect and abuse of, people with disabilities
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct

# Gunditjmara Health Service Programs and Services

24 Hopkins Road, Warrnambool  
Phone (03) 5564 3344

- General Practitioners
- Koori Maternity Service
- Chronic Health Care
- Psychologists
- Dietitian
- Optometry Services
- Dental Services
- Audiology Services
- Local Justice Worker
- Drug & Alcohol Services
- Men's Health Services
- Women's Health Services
- Immunisations
- Quit Smoking support
- Pathology Collection
- Diabetes Education
- Medical Transport
- Individual Social Support including community access and shopping assistance
- Two groups, Elders and Young Persons meet alternate fortnights, lunch provided, range of activities
- Home Care Packages Service Provider
- NDIS Program—Culturally Specific Client Support including one on one
  - or groups
- Domestic Assistance
- Home Maintenance

**If you would like to speak to someone about any of our services or programs please call us on (03) 5564 3344**

# Gunditjmara Health Service

24 Hopkins Road, Warrnambool

Phone (03) 5564 3344

Opening hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 8:30am - 5pm

Friday 9am - 4pm

After hours services are available, please phone the Health Service on 5564 3344 or check our website on [www.gunditjmara.org.au](http://www.gunditjmara.org.au) for more information.

**For medical assistance outside of these hours please contact South West Healthcare Emergency Department on 03 5563 1666 and/or call 000 in an emergency.**

## Bulk Billing

Our practice operates a Medicare bulk-billing service. Patients who do not hold a Medicare card are required to pay for services on the day. Some additional services and products (e.g. immunisations) come at a cost. We have EFTPOS facilities available for these services.

## Privacy and Confidentiality

Your medical record is a confidential document. It is the policy of this practice to maintain security of personal health information at all times and to ensure that this information is only available to authorised members of staff. A copy of our privacy policy is available on request from our receptionist.

## Transfer of Medical Records

If you would like us to obtain records from another service provider on your behalf, please see our medical receptionist to obtain a transfer application form.



## Recall and Reminder System

We may issue you with a reminder notice from time to time offering you preventative care services, appointment reminders, requests to follow-up with your doctor and other services. Please ensure your contact details at the clinic are up to date.

## Test results

Results are checked daily by the doctors. If they need to be followed up, the doctor will either call you directly to discuss them, advise you at your follow up appointment or request a member of the reception staff to call you to make an appointment to discuss the results.

## Third party

A suitable third person, Medical student or registrar, is occasionally present at consultations in our clinic. Patients are advised verbally and in writing at the time of their arrival at the clinic of the presence of the third person and are at liberty to request that they leave the room.

## Australian Commission on Safety & Quality in Health Care

The 'Top Tips for Safety Health Care' brochure may be downloaded at:  
[www.safetyandquality.gov.au/toptips](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/toptips)

Victorian Health Services Commissioner  
Level 30, 570 Bourke street,  
Melbourne, Vic 3000.  
Phone: (03) 8601 5222  
Regional free call: 1800 136 066

# Our Commitment to Child Safety

## We are proud to be a child safe organisation.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children, preventing, and responding to child abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of all Executives, Managers, Staff, Contractors and Volunteers.

## Gunditjmara is committed to Child Safety, this includes:

- Zero tolerance for child abuse
- Actively working to listen to and empower children
- Systems to protect children from abuse, taking all allegations and concerns very seriously and responding to them consistently in line with the organisation's Child Safe policy and procedures
- Promoting cultural safety for children
- Providing a safe environment for children with a disability

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000**

### Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Child Safe Officers



Danny Chatfield



Kellie Bethel



Tara Smith

# Child Safety Reporting Process



# UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

“Rights” are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is the best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

## **Article 1**

Everyone under 18 has these rights.

## **Article 2**

All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

## **Article 3**

All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

## **Article 4**

The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

## **Article 5**

Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

## **Article 6**

You have the right to be alive.

## **Article 7**

You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

## **Article 8**

You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

## **Article 9**

You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

## **Article 10**

If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

## **Article 11**

You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

## **Article 12**

You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

## **Article 13**

You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

## **Article 14**

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

## **Article 15**

You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

## **Article 16**

You have the right to privacy.

## **Article 17**

You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

**Article 18**

You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

**Article 19**

You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

**Article 20**

You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

**Article 21**

You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

**Article 22**

You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

**Article 23**

You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

**Article 24**

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

**Article 25**

If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

**Article 26**

You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

**Article 27**

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

**Article 28**

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

**Article 29**

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

**Article 30**

You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

**Article 31**

You have the right to play and rest.

**Article 32**

You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

**Article 33**

You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

**Article 34**

You have the right to be free from sexual abuse. Article 35 No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

**Article 36**

You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

**Article 37**

No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

**Article 38**

You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

**Article 39**

You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

**Article 40**

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

**Article 41**

If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

**Article 42**

You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

**Articles 43 to 54**

These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to ensure children are protected with their rights.

# Family & Community Services

24 Hopkins Road, Warrnambool

Phone (03) 5559 1234

Toll free 1800 629 729

- Kinship Care
- Kooramook Playgroup
- Integrated Family Services
- Cultural Support Planning
- Better Futures
- Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making Program
- Koori Youth Justice
- Koori Pre School Assistant Program
- Targeted Care Packages (TCP)
- Regional Family Violence Services
- Social & Emotional Well-being services Men, Women and Youth
- Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk

**If you would like to speak to someone about any services  
or programs please call us on (03) 5559 1234**

# Personal Information

## What happens to information about me?

When you become a client of this service, a client file is created. It includes:

- Personal information such as your name and contact details
- Your support needs including physical, social, and emotional
- Every time you have contact with us new information is added to your file

Some information or data may also be used for research and planning, to help us provide better outcomes and improve service delivery. In this case, any identifying information, such as your name and contact details, will be removed before the information is used.

It's a policy of this organisation to maintain security of your information at all times. The Gunditjmara Privacy Policy 'conforms to the Federal Privacy Act (1988) and the Australian Privacy Principles which govern the collection, use and storage of personal information. A copy of our privacy policy is available on request from our reception.

## Why is this information necessary?

Initially we need to collect and keep this information to provide you with the appropriate services. It will also lessen the need to collect the same information repeatedly.

## What rights do I have to access my Information?

You can ask to see any information held on your client file or have information explained to you that is in your client file. Some limits may apply where particular circumstances prevent us from releasing information (if any limits apply to your record, this will be explained to you). You also have the right to correct any information in your client file that you believe is incorrect, incomplete, out of date or misleading.

## How will my Information remain Confidential?

We have strict policies about who can see and use your personal client Information. Your privacy is also protected by law. All our staff members must treat your information confidentially. Generally, we only share personal information about you with people who are directly involved in your ongoing care.

## Care Team Meetings

To provide a holistic approach to your care Gunditjmara staff may request that your information be shared amongst our programs so that you can receive input and support from several people at the same time. For instance, there may be times when you have housing needs, emotional needs, and legal issues that you need help with and therefore several staff may be supporting you from Gunditjmara. Being able to share your information amongst Gunditjmara staff when necessary helps ensure that you have a coordinated approach to your care that is effective and that leads to better outcomes. Your consent will be sought before sensitive information is shared by Gunditjmara staff at any internal care team meetings.

## Who else may have access to Information about Me?

We may recommend that others outside this organisation become involved in your care. In that case, you will be asked to give consent for us to discuss any necessary information from your client file. You have the right to refuse or withdraw consent if you wish. If you have any concerns or questions about sharing of information, please speak to one of our staff. If we need to share your information for this purpose or any other purpose we will ask for your written or verbal agreement before doing so (unless required by law).

## What if I am unable to give Consent?

In some cases, people may not be able to give consent because they are legally unable to make a decision about the release of their information (for example, children) or people under an administration order. In such cases, a decision will be sought from the person's authorised representative. People who can act as authorised representatives in these circumstances are specified by law. Your worker can give you more details about this.



# Community Feedback

The Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative is committed to always improving service to the Community. There are suggestion boxes at our reception. All responses will be kept confidential. Gunditjmara will also periodically undertake community and client surveys to assist in our planning and program management.

We also welcome feedback at any other time to help us understand your experience of our service. Feel free to contact staff or our Team Managers at any time. Pop in and put a feedback form in the box at reception or simply pop in and have a yarn!

**Our feedback forms are available from our friendly staff at reception  
we can even send a copy out to you!**

**To enquire feel free to call reception on (03) 5559 1234**

## Making a complaint

A person wishing to make a complaint may do so in writing or verbally to:

- The staff member they were dealing with at the time
- The manager or team leader of that staff member

If you are not happy with the outcome you can also make a complaint through:

### **Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner**

Call 1300 582 113 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Visit their website: <https://hcc.vic.gov.au/>

### **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

Call 1800 951 822 (between 9am and 5pm weekdays)

Visit their website:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint/lodge-complaint>

### **NDIS Commission**

Call 1800 035 544

Visit their website: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints>

# Gunditjmara's Feedback & Complaints Process

Submit a completed Feedback and Complaints form into the Suggestion Box located at reception of Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative. The Feedback and Complaints form is available in hard copy.

Written complaints may be sent to Gunditjmara Quality Team who are responsible for receiving this correspondence and directing it to the appropriate person.

Feedback and complaints via telephone may be made on 03 5559 1234 or online at [www.gunditjamra.org.au/feedback](http://www.gunditjamra.org.au/feedback).

**Anonymous complaints may be made by phone or writing.**

## Questions to consider if making a complaint:

- Who are you complaining about?
- When did the incident occur?
- Have you tried to resolve the complaint with the staff member?
- What was their response?
- Provide a summary of what happened
- What do you want to happen?
- Please describe what outcomes you are seeking

Once we receive your complaint we will review it as part of our usual internal process which involves investigating the complaint, considering a response, and then informing you of an outcome. Our aim is to communicate an outcome to you within two weeks of receiving your complaint.

# Client Appeal Process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation and proposed resolution of their complaint or appeal, they can seek a further review of the matter via the CEO within 5 business days.

Clients or their advocates may lodge an appeal if they disagree with a decision made by the organisation. A formal external feedback procedure may follow if still not satisfied with the outcome. The complainant will be referred to the relevant Commissioner and provided information and support to make the complaint externally if necessary. Clients or their advocates may lodge an appeal if they disagree with a decision made by the organisation.

# Advocacy

Gunditjmara respects each service user's (and/or their representative's) choice of advocate and, if required, assists the service user (and/or their representative) to access an advocate.

Information is maintained on available advocacy agencies in policies and procedures and in the Client Handbook

Service users are advised of their right to an advocate and of advocacy agencies through the Client Handbook

Information is explained at assessment and reviews

Information is also provided as part of the complaints process

Assistance to access an advocate is available

Staff and volunteers understand the role of advocates and how to access advocates for service users as required

Advocacy processes are regularly audited and improvements identified on an ongoing basis

## What is an Advocate?

An advocate is a person who, with the authority of the service user, represents the service user's interests. Advocates may be used during assessments, reviews, and complaints or for any other communication between the service user and WCC Child and Family Services

## Use of Advocates

Service users have a right to use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be a family member, friend or advocacy service. Advocates are accepted by Gunditjmara programs as representing the interests of the service user. We also recognise that service users may choose a family member, friend or other person to advocate on their behalf.

Staff ensure service users are aware of their right to use an advocate, and remind them of this option whenever appropriate including if a complaint is lodged.

## Appointing an Advocate

Service users wishing to appoint an advocate inform WCC Child and Family Services practitioner of the person they wish for their advocate. Service users can change their advocate at any time and inform WCC IFS practitioner. If a service user has difficulty in completing any paperwork necessary due to language or literacy, staff will assist them or refer them to an advocacy agency to assist. WCC staff assist and supports people with special needs to access an advocate of their choice by providing whatever support is required. Completed authority forms are kept in the service user's record and noted in the Client Management System ECM.

## Guidelines for Advocates

Guidelines for advocates are Nominate an Advocate form; this is given to the service user and explained to them if they wish to appoint an advocate.

## Advocacy and Complaints Investigation Contacts

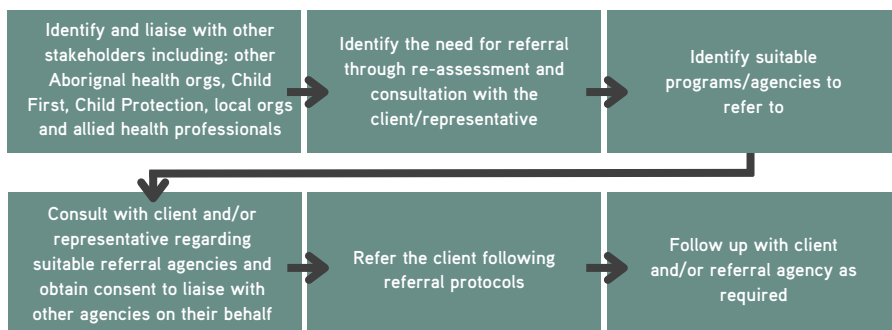
Services that may advocate on behalf of service users (depending on the issue) or provide advocacy support to service users include:

### Advocacy Services

- **DHHS Disability Advocacy Program**  
Phone: 03 9096 8226  
Email: [disabilityadvocacy@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:disabilityadvocacy@dhhs.vic.gov.au)
- **South West Advocacy Association**  
Phone: 03 5561 4584  
Email: [admin@swadvocacy.com.au](mailto:admin@swadvocacy.com.au)  
45 Hider St. Warrnambool, Victoria 3280
- **Older Persons Advocacy Network**  
1800 700 600  
[www.opan.org.au/contact-us/](http://www.opan.org.au/contact-us/)

# Service User Referral

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative refers clients (and/or their representative) to other providers as appropriate.



## Referral process for exiting clients

The referral process generally includes the following steps.

- Liaises with the client and/or their representative and identifies the need for services from another agency
- Explains the need for a referral to another program (internally) or an external program at another agency including the reasons for being unable to provide the required or requested services
- Identifies referral options and discusses these with the client
- Continues to provide services currently in place (as applicable)
- Obtains consent to liaise with other programs/providers on behalf of the client
- The culturally specific needs of the client are considered and are culturally safe e.g. referring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to services provided by Aboriginal community organisations
- Contacts other service providers that may be able to provide services and contacts them to discuss the services needs of the client
- Refers the client to another provider and completes an external referral form
- Follows up with the client and/or provider referred to, to check on the outcome of the referral
- Provides any further information to the other provider as required
- Documents any relevant information in the client records

# Networking and Liaison with other providers

## Networking and coordinating with other agencies

Gunditjmara programs sits within various networks within the region (including the South West Child and Family Services alliance, DHELK DJA, The Orange Door) and is well connected to the services provided by other local organisations; this ensures open communication with them on an ongoing basis. The Manager, Team Leaders, and all practitioner personnel network and liaise with other stakeholders including, other ACCHO's, TOD, MCH ,CAHMS, CASA, Emma House , allied health professionals, medical practitioners and others as relevant.

Networking and coordination of other services is promoted through monthly Alliance network meetings, network meetings and telephone discussions. Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative also maintains a range of brochures that outline other relevant community services and supports to assist in referrals

## Referral

The need for referral may be identified when the client first contacts GAC for services or after services are provided such as when support needs change.

## Identifying the need for referral

A referral to another service may be needed in the following circumstances:

- The risk to children and family is greater than identified at allocation/intake
- The needs of the client change or
- The client requires specific assistance from another health provider.

## Monitoring Client Referral Processes

Client referral processes and systems are regularly tracked and followed up via alliance channels and internal systems; staff, clients and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback on issues and areas where improvements can be made.



# Client Acknowledgement

I hereby acknowledge that I have received the Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Client Information Pack and have read (or had read to me) and understood the contents as outlined below:

## Introduction

Background, Programs & Services, Victorian Charter Human Rights, Programs & Services, Charter of Aged Care Rights, NDIS Code of Conduct, Organisational Profile, Vision Statement, Core Values.

## Rights & Responsibilities

Your Rights, Your Responsibilities, Our Responsibilities, Discrimination, Alcohol/Drugs, Smoking Policy.

## Your Personal Information

Client File Access Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Privacy & Confidentiality Procedure.

## Intake & Assessment

Once your referral has been received a staff member will make contact as part of our intake and assessment process.

## Feedback

Program Feedback / Feedback Process, Compliments, Comments, Concerns, Client Complaints Procedure Feedback Form.

Client Name .....

Client Signature ..... Date .....

Gunditjmara Worker Name .....

Gunditjmara Worker Signature ..... Date .....

## GUNDITJMARA ABORIGINAL COOPERATIVE

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PO Box 732  
Warrnambool  
Victoria 3280

### Phone

(03) 5559 1234

### Toll Free

1800 629 729 (Vic Only)

### Fax

(03) 5561 0392

### Email

[admin@gunditjmara.org.au](mailto:admin@gunditjmara.org.au)

### Website

[www.gunditjmara.org.au](http://www.gunditjmara.org.au)

## MEDICAL CLINIC

24 Hopkins Road  
PO Box 732  
Warrnambool  
Victoria 3280

### Phone

(03) 5564 3344

### Toll Free

1800 629 729 (Vic Only)

### Fax

(03) 5562 1452

### Email

[health@gunditjmara.org.au](mailto:health@gunditjmara.org.au)

### Website

[www.gunditjmara.org.au](http://www.gunditjmara.org.au)







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